that qualitative and quantitative approaches to the study of culturally situated communication are not mutually exclusive, and that each can and should inform the other. While ethnography has tended to be identified exclusively with qualitative approaches, many practitioners today are recognizing the need to extend the boundary to include quantitative data in ethnographic descriptions. Gumperz and others have also stressed the need to look at the larger socio-political contexts within which culturally situated communication takes place, as these contexts may determine features of communication in ways that are not evident from a focus on communicative patterns alone.

Thus while the ethnography of communication has a unique contribution to make in terms of the questions it asks and its relativistic perspective, its contribution to the description and understanding of culturally constituted patterns of communication will be limited if its methods and findings are not integrated with other descriptive and analytical approaches. It is the nature of ethnography to be holistic in nature, and this should also characterize the disciplinary orientation of its practitioners.

A well-known fable tells of three blind men describing an elephant: to one (feeling the tail) it is like a rope; to one (feeling the side) it is flat and leathery; and to one (feeling the trunk) it is like a long rubber hose. While each perception is accurate so far as it goes individually, they fail to provide an accurate picture of the total animal because there is no holistic perspective. Such an integrative approach seems essential if we are to fulfill Hymes’ call to develop an ethnographic model for the study of communication which will help us more fully to understand its role in human affairs.

2

Basic Terms, Concepts, and Issues

The principal concerns in the ethnography of communication, as these have been defined by Hymes and as they have emerged from the work of others, include the following topics: patterns and functions of communication, nature and definition of speech community, means of communicating, components of communicative competence, relationship of language to world view and social organization, and linguistic and social universals and inequalities.

Patterns of Communication

It has long been recognized that much of linguistic behavior is rule-governed, i.e. it follows regular patterns and constraints which can be formulated descriptively as ‘rules’. Thus, sounds must be produced in language-specific but regular sequences if they are to be interpreted as a speaker intends; the possible order and form of words in a sentence is constrained by the rules of grammar; and even the definition of a well-formed discourse is determined by culture-specific rules of rhetoric.

Sociolinguists such as Labov (1963; 1966), Bailey (1976), and Trudgill (1974) have demonstrated that what earlier linguists had considered irregularity or ‘free variation’ in linguistic behavior, can be found to show regular and predictable statistical patterns. The ethnography of communication is concerned with discovering regularities in language use, but while sociolinguists focus on variability in pronunciation and grammatical form, ethnographers are concerned with how communicative units are organized and how they
pattern in a much broader sense of 'ways of speaking', as well as with how these patterns interrelate in a systematic way with and derive meaning from other aspects of culture.

Some common patterns are so regular, so predictable, that a very low information load is carried even by a long utterance or interchange, though the social meaning involved can be significant. For instance, greetings in some languages (e.g., Korean) may carry crucial information identifying speaker relationships (or attitudes toward relationships). An unmarked greeting sequence such as 'Hello, how are you today? Fine, how are you?' has virtually no referential content. However, silence in response to another's greeting in this sequence would be marked communicative behavior, and would carry a very high information load for speakers of English.

Greetings in many languages are far more elaborate than in English (e.g., Arabic, Indonesian, Igbo), but even a lengthy sequence may convey very little information as long as it is unmarked. In all cases patterned variations can be related to aspects of the social structure or value and belief systems within the respective cultures.

The potential strength of a pattern may be illustrated by the opening sequence of a telephone conversation in English (Schegloff 1968). The ring of the telephone is a summons, and the person who answers must speak first even though the caller knows the receiver has been picked up. (Many people will not pick up the telephone in the middle of a ring because they feel it is an interruption of the summons.) Even an obscene telephone caller generally waits for the person who is answering to say something before the obscenities begin. If someone picks up the telephone and does not say anything, the caller cannot proceed. He or she can either say something like 'Hello, hello, anybody there?' as a second summons, or else hang up. The caller may dial back again to repeat the sequence, but not continue if there has not been an appropriate response.

The relationship of form and function is an example of communicative patterning along a different dimension. Asking someone in English if he or she has any cigarettes is readily recognized as a request rather than an information question, for instance, because it is part of the regular structural pattern for requesting things in English; the person who answers 'Yes, thanks', without offering one is joking, rude, or a member of a different speech community.

Patterning occurs at all levels of communication: societal, group, and individual (cf. Hymes 1961). At the societal level, communication usually patterns in terms of its functions, categories of talk, and attitudes and conceptions about language and speakers. Communication also patterns according to particular roles and groups within a society, such as sex, age, social status, and occupation: e.g., a teacher has different ways of speaking from a lawyer, a doctor, or an insurance salesman. Ways of speaking also pattern according to educational level, rural or urban residence, geographic region, and other features of social organization.

Finally, communication patterns at the individual level, at the level of expression and interpretation of personality. To the extent emotional factors such as nervousness have a physiological effect on the vocal mechanism, they are not considered part of 'communication', but there are many conventional symbols which are part of patterned communication. An example of conventional expression of individual emotion is the increased volume meaning 'anger' in English. A Navajo expressing anger uses enclitics not recognized as emotion markers by speakers of other languages, and a friendly greeting on the street between Chinese speakers may have surface manifestations corresponding to anger for speakers of English. Similarly, American Indian students often interpret Anglo teachers' 'normal' classroom projection level as anger and hostility, and teachers interpret students' softer level as shyness or unfriendliness. Perceptions of individuals as 'vuluble' or 'tacturn' are also in terms of cultural norms, and even expressions of pain and stress are culturally patterned: people in an English speech community learn withdrawal or anger, in Japanese nervous laughter or giggling, and in Navajo silence.

Although I have listed these levels of patterning separately, there is an invisible web of interrelationships among them,
and indeed among all patterns of culture. There may very well be general themes that are related to a world view present in several aspects of culture, including language. There are societies that are more direct than others, for instance, and this will be manifested in ways of speaking as well as in belief and value systems. The notion of a hierarchy of control seems to be pervasive in several cultures, and must first be understood in order to explain certain language constraints as well as religious beliefs and social organization (cf. Thompson 1978; Watkins 1979; Witherspoon 1977).

The concern for pattern has always been basic in anthropology (cf. Benedict 1934; Kroeber 1935; 1944), with interpretations of underlying meaning dependent on the discovery and description of normative structure or design. More recent emphasis on processes of interactions in generating behavioral patterns (cf. Barth 1966) extends this concern to explanation as well as description.

**COMMUNICATIVE FUNCTIONS**

At a societal level, language serves many functions. Chief among these, perhaps, is that of creating/reinforcing boundaries, unifying its speakers as members of a single speech community, and excluding outsiders from intragroup communication. Many languages are also made to serve a social identification function within a society by providing linguistic indicators which may be used to reinforce social stratification. Linguistic features are often employed by people, consciously or unconsciously, to identify themselves and others, and thus serve to mark and maintain various social categories and divisions.

At the level of individuals and groups interacting with one another, the functions of communication are directly related to the participants’ purposes and needs (Hymes 1961; 1972). These include such categories of functions as expressive (conveying feelings or emotions), directive (requesting or demanding), referential (true or false propositional content), poetic (aesthetic), phatic (empathy and solidarity), and metalinguistic (reference to language itself).

This list is similar to Searle’s (1977a) classes of illocutionary acts (representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, declarations), but there are differences in perspective and scope which separate the fields of ethnography of communication and speech act theory or pragmatics. Among these are the latters’ primary focus on form, with the speech act almost always coterminous with sentences in analysis; for ethnographers, the functional perspective has priority in description, and while function may coincide with a single grammatical sentence, it often does not, or a single sentence may serve several functions simultaneously. Further, while speech act theorists and pragmatists generally exclude the metaphorical and phatic uses of language from consideration, these constitute a major focus for ethnographic description. Phatic communication conveys a message, but has no referential meaning. The meaning is in the act of communication itself. Much of ritual interaction is included in this category, fully comprising most brief encounters, and at least opening and closing most longer ones (Goffman 1971). Not accounting for such functions of communication is ignoring much of language as it is actually used.

The distinction between intent and effect in function (Ervin-Tripp 1972) is comparable to the difference between illocutionary and perlocutionary acts in pragmatics (cf. Searle 1969; 1977b). The difference between the functional intent of the speaker and the actual effect on the hearer is part of the notion of functional relativity (Hymes 1972). Both are relevant to the description and analysis of a communicative event.

While many of the functions of language are universal, the ways in which communication operates in any one society to serve these functions is language specific. The same relative status of two speakers may be conveyed by their choice of pronominal forms in one language; in another, by the distance they stand apart or their body position while speaking; and between bilinguals, even by their choice of which language is used in addressing one another.

The functions of language provide the primary dimension for characterizing and organizing communicative processes and products in a society; without understanding why a
language is being used as it is, and the consequences of such use, it is impossible to understand its meaning in the context of social interaction.

To claim primacy of function over form in analysis is not to deny or neglect the formal structures of communication; rather it is to require integration of function and form in analysis and description. Sentences and even longer strings of discourse are not to be dealt with as autonomous units, but rather as they are situated in communicative settings and patterns, and as they function in society.

**SPEECH COMMUNITY**

Since the focus of the ethnography of communication is on the speech community, and on the way communication is patterned and organized within that unit, clearly its definition is of central importance. Many definitions have been proposed (cf. Hudson 1980:25-30), including such criteria as shared language use (Lyons 1970), frequency of interaction by a group of people (Bloomfield 1933; Hockett 1958; Gumperz 1962), shared rules of speaking and interpretation of speech performance (Hymes 1972), shared attitudes and values regarding language forms and use (Labov 1972), and shared sociocultural understandings and presuppositions with regard to speech (Sherzer 1975).

Linguists are generally in agreement that a speech community cannot be exactly equated with a group of people who speak the same language, for Spanish speakers in Texas and Argentina are members of different speech communities although they share a language code, and husbands and wives within some speech communities in the South Pacific use quite distinct languages in speaking to one another. Speakers of mutually unintelligible dialects of Chinese identify themselves as members of the same speech community (they do indeed share a written code, as well as many rules for appropriate use), while speakers of Spanish, Italian and Portuguese are not members of the same speech community although their languages are to some degree mutually intelligible. Questions arise in deciding if speakers of English from Britain and the United States (or Canada and Australia, or India and Nigeria) are members of the same speech community. How different must rules of speaking be to be significantly different? Are deaf signers and hearing interpreters members of the same speech community? Answers to such questions are based on history, politics, and group identification, rather than on purely linguistic factors. It is thus useful to distinguish between participating in a speech community and being a member of it; speaking the same language is sufficient (yet not necessary) for some degree of participation, but membership cannot be based on knowledge and skills alone.

All definitions of community used in the social sciences include the dimension of shared knowledge, possessions, or behaviors, derived from Latin *communitas* 'held in common', just as the sociolinguistic criteria for speech community enumerated above all include the word 'shared'. The key question is whether our focus in initially defining communities for study should be on shared language form and use, or on common geographical and political boundaries, culture traits, and perhaps even physical characteristics (e.g. a particular skin color may be considered a requirement for membership in some communities, a hearing impairment for others). Since patterns of language use and interpretation, rules of speaking, and attitudes concerning language are part of the product of ethnographic investigation, it is somewhat circular to use them as basic criteria for defining a group to study.

If circularity is to be minimized, ethnographers of communication should begin with an extra-linguistically defined social entity, and investigate its communicative repertoire in terms of the socially defined community: the nature and distribution of linguistic resources, how they are organized and structured, how they relate to the social organization, how they function as a patterned and integrated component of the community as a whole.

Part of the difficulty we have in defining speech community must be attributed to the differential scope which 'community' has according to different criteria:
1 It is any group within a society which has anything significant in common (including religion, ethnicity, race, age, deafness, sexual orientation, or occupation, but not eye color or height).

2 It is a physically bounded unit of people having a full range of role opportunities (a politically organized tribe or nation, but not a single-sex, single-age, or single-class unit like a monastery, home for the aged, or ghetto).

3 It is a collection of similarly situated entities that have something in common (such as the Western World, developing countries, European Common Market, or the United Nations).

Depending on the degree of abstraction desired, social units may be selected at different levels; virtually any community in a complex society might be considered part of another larger one, or subdivided into smaller groups. While one can focus on a single school, a neighborhood, a factory, or the gay ‘community’, an integrated ethnographic approach would require relating such subgroups to the social and cultural whole, with its full complement of roles. There is no expectation that a community will be linguistically homogeneous, but as a collectivity it will include a range of language varieties (and even different languages) that will pattern in relation to the salient social and cultural dimensions of communication, such as role and domain. From this perspective, patterns of language use do not define a community to be investigated, but their description is part of the outcome of an ethnographic study which focuses on a community selected according to non-linguistic criteria. Also a product of investigation is the determination of whether a community is a ‘speech community’ according to selected linguistic criteria. To the ones already mentioned, I would add that language must be found to play a significant role in identifying the boundary of a speech community, at least from the perspective of its own members.

At any level of speech community selected for study, the societal functions of language will include the boundary functions of separating, unifying, and stratifying. The inter-

Functional functions which are present will be dependent on the level of community studied, with a full complement of language functions and domains present only at the level defined as including a range of role opportunities. At this more inclusive level, a speech community need not share a single language, and indeed it will not where roles are differentially assigned to monolingual speakers of different languages in a single multilingual society (e.g. speakers of Spanish and Guaraní in Paraguay, discussed in Chapter 3).

An informal typology of speech communities as ‘soft-shelled’ versus ‘hard-shelled’ may be distinguished on the basis of the strength of the boundary that is maintained by language: the ‘hard-shelled’ community has of course the stronger boundary, allowing minimal interaction between members and those outside, and providing maximum maintenance of language and culture.

Speech communities which primarily use one of the world languages are more likely to be ‘soft-shelled’, because it will be known as a second language by many others, and interaction across the boundary will be relatively easy in both directions. A speech community speaking Japanese or other language with limited distribution would more likely be ‘hard-shelled’, because few outside the community learn to use it. Educated Japanese learn a world language for interaction across the boundary, but this is unidirectional, with outsiders still very restricted in their linguistic participation with Japan. The most extreme form of a ‘hard-shelled’ community would be one like Mongolia, where members speak a language outsiders do not know, yet few learn a world language for wider communication; another would be the Tewa-speaking San Juan pueblo in New Mexico, where outsiders are forbidden even to hear the language, and only a few insiders learn either English or Spanish.

Language often serves to maintain the separate identity of speech communities within larger communities, of which their speakers may also be members. Within the United States, for instance, Armenian continues to function in some areas as the language of home, religion, and social interaction among members of the group. Because the Armenians are bilingual
and also speak English, they participate fully in the larger speech community, but because outsiders seldom learn Armenian, the language is a barrier which keeps others from participating in their internal social and religious events. A similar situation exists in Syria, where Armenians bilingual in their native language and Arabic participate in two speech communities; these remain separate entities because of the one-way boundary function the Armenian language serves. In cases where individuals and groups belong to more than one speech community, it is useful to distinguish between primary and secondary membership.

Individuals, particularly in complex societies, may thus participate in a number of discrete or overlapping speech communities, just as they participate in a variety of social settings. Which one or ones a person orient to himself or herself to at any moment — which set of rules he or she uses — is part of the strategy of communication. To understand this phenomenon, it is necessary to recognize that each member of a community has a repertoire of social identities, and each identity in a given context is associated with a number of appropriate verbal and nonverbal forms of expression. It is therefore essential to identify the social categories recognized in a community in order to determine how these are reflected linguistically, and how they define and constrain interpersonal interaction in communicative situations.

Traditional anthropological and sociological definitions of a community frequently contain language-related criteria, so circularity frequently cannot by entirely avoided. Having a shared culture, having a native name with which members identify, having a social network for contact, and having common folklore or history are all largely dependent on having a common mode of communication.

COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

Hymes (1966a) observed that speakers who could produce any and all of the grammatical sentences of a language (per
The concept of communicative competence must be embedded in the notion of cultural competence, or the total set of knowledge and skills which speakers bring into a situation. This view is consonant with a semiotic approach which defines culture as meaning, and views all ethnographers (not just ethnographers of communication) as dealing with symbols (cf. Geertz 1973; Douglas 1970). The systems of culture are patterns of symbols, and language is only one of the symbolic systems in this network. Interpreting the meaning of linguistic behavior requires knowing the meaning in which it is embedded.

Ultimately all aspects of culture are relevant to communication, but those that have the most direct bearing on communicative forms and processes are the social structure, the values and attitudes held about language and ways of speaking, the network of conceptual categories which results from shared experiences, and the ways knowledge and skills (including language) are transmitted from one generation to the next, and to new members of the group.

Shared cultural knowledge is essential to explain the shared presuppositions and judgements of truth value which are the essential undergirdings of language structures, as well as of contextually appropriate usage and interpretation.

While referential meaning may be ascribed to many of the elements in the linguistic code in a static manner, situated meaning must be accounted for as an emergent and dynamic process. Interaction requires the perception, selection, and interpretation of salient features of the code used in actual communicative situations, integrating these with other cultural knowledge and skills, and implementing appropriate strategies for achieving communicative goals.

The phonology, grammar, and lexicon which are the target of traditional linguistic description constitute only a part of the elements in the code used for communication. Also included are the paralinguistic and nonverbal phenomena which have conventional meaning in each speech community, and knowledge of the full range of variants in all elements which are available for transmitting social, as well as referential, information. Ability to discriminate between those variants which serve as markers of social categories or carry other meaning and those which are insignificant, and knowledge of what the meaning of a variant is in a particular situation, are all components of communicative competence.

The verbal code may be transmitted on oral, written, or manual (signed) channels. The relative load carried on each channel depends on its functional distribution in a particular speech community, and thus they are of differential importance in the linguistic repertoire of any individual or society. Full participation in a deaf speech community requires ability to interpret language on the manual channel but not the oral, for instance; a speech community with a primarily oral tradition may not require interpretation of writing; and a speech community which relegates much information flow to the written channel will require literacy skills for full participation. Thus, the traditional linguistic description which focuses only on the oral channel will also be too narrow to account for communicative competence in most societies. Although it may cause some terminological confusion, references to ‘ways of speaking’ and ‘ethnography of speaking’ usually include a much broader range of communicative behavior than merely speech.

The usual descriptive focus on oral production has tended to characterize language as a unidirectional phenomenon. In considering the nature and scope of communicative competence, it is useful to distinguish between receptive and productive dimensions (Troike 1970); only shared receptive competence is necessary for successful communication. Knowledge of rules for appropriate communicative behavior entails understanding a wide range of language forms, for instance, but not necessarily the ability to produce them. Members of the same community may understand varieties of a language which differ according to the social class, region, sex, age, and occupation of the speaker, but only a few talented mimics will be able to speak them all. In multilingual speech communities, members often share receptive competence in more than one language but vary greatly in relative ability to speak one or the other.

The following outline summarizes the broad range of
shared knowledge that speakers must have in order to communicate appropriately. From the ethnographer’s perspective, this inventory also indicates the range of linguistic, interactional, and cultural phenomena which must ultimately be accounted for in an adequate description and explanation of communication (see also Duranti 1988, Gumperz 1984, Hymes 1987, and Saville-Troike 1989). These, then, are essentially the components of communication:

1 Linguistic knowledge
   (a) Verbal elements
   (b) Nonverbal elements
   (c) Patterns of elements in particular speech events
   (d) Range of possible variants (in all elements and their organization)
   (e) Meaning of variants in particular situations

2 Interaction skills
   (a) Perception of salient features in communicative situations
   (b) Selection and interpretation of forms appropriate to specific situations, roles, and relationships (rules for the use of speech)
   (c) Discourse organization and processes
   (d) Norms of interaction and interpretation
   (e) Strategies for achieving goals

3 Cultural knowledge
   (a) Social structure
   (b) Values and attitudes
   (c) Cognitive maps/schemata
   (d) Enculturation processes (transmission of knowledge and skills)

Since communicative competence refers to knowledge and skills for contextually appropriate use and interpretation of language in a community, it refers to the communicative knowledge and skills shared by the group, although these (like all aspects of culture) reside variably in its individual members. The shared yet individual nature of competence reflects the nature of language itself, as expressed by von Humboldt (1836):

While languages are in the ambiguous sense of the word ... creations of nations, they still remain personal and individual creations of individuals. This follows because they can be produced in each individual, yet only in such a manner that each individual assumes a priori the comprehension of all people and that all people, furthermore, satisfy such expectation.

Problems arise when individual competence is judged in relation to a presumed ideal speech community, or assessed with tests given in a limited subset of situations which do not represent the true range of an individual’s verbal ability (Hymes 1979). The problems are particularly serious ones when such invalid judgements result in some form of social discrimination against the individuals, such as unequal or inappropriate educational treatment. Awareness of the complex nature of communicative competence and the potential negative consequences of misjudgements is leading to major changes in procedures and instruments for language assessment, but no simple solutions are forthcoming (see Milroy 1987; Philips 1983a).

THE COMPETENCE OF INCOMPETENCE

Part of communicative competence is being able to sound appropriately ‘incompetent’ in the language when the situation dictates. This may be done to signal deference when interacting with someone of higher rank: e.g. in Burundi, lower ranking persons are expected to speak in a bumbling and hesitating manner to those of higher rank, but the same individuals speak fluently with peers or others of lower rank than they (Albert 1972). Similarly, members of a subordinate group in the community may adopt a ‘powerless speech style’ with members of the dominant group, including women with men, ethnic minorities with majorities, and children with adults (Giles, Scherer, and Taylor 1979). Conversely, in Wolof ‘for the highest of the nobles incorrectness in certain aspects of speech is considered appropriate, since high-
ranking persons are not supposed to be very skilled at speaking, at least in terms of superficial elaboration' (Irvine 1973:40-1).

On some occasions, proving ‘incompetence’ may have practical benefits. Actors or actresses may cultivate a ‘sexy’ foreign accent to increase box office receipts, and applicants to at least one federally funded training project for which limited English proficiency was an entry criterion were caught cheating downward on the language test used for admission.

In a religious context, such as ‘speaking in tongues’ among charismatic Christian groups, inarticulateness may be taken as evidence of divine inspiration, proof that the speaker is not in conscious control of what is being said (Douglas 1970:109-10), just as ‘I don’t know what to say’ may be interpreted as the most sincere expression of deep emotion to someone who is bereaved.

Speakers of a second language are often well advised not to try to sound too much like a native. A foreign accent will often allow as yet imperfectly learned rules of etiquette to be excused as such, while a speaker who has mastered the phonology of a language is assumed to have also mastered all other aspects of its use, and violations are more likely to be interpreted as rudeness. Additional consequences of perfecting pronunciation in a second language may be suspicion or resentment from native speakers if they do not welcome new members, or feelings from the primary speech community that one is disloyal to it.

UNITs OF ANALYSIS

In order to describe and analyze communication it is necessary to deal with discrete units of some kind, with communicative activities that have recognizable boundaries. The three units suggested by Hymes (1972) are situation, event, and act.

The communicative situation is the context within which communication occurs. Examples include a religious service, a court trial, a cocktail party, an auction, a train ride, or a class in school. The situation may remain the same even with a change of location, as in a train, plane, bus, or car, or it may change in the same location if very different activities go on there at different times. A busy street corner at noon would not provide the same communicative context as that corner at midnight, nor would the auction place if closed for business, nor the site of a cocktail party when functioning as a family dwelling. A single situation maintains a consistent general configuration of activities, the same overall ecology within which communication takes place, although there may be great diversity in the kinds of interaction which occur there.

The communicative event is the basic unit for descriptive purposes. A single event is defined by a unified set of components throughout, beginning with the same general purpose of communication, the same general topic, and involving the same participants, generally using the same language variety, maintaining the same tone or key and the same rules for interaction, in the same setting. An event terminates whenever there is a change in the major participants, their role-relationships, or the focus of attention. If there is no change in major participants and setting, the boundary between events is often marked by a period of silence and perhaps change of body position.

Discontinuous events are possible, if one is interrupted and then resumed without change in major components. A conversation between student and professor in an office may be interrupted by a telephone call, for instance. The professor then participates in a different event with the caller, leaving the student on hold. They may say ‘Now where were we?’ before resuming the first event, but participants can usually continue from the point of interruption. In this case the student has not been an active participant in the intervening event, generally looks elsewhere, and at least pretends not to listen. He or she has essentially left the situation, although physically still present.

Discovering what constitutes a communicative event and what classes of events are recognized within a speech community are part of doing ethnography of communication. The designation of some may be inferred from the fact they
are given different labels in the language, and may be identified as categories of talk, but some are not neatly differentiated.

The communicative act is generally coterminous with a single interactional function, such as a referential statement, a request, or a command, and may be either verbal or nonverbal. For example, not only may a request take several verbal forms (I'd like a cigarette and Do you have a cigarette? as well as May I please have a cigarette?), but it may be expressed by raised eyebrows and a 'questioning' look, or by a longing sigh. In the context of a communicative event, even silence may be an intentional and conventional communicative act, and used to question, promise, deny, warn, insult, request, or command (Saville-Troike 1985). The same observable behavior may or may not constitute a communicative act in different speech communities. A burp at the end of a meal is not a communicative act if it is merely a sign of indigestion, but it is a communicative act in societies where one burps to symbolize appreciation and thanks for the meal; the way stones, shells, or bones configure when thrown is considered communicative in many parts of the world, but they are not considered potential elements of communica in others.

The study of speech acts within linguistic theory is the basis for this level of analysis, but must be extended to account for a broader range of phenomena within the ethnography of communication, and to allow for possible differences with regard to what segments of language are considered basic functional units by members of different speech communities.

The following examples illustrate the three different units of analysis:

First, a religious service is a communicative situation which might include these discrete events:

1. Call to worship
2. Reading of scriptures
3. Prayer
4. Announcements
5. Sermon
6. Benediction

Even though a single set of participants is involved (perhaps even a single speaker), and the setting and general purpose remain the same, the change between events is clearly marked by different ways of speaking, different body position for both leader and congregation, and periods of silence or musical interludes. Within the event labelled 'prayer', the sequence of communicative acts predictably includes the summons, praise, supplication, thanks, and closing formula.

It is possible for an event to occur which is outside the general configuration of activities in a religious service, but this will create a discontinuous situation and often be difficult to interpret. The event labelled 'announcements' includes introduction of visitors in one Washington DC church, and on an occasion when two visitors from the city of Dallas, Texas, were introduced, the minister asked them 'Do you know J.R.?' A question about a character in the TV program Dallas was so removed from the immediate context, that when the visitors had recovered from their surprise and responded, the minister signalled the resumption of the event with 'Well, now back to church'.

An elementary school class is another communicative situation. Discrete events in such a situation might include:

1. Pledge to the flag
2. Roll call
3. Collection of milk or lunch money
4. Show and tell (or 'sharing time')
5. Motivational activity (often background discussion of the topic to be studied)
6. Presentation of new information
7. Question and answer period
8. Transition period (changing groups, subjects, or teachers)

Although setting and participants usually remain the same, each event involves different ways of speaking and different rules for interaction. In bilingual classes, a shift in languages is often involved at event boundaries.

The 'pledge to the flag' is a ritual oath of allegiance to the United States, which is often repeated on ceremonial occasions, and sometimes included in the opening activities
of each school day for students in kindergarten and elementary school. Students typically stand and place their right hands on their hearts, reciting the pledge in unison as a frozen routine.

‘Show and tell’ is a common performance event in classes for young children (the rules for appropriate speaking are discussed in Chapter 6). Hands must be raised to request permission to speak and strict turn-taking is observed, as it is for the question and answer period. This is not the case for collection of lunch money and transition periods, which are generally much more informal.

Acts within the event labelled ‘roll call’ are cyclic recitation of names by the teacher (functioning as requests for information about the presence or absence of each child) and responses by the students named. These responses may be verbal (often here or present), or may be in the form of a raised hand or bringing homework up to the teacher, depending on the specific classroom procedure that has been established.

‘Roll call’ is also a discrete event in other situations, including military and prison contexts, and in memorial services for the dead; each would be described and analyzed as a separate ‘situated event’ (Malinowski 1923), and then compared and contrasted for more general patterns. The common English label used for the events suggests that we consider them the same in some significant respects, but such classification of kinds of communicative events is culture-specific.

CATEGORIES OF TALK

As with the identification of communicative events, labels used by a speech community for categories of talk provide a useful clue to what categories it recognizes and considers salient. The elicitation of labels is one aspect of ethnosemantics (also called ethnoscience, ethnographic semantics, and new ethnography).

As a procedure to discover categories of talk, on various occasions when verbal interaction is observed, the ethno-
may reveal the way time is segmented and organized, beliefs about animacy and the relative power of beings, and salient social categories in the culture (cf. Hill 1988; Taylor 1987; Whorf 1940; Witherspoon 1977).

Hymes suggests a second type of linguistic relativity which sees in grammar evidence not only of static social categories, but also of speakers’ social assumptions about the dynamics of role-relationships, and about what rights and responsibilities are perceived in society. While the first type of linguistic relativity claims that cultural reality in part results from linguistic factors, Hymes contends:

people who enact different cultures do to some extent experience distinct communicative systems, not merely the same natural communicative condition with different customs affixed. Cultural values and benefits are in part constitutive of linguistic relativity. (1966b:116)

The interrelationship of patterns in various aspects of culture is pervasive enough in many cases for us to call them themes, or central organizing principles which control behavior. Opler (1941) exemplifies this concept with the Apache theme of male superiority, which is realized in patterns of communication as well as in religious and political domains. At tribal meetings, for instance, only a few older women may speak before all of the men have been heard, and it is very unusual for a woman to pray out loud in public. The Manus of New Guinea have been characterized in part as having an anti-sex theme in their culture: there are no purely social dances, no love songs, no romantic myths – and no word for ‘love’ in their language (Mead 1930).

Where directness or indirectness are cultural themes, they are always language-related. As defined in speech act theory, direct acts are those where surface form matches interactional function, as ‘Be quiet!’ used as a command, versus an indirect ‘It’s getting noisy in here’ or ‘I can’t hear myself think’, but other units of communication must also be considered.

Indirectness may be reflected in routines for offering and refusing or accepting gifts or food, for instance. A yes or no
intended to be taken literally is more direct than an initial no intended to mean ‘Ask me again’. Visitors from the Middle East and Asia have reported going hungry in England and the United States because of a misunderstanding of this message; when offered food, many have politely refused rather than accept directly, and it was not offered again. English speakers have the reverse problem in other countries when their literal no is not accepted as such, and they are forced to eat food they really do not want.

An indirect apology is illustrated by Mead (1930), who reports a situation where a Manus woman fled to her aunt’s home after being beaten by her husband. His relatives, coming to retrieve her, engaged her relatives for an hour of desultory chatter about such topics as market conditions and fishing before one made a metaphorical reference to men’s strength and women’s bones. Still without saying a word, the wife joined the husband’s relatives in their boat, and returned with them.

The use of metaphors and proverbs is a common communicative strategy for depersonalizing what is said and allowing more indirectness. Criticism is often couched in this form, as when chiefs of the San Blas Cuna Indian tribe of Panama express opinions in metaphoric songs (Sherzer 1974; 1983), or when an English speaker reproves another with ‘People who live in glass houses shouldn’t cast stones’.

Joking is also a common way of mitigating criticism that might not be acceptable if given directly. This has reached the level of art in Trinidad, where ritual verbal protests culminate in the song-form of the calypso. ‘It is a means of disclaiming responsibility for one’s words. It is only because the norms of the event are shared by members of the community – political leaders included – that many a calypsonian does not end up with a law suit filed against him’ (Sealey).

At the level of the grammatical code, using passive rather than active voice, or using impersonal pronouns, are yet other common means of indirectness, Talmy (1976) illustrates the difference this may make in directness with his example of a Yiddish story in which a boy invites a girl to the woods. In English, she would have to respond with embarrassingly direct pronouns, I can’t go with you. You’ll have to kiss me. In Yiddish this is avoided with a nonspecific pronoun, Me tor ništ geyn ahin. Me vet zix vein kušn. ‘One mustn’t go there. One will want to kiss another.’

While it may be easier to be indirect in some languages than others, communicative patterns are not necessarily tied directly to language forms. The native speaker of Arabic, Yiddish, Farsi, Indonesian, or Japanese often uses English more indirectly than does a native speaker of English, for instance. There is no intrinsic reason that the structures and vocabulary for one language cannot be used in many domains of communication within other speech communities to express the cultures of those communities, and in ways in keeping with their rules of appropriate behavior. As it is developed and used creatively as an auxiliary language in Nigeria, India, and elsewhere in the world, English becomes ‘Englishes’ (Kachru 1980; 1986) in the enactment of different cultural values and beliefs.

Although language is unquestionably an integral part of culture, to assume specific cultural experiences and rules of behavior as invariable correlates of specific linguistic skills is a naive oversimplification of the relationship of language and culture. The issue of their relationship is one which pervades the whole of the ethnography of communication.

COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The role of language is not the same in all societies, but it often includes the identification or marking of social categories, the maintenance and manipulation of individual social relationships and networks, and various means of effecting social control.

The relationship is not a static one, but varying and constitutive in nature. Social categories are primarily part of the social system, but also become embedded in the language system as it is used to mark them; the use and valuation of the linguistic markers in turn may affect the nature and persistence of the categories themselves.
Societies vary in the extent to which communicative behavior is bound up with the definition of social roles. In some, such as that of the Cuna Indians of San Blas, Panama, speaking ability is an integral and necessary part of role achievement and validation (Sherzer 1974; 1983). In others, communicative ability may have little or no significance in terms of roles, although certain social categories (such as age and sex) may be marked by characteristic communicative behavior. Also, societies may recognize distinctive role types, such as Abrahams' (1983) 'man of words' in Black culture, which are defined primarily in terms of communicative behavior.

There are many in US society who feel that language markers help perpetuate inequalities in the social system, and that language can be changed to eliminate the inequality. It is felt, for instance, that using generic terms like policeman rather than law enforcement officer, or calling all doctors he and all nurses she perpetuates occupational inequality between men and women by influencing thought and perception. Some feel that the way to break down social categories is to break down the language distinctions that mark them; others feel that the symbols would only be replaced by new ones unless the underlying social structure is itself changed in some more basic way. Still others believe that changing labels may have little effect on present beliefs and values, but will prevent their being transmitted as readily to the next generation.

Similarly, there is widespread belief in both the United States and England that speaking nonstandard English is a causal factor in the low economic status of large segments of minority group populations, and that learning 'good' English will automatically erase class boundaries and prejudice. This view is epitomized in Shaw's Pygmalion, where Henry Higgins succeeds in changing Eliza Doolittle's social class status by changing her speech patterns.

Major changes in categories in the social structure, as in social revolutions, usually entail change in communicative patterns as well. Movement to the political left may be accompanied by changing terms of address or titles and pronominal forms to symbolize class leveling (cf. Brown and Gilman 1960; Fang and Heng 1983; Paulston 1976). Since the communist revolution in Cuba, a rural, once nonstandard variety of Spanish has become prestigious, and the variety once considered an educated standard has been disparaged and devalued, although to be sure, differential pronominal distinctions are creeping back into Hungarian, and the Indonesian language, originally adopted as more democratic than Javanese, has developed the capacity to make most of the same social distinctions.

Change in language use caused by changing ideologies is illustrated by the decline in Cuba of such exclamatory terms as Jesús and Dios mio, which are now used almost exclusively by the younger generation. This change is attributed to the influence of Marxist attitudes towards religion. Another illustration of this relationship is the ban on the Bavarian greeting Gruss Gott during Hitler's reign in Germany.

The effect of social change on language use is clearly evident when we contrast a sociolinguistic domain such as address terminology among Mandarin Chinese speakers in Mainland China and in Taiwan. On the basis of interviews with students in the US from both locations, Jin (1987) found two significant differences in current patterns of address. During the Cultural Revolution in Mainland China (1966–78), the use of tongzhi 'comrade' largely replaced professional titles. The usage has diminished with subsequent social change, however, and tongzhi is now used only with (1) strangers, (2) those whose occupations are unknown, and (3) those whose occupations carry no title and with whom the speaker is not familiar. It is also noteworthy that while the introduction of tongzhi served to neutralize male–female distinctions (in accordance with political ideology), the gender distinction has been reintroduced with the invention of nu tongzhi 'female comrade' and nan tongzhi 'male comrade'. More recent change is in the use of shifu 'master' as a general title in Mainland China, contrasted with a narrower use of the term in Taiwan to refer to individuals who actually teach skills (such as a locksmith or a Kungfu instructor). Shifu is apparently beginning to replace tongzhi when addressing members of the working class in Mainland China, in order to signal their higher position.
The differences found in norms of address terms between Mainland China and Taiwan thus reflect differing social organization and political values, while the far more extensive similarities suggest there is still more shared culture. The changes within Mainland China in recent years are evidence of the responsiveness of language use to the dynamics of social development, even within a relatively short time span.

The wider acceptance in US society of male–female cohabitation without marriage, and increased recognition of the validity of homosexual relationships, has been accompanied by pressure for change in the English language. A major etiquette problem of our day, judging from letters for advice submitted to such newspaper columnists as Ann Landers and Miss Manners (Washington Post), may well be what term of reference to use for the person with whom someone lives, but is not married to. Mistress is considered condescending, boy friend or girl friend childish, partner too businesslike, and roommate confusing. Consort makes Miss Manners ‘think of Prince Philip walking three paces behind’, and cohabitant of someone ‘who will only cook on copper pots’, and so the problem continues. The response that it should not be necessary for people to declare their sexual affiliation is sociolinguistically naive; if the relationship does not have a label, others cannot be sure of how to interact appropriately.

The White House Conference on Families in 1980 began with arguments over the definition of family, which were never resolved. Much of the controversy focuses on whether or not the term refers to homosexual as well as heterosexual relationships, an issue of profound social and legal consequence. One case which went to the US federal appeals court charged discrimination against a male alien because his ‘marriage’ to a male citizen was rejected for giving him immigrant status. Some social changes have been made by changing terminology, and with beneficial effect, as when the American Psychiatric Association officially did away with all neurosis by voting the word meaningless.

The maintenance and manipulation of social relationships are importantly served by greeting events in many communities, which for first encounters may include questions about family, income, occupation, place of origin, or where one went to school. This is usually interpreted as ‘friendly’ behavior, but it also provides information for assignment of the new acquaintance to a social category. What is considered ‘appropriate’ interactional behavior is largely determined by such categorization.

The first questions traditional Navajo speakers ask another on meeting are usually ‘What clan are you born of?’ and ‘What clan are you born for?’ in order to place that person in the network of existing relationships, and to know how to behave appropriately, including how to speak and what terms of address to use. When Navajo language instruction was first implemented in bilingual kindergarten and first grade classes by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, a number of parents were interviewed to find out what they considered most important for their children to learn about the Navajo language that they might not already know. Without exception, every parent responded that most important would be how to ask and respond to questions about clan membership, since many children would encounter people from outside the family unit for the first time on school entry, and there could be serious social and religious consequences if they did not know how to behave appropriately.

Language most obviously serves a role in social control by providing a medium for telling people directly what to do, but it also allows for such indirect control forms as threats, curses, teasing, and gossip. One of the strongest control forms in many societies is silence, or ‘shunning’, which is also part of the communicative system.

Stories told to children are often intended to control their behavior: Aesop's fables in Western tradition, Anancie tales of Africa, Monkey tales of Japan, Coyote stories of North American Indians, and Uncle Remus stories of New World Blacks all serve this function, as the Trickster's antisocial behavior focuses attention on the social norms, and allows for the verbalization of morals and collective group wisdom.

Rights and responsibilities involved in such systems as law, medicine, and religion cannot be fulfilled without language. Its importance is perhaps most clearly seen in situations
situation, the propositional content, the logic, is essentially removed. What is said is accepted because it is the right thing to say, and not because it is true or false. Bloch and others claim that in societies where there is more emphasis on ritual events, there is less freedom and more direct control than in societies where there is less emphasis on ritual. The control may be in both directions, controlling those in authority as well as those being governed: i.e. the speaker also gives up some freedom in ritual, even if he has power.

Ritual events are much more likely to be important to closed social groups than to those that are open. In making this point, Douglas (1970) contrasts the lack of ritual among the mobile Ituri pygmies of Africa (cf. Turnbull 1961) and the Basseri nomads of Persia (cf. Barth 1964b) with the pervasive ritual activity among the Navajo, which demands exact ordering in fixed ceremonial events (cf. Aberle 1966).

Both Bloch and Douglas relate the formal-informal communicative situations to the ritual and anti-ritual in types of religion, and to Bernstein's (1971) distinction between positional and personal family structures and their relation to strong boundary maintenance and weak boundary maintenance in education. According to them, Bernstein's restricted code is appropriate in a ritualized situation where the context is highly coded, roles are rigidly delineated, meanings are local and particular, and there is a small range of alternative forms. An elaborated code is appropriate in a less structured context where meanings must be made more explicit, and speakers have a wide range of choice. The restricted code serves the social function of control as well as communication, and creates solidarity.Bloch and Douglas interpret Bernstein's general distinction as essentially one of context, with the structural characteristics of the two types of code in any one speech community a matter for investigation: 'the distinction between restricted and elaborated codes must be relative within a given culture or within the speech forms of a given group' (Douglas 1970:77).

The relationship of social structure and communication patterns suggests dimensions for a typology of speech communities which might allow the analysis and display of
patterns at a more abstract level, and thus contribute to general theory of communication. I earlier suggested a ‘hard-shelled’ versus ‘soft-shelled’ dimension with reference to the degree of permeability in the boundary of a speech community; Douglas’s closed versus open social group distinction refers to degree of group cohesiveness, and Bloch’s formal versus informal dimension to degree of individual freedom. All of these are related, and relate in turn to the distinction Bloomfield (1927) makes in the types of interaction which take place in primitive groups and literate societies because of different levels of shared experience. Since there are groups which are both ‘primitive’ and open (such as the pygmies of Ituri), and literate and closed (such as the Japanese), to claim communicative patterns and social structure are invariable coordinates would again be an oversimplification of the relation of language and culture.

ROUTINES AND RITUALS

Linguists are very interested in man’s ability to be creative with language as part of defining competence, but also in how, when, and why man chooses not to be creative, to repeat what has been heard and said many times before, often in exactly the same form. The relation of ritual to social control has already been discussed, but the general nature of routines and rituals requires further consideration.

Linguistic routines are fixed utterances or sequences of utterances which must be considered as single units, because meaning cannot be derived from consideration of any segment apart from the whole. The routine itself fulfills the communicative function, and in this respect is performative in nature. Such communication essentially defines the situation.

Routines must be learned, as well as analyzed, as single units, although they may vary in length from single syllables (Hi) to phrases (How do you do, April fool, and Have a nice day) to a sequence of sentences (the well-rehearsed pitch of a doorto-door salesman). They may be uttered by an individual, or require cooperation between two or more persons, as in a greeting sequence or minister/congregation alternation in the reading of scriptures.

Non-native speakers of English often complain that native speakers do not really care about the state of their health when they ask How are you? The non-natives are not recognizing that this question is part of a greeting routine, which by nature has no meaning apart from its phatic function in communication. If English speakers really want to know how someone is feeling, they repeat the question after the routine is completed, or they mark the question with contrastive intonation to indicate it is for information, and not part of the routine.

Understanding routines requires shared cultural knowledge because they are generally metaphoric in nature, and must be interpreted at a non-literal level. They include greetings, leave takings, curses, jokes, condolences, prayers, complements, and other formulaic language. Sneezes, hiccoughs, or other involuntary noises may require routines to repair the situation, as may simultaneous talking or spontaneous silence in a group. In Japan or Korea, a sneeze means someone is talking about you, and many English speakers say Bless you to a sneezer because of traditional beliefs that it is the soul or spirit escaping, or a sign of illness. Someone who hiccoughs in Germany makes a wish, and in Puerto Rico, a common response is ‘Did you steal something?’

Speech communities place differential value on knowledge of routines versus creativity on the part of individual speakers, with oral versus literate traditions a significant factor (cf. Tannen 1979a), along with degree of formalization and ritualization of other aspects of culture. English speakers are often quite opposed to routines and rituals at a conscious level, because they are ‘meaningless’ and depersonalize the ideas expressed. One occasion where a prescribed routine is considered too impersonal is the bereavement of a friend; condolence therefore often takes a form of I don’t know what to say, which has itself become a routine. This contrasts sharply with other speech communities where fixed condoling routines are considered an essential component of funerary ritual.
Ritual is made up of routines, but these are given far greater cultural significance for being part of a ritual context, rather than everyday encounters. Its context-bound nature was noted by Malinowski (1935), who found in studying ritual that the meaning of symbols could not be interpreted in isolation, but only in the context of the meaning of the ritual situation. This observation creates serious problems for any discipline of autonomous semantics, which requires individual units of meaning to carry a semantic load in themselves. On the other hand, because the total meaning is already known to the group from the context, we can explain why it is the case that even though 'the receiver of a ritual message is picking up information through a variety of different sensory channels simultaneously (and these over a period of time), all these different sensations add up to just one "message"' (Leach 1976:41).

Magical incantations provide one example of ritual: the language is fixed, and the linguistic formulae themselves are expected to exert some control over the supernatural. Parts of a spell have no meaning uttered by themselves; the whole must always be recited in full to have effect. Paralinguistic features of production are clearly differentiated from 'normal' language, with spells often recited in a sing-song manner, and with distinctive rhythm and pitch.

Comparable to the sing-song of magical incantation, intoned speech (or 'wailing') is common for expressing grief, and both intoned speech and chanting are often used in religious rituals. These varieties of language are on a speech-song continuum, with the song end of the continuum used in more formal contexts (Bloch 1974).

As routines often mark the boundaries of speech events by opening and closing them, rituals serve as boundary markers for major changes in social status: puberty rites, weddings, funerals, and graduation ceremonies. Perhaps the most important characteristic of routines and rituals is that truth value is largely irrelevant. Their meaning is dependent on shared beliefs and values of the speech community coded into communicative patterns, and they cannot be interpreted apart from social and cultural context.

It is precisely because the ritual use of language encodes cultural beliefs and reflects community social organization that it has been of primary interest to ethnographers, but this has led to the criticism that the field has focused on the ceremonial or 'special' uses of language to the neglect of more everyday communication.

Bloch (1976) asserts that nonritual communication has much more in common cross-culturally, while ritual communication reflects 'strange other ways of thinking', which may explain why such researchers as Levi-Strauss, Geertz, and Douglas stress differences in systems of classification which link systems of cognition to social structure, while such researchers as Berlin and Kay find universal criteria for classification. The former concentrate almost exclusively on ritual communication, the latter on nonritual. 'Only concentrating on the picture of the world apparent in ritual communication obscures the fact of the universal nature of a part of the cognitive system available in all cultures' (Bloch 1976:285).

The nature of language cannot be described or explained without both perspectives. Hymes considers the type of explanatory adequacy proposed by Chomsky and that of a socially constituted linguistics to have complementary goals:

Chomsky's type of explanatory adequacy leads away from speech, and from languages, to relationships possibly universal to all languages, and possibly inherent in human nature. The complementary type of explanatory adequacy leads from what is common to all human beings and all languages toward what particular communities and persons have made of their means of speech. (1974:203)

To be sure, the ethnographer is concerned with such constructs as a universal framework of conversational maxims (cf. Grice 1975), but as working hypotheses against which conversational patterns in different speech communities may
be tested and compared rather than as facts. Keenan (1976) has reported that speakers of Malagasy regularly violate the maxim to ‘be informative’, for instance, as do Kaingang speakers in Brazil (Kindell), and undoubtedly speakers of many other languages. In fact, in many communities (including the most technologically advanced societies) ‘... it may be one’s obligation to lie, successfully, or avoid giving pertinent information’ (Hymes 1987:222). The degree to which Grice’s maxims hold in a particular community, and in relation to what particular sociocultural conditions, is important for the ultimate understanding of all human communication as well as for descriptions of conversational patterns in particular communities.

Similarly, while there is a finite generic set of functions which language may serve in a society, and it is indeed universal that language serves a plurality of functions in each community, it is fundamental to the ethnography of communication that research begin from the perspective that functions are problematic rather than given. Hymes contends that the role of language may differ from community to community; that in general the functions of language in society are a problem for investigation, not postulation. If this is so, then the cognitive significance of a language depends not only on structure, but also on patterns of use. (1967:116)

It is quite probable that some aspects of language function will prove to be universal, although perhaps in a hierarchy of importance which is relative to particular communities, but this remains a topic for empirical investigation. Clearly in multilingual societies, different languages often serve differential functions, and a single a priori assumption regarding language might obscure enlightening sociolinguistic data.

A related issue which this raises is that of the inequality of languages: not all languages are equally capable of serving the same functions in a society. This assertion violates most pronouncements of linguists made during the last half century that all languages are adequate as communicative systems for members of a social group, but it will be accepted by most administrators concerned with education and economics in developing countries. While all languages are inherently capable of expressing all concepts and fulfilling all functions, they have evolved differently through processes of variation, adaptation, and selection. The fact that each language may retain the potential to serve all functions does not alter this conclusion.

The official preference is to stress the potentiality of a language and to ignore the circumstances and consequences of its limitations. Yet every language is an instrument shaped by its history and patterns of use, such that for a given speaker and setting it can do some things well, some clumsily, and others not intelligibly at all. The cost, as between expressing things easily and concisely, and expressing them with difficulty and at great length, is a real cost, commonly operating, and a constraint on the theoretical potentiality of language in daily life. (Hymes 1973:73)

It therefore remains central to our concerns to describe what a community has made of its language, and why, and how – not only as part of our scientific inquiry, but because one of the responsibilities and motivations of a socially constituted study of language is the welfare of its human speakers. Ethnographers, who by the nature of their perspective reach beyond the ‘facts’ of observable behavior to interpret meaning/culture, have an ethical responsibility to the ‘subjects’ of investigation.

The question of inequality is also raised with respect to the degree to which individual speakers are competent in the language(s) of their group. The concept of possible ‘semitranslation’ (cf. Cummins 1979) in some language contact situations is rejected by many on philosophical grounds, yet it may be one of the social problems to which findings from ethnography of communication may be applied. Bloomfield in a study of the North American Menomini noted:
White-Thunder, a man around forty, speaks less English than Menomini, and that is a strong indictment, for his Menomini is atrocious. His vocabulary is small; his inflections are often barbarous; he constructs sentences of a few threadbare models. He may be said to speak no language tolerably. His case is not unknown among younger men, even when they speak but little English. (1927:437)

We are thus concerned with the obsolescence and loss of ways of speaking as well as with their development and maintenance. Of central interest will be the community’s attitudes towards these phenomena, and ultimately the potential applications of our findings in furtherance of its goals.

Within each community there is a variety of language codes and ways of speaking available to its members, which is its communicative repertoire. This includes ‘all varieties, dialects or styles used in a particular socially-defined population, and the constraints which govern the choice among them’ (Gumperz 1977). Any one speaker also has a variety of codes and styles from which to choose, but it is very unlikely any individual is able to produce the full range; different subgroups of the community may understand and use different subsets of its available codes.

The means of communication used in a community thus include different languages, different regional and social dialects of one or more of the languages, different registers (generally varying on a formal-informal dimension which cross-cuts dialect dimensions), and different channels of communication (e.g. oral, written, manual). The nature and extent of this diversity is related to the social organization of the group, which is likely to include differences in age, sex, and social status, as well as differences in the relationship between speakers, their goals of interaction, and the settings in which communication takes place. The communicative repertoire may also include different occupational codes, specialized religious language, secret codes of various kinds, imitative speech, whistle or drum language, and varieties used for talking to foreigners, young children, and pets.

Identification of the varieties which occur in any community requires observation and description of actual differences in pronunciation, grammar, lexicon, styles of speaking, and other communicative behaviors which are potentially available
their paradigm to that date.)

A final caveat is in order in this discussion of methodology. Even as we attempt to be faithful to the realities of behavior as it is enacted, we must not ignore the broader context within which the actions we observe are situated. We must constantly seek for both the antecedents and the contingencies which give meaning to the scenes we witness. At the same time, we must continually test our perceptions and understandings against those of the participants, if our 'objective' account of their communicative competence is to adequately reflect the experienced reality of their own subjective world.

Attitudes toward Communicative Performance

Attitudes toward language and its use have been of major interest to researchers in recent years, and have been elicited and analyzed from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. Of particular relevance for ethnographers are questions of how culture-specific criteria for 'speaking well' function in the definition of marking of social roles, how attitudes toward different languages and varieties of language reflect perceptions of people in different social categories, and how such perceptions influence interaction within and across the boundaries of a speech community. In addition to their value in adding to our understanding of functions and patterns of language use, answers to such questions are relevant to the explanation of language maintenance and shift, and to applied concerns in the fields of cross-cultural communication, language planning, and education. Some of these issues have been briefly addressed in the discussion of language varieties, but all warrant further attention.

Language attitude studies may be characterized as: (1) those which explore general attitudes toward language and language skills (e.g. which languages or varieties are better than others, to what extent literacy is valued, etc.); (2) those which explore stereotyped impressions toward language, their speakers, and their functions; and (3) those which focus on applied concerns (e.g. language choice and usage, and language learning). Underlying each are questions of the nature of language attitudes, their causes, and their effects.

One reason language attitudes are of particular interest to ethnographers is that individuals can seldom choose what attitudes to have toward a language or variety. Attitudes are
acquired as a factor of group membership, as part of the process of enculturation in a particular speech community, and thus basic to its characterization.

It is because attitudes toward communicative performance are generally culturally determined that they are so strongly influenced by the social structure of the community in question. This may be considered a Whorfian notion in its mirror image, as has been articulated by Hymes (1966b). While Whorf said that the structure of language may influence social structure, interaction, and thinking, Hymes suggests that the social structure may influence our attitudes toward particular kinds of language. In other words, the social differences are there to begin with, and we can then use concomitant linguistic differences to symbolize them. At that point, we may use language to discriminate and to control, because we may use it to categorize people, to put or keep them in their place.

METHODOLOGY

It is perhaps appropriate that in this area of communication research there is the greatest division in professional attitudes toward methodology. Qualitative research is considered unreliable by many, on the one hand, because of limited samples, possible subjective biases, and lack of explanatory power. The validity of experimental research is questioned from an ethnographic perspective, on the other hand, because of the unnaturalness of the situation and means by which data are elicited, and equally possible subjective biases, both in research design and interpretation of findings.

A large number of quantitative studies which relate attitudinal-motivational factors to various kinds of academic achievement have been conducted, including many of second-language proficiency. There are also a large number of studies on stereotypic attitudes which are held by one language group toward speakers of other languages or other language varieties. One common elicitation technique used is the 'matched-guise' procedure, in which subjects listen to recorded samples of speech which are purported to be from different speakers. To determine attitudes toward speakers of different languages, bilingual speakers have actually been used, speaking once in one language and once in the other (e.g. Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner and Fillenbaum 1960). Subjects rate each speaker on a series of attitudes, and an analysis is made of differential ratings of the same speaker when using different languages. These attributes often include judgements on intelligence, personality, and suitability for particular occupations. One of the most interesting findings has been the readiness of so many subjects to judge others on the basis of only limited speech samples.

A word of caution must be added about the use of quantitative measures with people from different cultural backgrounds, as it was earlier for the study of variable social markers. While they may be quite reliable, the validity of such studies can be established in these situations only through qualitative research. Judging occupational suitability, for instance, presumes a hierarchy in terms of prestige, and what this is must be determined anew for each culture being investigated. One widely accepted study of the relationship of attitudes to academic achievement among American Indians concludes Indian students have the lowest self-concept of all minority groups tested, but deduces this largely from students’ feelings that they have little or no control over their environment. Most American Indian groups do not believe that actively controlling natural forces is desirable, or even reasonable, so the conclusion that they have a low self-concept based on an ethnocentric interpretation of the data, is accordingly invalid.

Macaulay (1975) raises similar questions regarding the validity of many attitude studies, including Labov’s (1966) tests of ‘linguistic insecurity’ in New York City, d’Anglejan and Tucker’s (1973) forced choice responses in Montreal, and Macaulay and Trevelyan’s (1973) use of interviews in Glasgow.

Probably the weakness in all three approaches lies in the attempt to investigate such a complex question as linguistic attitudes from the outside on the basis of a
single hit-or-miss trial. What is missing in all three studies discussed above is corroboration from members of the speech community that the investigators’ conclusions are consistent with perceptions of the situation within the community itself. (Macaulay 1975:160)

On the other hand, the use of quantitative measures may allow the discovery of patterning in situations which might otherwise merely be seen as random variation. Especially in attitude research, an integration of both qualitative and quantitative procedures is clearly desirable.

ATTITUDES TOWARD LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGE SKILLS

Attitudes toward language in general, its nature, and its functions, may be captured by some of the expressions a speech community has that include reference to language. In many languages, for instance, the ‘heart’ of language is perceived to be the tongue. English speakers say She has a sharp tongue, He has a loose tongue, He speaks with two tongues (or) with a forked tongue, and She spoke tongue in cheek. Other parts of the anatomy less often relate to language, but we also use such expressions as Button your lip and He put his foot in his mouth. The person who has a sharp tongue in English has a ‘hot tongue’ in Dari, and a ‘pointed tongue’ in Pashto, but ‘hairst on his teeth’ in German.

There are abundant examples of proverbs from different speech communities which attest to the value of silence. For example: Silence is golden (English), If you talk you’ll get a small sum of money; if you remain silent, a lot of gold (Thai), Because of the mouth the fish dies (Spanish), The way your eyes look can say more than your mouth (Japanese), and Man becomes wise through the ear (Farsi). A counter-sentiment is expressed in the Serbo-Croatian proverb (Who) asks does not wander and the English The squeaky wheel gets the grease.

How language is used in various communities to categorize people according to the way they speak is also relevant, as are perceptions of how these categories should be ranked in value. Speakers of English may be labeled braggart, gossip, big-mouth, liar, eloquent, pedantic, loquacious, quiet, or tactful. According to Albert (1972), male speakers of Rundi would value being eloquent and loquacious most highly, tactful least; being a gossip or braggart would be more highly valued in that speech community than being discrete or quiet. Speakers of Navajo would conversely value quiet and tactful, and strongly disvalue a braggart. In contrast, in the Old English poem Beowulf, the hero is approvingly described as ‘eager for praise’.

Within a single speech community attitudes may vary concerning what constitutes ‘speaking well’ for males versus females, or for members of different social classes. While eloquent and loquacious are valued categories for Burundian males, for instance, females are trained for evasiveness, careful listening, and ‘artful silence’ (Albert 1972). Conversely, Americans traditionally value a male who is the ‘strong and silent’ type, while a female exhibiting the same communicative behaviors is likely to be negatively valued as shy, aloof, or unfriendly.

Attitudes about the nature of language and its functions may be inferred from derogatory comments which are made about it, or restrictions placed on its use. The role of language as an agent for socialization was clearly recognized in the 1880s by the US Commissioner of Indian Affairs, as can be judged from his statement on language and educational policy:

The first step to be taken toward civilization, toward teaching the Indian the mischief and folly of continuing in their barbarous practices, is to teach him the English language . . . we must remove the stumbling-blocks of hereditary customs and manners, and of those language is one of the most important. (Atkins 1887)

The potentially sacred nature and functions of language are illustrated in a religious edict issued in Saudi Arabia early in 1986. This edict made it an offense to discard Arabic language
newspapers in trashcans, since they usually contain Mohammed’s sayings and verses of the Koran (World Press Review, February 1987:47).

Derogatory comments about language change, or what Roger Shuy calls ‘the-world-is-going-to-hell-in-a-basket-and-language-is-leading-the-way syndrome’, may also be enlightening, in that complaints about what is changing usually reveal attitudes about what has been valued as it was. In the United States these are abundant in magazine and newspaper articles, letters to the press, and reports on the state of language and education. Comparable attitudes are also expressed elsewhere in the world. In Japan, for example, educated adults express concern about young people’s declining language skills, especially writing, blaming such media as TV, radios, and comic magazines for tempting them not to read the ‘good’ material which would transmit such ability.

The expression of concern about writing in particular in this example also indicates more value being placed on written versus oral language skills. While widespread, this attitude is far from universal. Oratory is highly cultivated as an art form in many speech communities, and concepts of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ speech are not dependent on standardization of a language or a tradition of literacy (Bloomfield 1927), although primary valuation of oracy may accompany literacy, as shown in the following example:

[In the Foreword to Mein Kampf], Hitler is most apologetic about giving his Nazi elite a written manual. He tells us that he knows that men are moved by the spoken, not the written, word and that every great movement owed its growth to great orators, not to great writers. (Duncan 1962:236)

An inverted recognition of the social importance of literacy, on the other hand, may be inferred in situations where there has been denial of literacy to certain portions of the population. This practice was justified during the slavery period in the US by the claim that literacy made slaves more likely to revolt, and rendered them ‘unfit for their place in society’ (Bullock 1970:75).

Technological changes may result in changed attitudes toward speaking styles, as was illustrated during the 1980 US presidential campaign. The television camera has shifted the valued political style from traditional ringing oration at a distance to the illusion of intimate encounter. John F. Kennedy’s early campaign style was perceived as ‘bombastic’ by many TV viewers, and Ronald Reagan’s as ‘warm’ and ‘sincere’ Reagan’s speech accepting the Republican nomination was very obviously and effectively directed to the camera and to the millions of people in the unseen audience rather than to the thousands actually present in the convention hall, a strategy which probably contributed to his eventual election.

The most highly regarded language skill in other societies may be knowing how to use speech levels well, or the ability to use similies, metaphors, proverbs, and rhymes in appropriate contexts; the same skills are suppressed when members of such societies are studying in English-medium universities, where ‘directness’ is the valued style and ‘cliches’ are penalized.

Other general areas where there may be culturally based differences in general attitudes toward language include the possible after-effects of speaking, and the degree to which one person may speak for another or for the group. Such information is important for the elicitation and interpretation of all data collected from members of a particular speech community.

ATTITUDES TOWARD LANGUAGES AND VARIETIES

The range of dimensions along which linguistic codes may be judged is captured by Kachru (1982) in his listing of the dichotomous attitude marking terms which are used to describe them. These include aesthetic/unaesthetic, correct/incorrect, cultivated/uncultivated, developed/undeveloped, educated/uncinated, effective/ineffective, proper/improper,
religious/non-religious, and vigorous/non-vigorous. These dimensions refer to both formal and functional aspects of codes, and judgements apply to both multiple languages and varieties of a single language.

One interesting source of attitudinal data is the labels referring to language which may be used to characterize particular groups, whether selves or others, exemplifying the inclusive and exclusive functions of language diversity. Self-reference terms of American Indian tribes are usually equivalent to ‘the people’, and reference to other groups ‘the strangers’ or ‘the enemies’, but identification may make reference to language: e.g. the name of the Popoloca tribe of Oaxaca means in Nahuatl (Aztec) ‘the people who babble’. Identification may also be in terms of ways of speaking: e.g. Hopkins (1977) reports that any speaker of Tzeltal or Tzotzil refers to the speech of any other Tzeltal or Tzotzil as ba’el k’op ‘true (proper) speech’, and among Bambara speakers in Mali, the prestigious Segu-Kaw group refers to the Beledugu-Kaw as nya-ni-nyele, a phrase which includes common female names. The implication is that they look down on the Beledugu-Kaw as being women; talking ‘like women’, whether male or female, is disvalued (Ly). Chinese speakers in Beijing give nicknames to people from other regions in accordance with how they are perceived to speak. People from Taijin are called mie zui zi ‘Tianjin mouth’ because the dialect sounds ‘talkative’; people from Shanxi shanxi loa xir ‘old west people’ because the dialect sounds rough, like the land in the west; and people from Henan henan kua zi ‘Henan bumpkins’ because the dialect sounds like ‘country folks’.

Another potentially useful source of attitudinal data is the use of language features in joking (mentioned in the earlier discussion of ethnic varieties), which typically highlights stigmatized forms. This source is particularly fruitful in languages like Farsi, where use of dialect features when joking about a subgroup is considered virtually mandatory. Joking usually involves mimicking marked phonological and lexical features, but may be extended to more complex stylistic factors, as in the Apaches’ joking imitation of ‘the Whiteman’ as described by Basso:

a style characterized by stock phrases, specific lexical items, recurrent sentence types, and patterned modification in pitch, volume, tempo, and voice quality – that signals to those familiar with it that a particular form of joking has begun. (1979:9)

Jokes which make fun of syntactic differences are less common. One comes from China, where speakers of southern dialects make more extensive use of the preverbal aspect particle you than do northerners (including Beijing). When teasing someone or joking about the south, Beijing speakers parody this usage with constructions such as We you zhi mei you dao, roughly ‘I don’t know’, with you inserted between the bound morphemes of zhi-dao ‘know’ (an impossible form in Beijing dialect). This seems comparable to northern US speakers parodying southern speech by inserting you-all in inappropriate places and producing utterances which would be ungrammatical to a Southerner. Such exaggerated usage is typical (at least in English) of any effort to parody another language variety (and perhaps of parody in general as a ‘literary’ device).

Using stereotyped features for one’s own ethnic group may also be valued in joking performances, although this is even more likely to be only an in-group phenomenon: e.g. English speakers of Irish ancestry may be adept at shifting to a ‘brogue’, and Australians may effectively use broad ‘Strine’.

Examples abound from speech communities where personality or social characteristics are attributed to speakers of different varieties of a language. Iranian informants listed the following regional varieties of Farsi and the traits they associated with speakers of each. [NB: these attitudes were expressed prior to the 1979 revolution, or by Iranian students who have not resided in Iran since that event.]

Tehrani – industrious, sociable, pleasure-loving
Rashti – simple, stupid, dishonorable (with reference to sexual behavior)
Ishfahani – clever, skillful, witty
Shirazi – hospitable, lazy, pleasure-loving, good-sounding
ATTITUDES TOWARD COMMUNICATIVE PERFORMANCE

Mashadi – stubborn, obstinate, closed
Yazdi – honest, industrious, stingy, religious

When speakers are from the same area in Iran, if one does not use that regional variety, he is perceived as not wanting to be identified with that group, and so is valued negatively. A non-group member may intentionally speak another variety for instrumental purposes: e.g. ‘a Tehrani in Isfahan would try to speak Isfahan rather than Tehrani so as not to be cheated.’

Japan is a very complex speech community, in which the Tokyo dialect is considered standard and all others again nonstandard, and in this case there are also quite different personality traits associated with different nonstandard varieties. Speakers of Zuzu Ben (in eastern Japan) are perceived as somewhat harsh and disagreeable, for instance, while speakers of the Osaka variety (in western Japan) are perceived as friendly and gentle.

Another illustration is from the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal, where varieties of Newari are judged primarily on a standard/nonstandard dimension: the standard is Kathmandu, and the nonstandard Bhaktapur, Kirtipur, and Lalitpur (named for the four major cities). Speakers of nonstandard varieties are all considered gaman ‘villagers’, and thus uncouth, subservient, rude, vulgar, naive, and less intelligent than standard speakers. They are thought to share the positive virtues of honesty, frankness, humility, and helpfulness. Speakers of the standard are judged educated, rich, intelligent, refined, and progressive, but also more cunning, selfish, arrogant, and dishonest than nonstandard speakers. A resident who lives in or near one of the other three cities will adopt the standard Kathmandu variety if he or she becomes educated.

Most sociolinguistic research on regional and social varieties equates ‘standard’ and ‘prestige’, but the relationship of these dimensions may be much more complex. In a study of varieties of Arabic spoken in Jordan, for instance, Abd-el-Jawad (1987) reports how speakers of a standard variety used in a rural community may switch to a nonstandard variety that is used in an urban area which has higher prestige. The function of such switching is to identify with the dominant urban group and avoid the stigma of the rural group membership.

Quantitative measures, including the matched guise technique, have been used to establish the reliability of such personality judgements in a variety of speech communities. An interesting question which often remains unexplored, however, is why speakers believe they associate such traits with varieties of language.

Reasons given by native speakers include social and physical factors, as well as historical circumstances:

In Iran, Tehrani is reportedly prestigious because it is spoken in the capital, where life is to be enjoyed ‘and there are opportunities for everything and everybody’; Shirazi is good-sounding because it has a great literary heritage, and has been the native dialect of many poets and musicians.

In Saudi Arabia, speakers of the Najdi variety are perceived as strong and pure because it is associated with the highly valued desert life. Additionally, it is the dialect spoken by the royal family.

In Indonesia, speakers of Hoakiau (Chinese) Malay are perceived as money-minded and hard working because of their traditional role as businessmen in the economy.

In the United States, a southern ‘drawl’ is associated by northerners with slow movement and laziness in men, though it is often admired in women.

Personality traits are also associated with phonetic forms in Japan, where Zuzu Ben speakers are considered disagreeable because their variety of Japanese is unclear and nasalized, while the ‘friendly and gentle’ Osaka variety makes use of a distinctive set of respectful verbs, and ‘the tones of these expressions are softer, and more aesthetically proper to feminine speech’.

This is also true in Javanese, where degrees of gentleness or softness are associated with relative speed and volume perceived typical of different varieties, and with different degrees of frankness or directness. One Indonesian reports:
As the language becomes less and less alus 'gentle' as we move eastward from Solo, so are the people. Generally speaking, a Javanese from Surabaya (the capital of the East Java province) is less alus than one from Solo or Jogjakarta, in that the former tends to talk faster and louder as well as to be more frank and straightforward than the latter.

These relationships between form and attitudes may be considered a type of phonetic symbolism. A key example is provided by Fischer (1965) in his analysis of the differential development of a sandhi rule in Ponape and Truk, two Pacific islands, and the differential perceptions of personality traits in speakers of each. In Ponapean, homorganic stops dissipilate to nasal plus stop, and speakers are judged as more refined, formal, and as placing greater value on precision and quality of speech. In Trukese, a nasal assimilates to the following homorganic stop resulting in more fortis articulation. These speakers are perceived as more aggressive, informal, and as placing greater value on fluency and quantity. The same perceptions are held by members of both speech communities towards themselves and the others, and they may shift for effect; Fischer reports a Ponapean chief omitted sandhi to express aggression, and in Trukese there is some tendency to omit sandhi in polite speech. A completely analogous phenomenon is reported for the related dialects of Batak Toba and Batak Mandailing (Sirait).

Similarly, Navajo speakers in the western part of their reservation normally use an articulation with stronger aspiration and glottal release than do those in the eastern part, and they are judged to be 'harsher' in personality; eastern Navajos may choose to use more fortis articulation to mark intensification without increasing volume. The relationship between fortis articulation and the attribution of forceful personality traits should be explored as a possible universal.

Other areas of attitude research which have received considerable attention are how speakers of one language feel about other languages as entities in themselves, and how they feel about non-native or 'accented' varieties of their own. Many of these perceptions are also based on phonetic features, as the English view that German is 'gutteral', and the German response that 'All Americans say [jææ]'. British English is perceived by German speakers to be more like their own language because final consonants are articulated, while Americans 'slow down at the end'. According to a Japanese saying, 'One gets upset in German, romantic in French, mischievous in Spanish.' The French view their own language as particularly well suited for expressing precision of thought (Ce qui n’est pas clair n’est pas français ‘What is not clear is not French’), and Japanese their own as excellent for literature, but ill suited to law or science.

Japanese people do not ordinarily think of the meanings of terms in legal provisions with any precision; they are content with a general and hazy understanding. . . . In Japan lack of clarity and definition is accepted; that the meanings of terms are unclear, unlimited, and unfixed is considered natural and even desirable. (Kawashima 1979)

Foreign accented English is generally well tolerated – even potentially prestigious, if fluent – although the native language of the speaker is a critical variable. Attitudes toward such non-native varieties as Indian English or Nigerian English, however, may be far less accepting. Kachru claims:

such attitudes are not essentially based on linguistic value judgement but various other factors play an important role, one being a native speaker's fear of seeing his language disintegrate in the hands of (or shall we say, through the lips of) non-native users. (1980)

Still, speakers of English, French, German, Russian, Italian, and Spanish think it is entirely appropriate for others to learn their languages, and English speakers especially seem to operate on the assumption that they will do so. Dutch
speakers, on the other hand, feel their language is very difficult for others to learn, but that it is quite appropriate for them to speak at least French, German, and English.

The Dutch seem almost irritated at having to put up with the cumbersome process of talking to a stammering ‘learner of Dutch’. Instead, they prefer to show off their superior knowledge of foreign languages. If the foreigner is to overcome this obstacle of the negative attitude towards his trying to communicate in Dutch, he must try to eradicate any signals that could be interpreted as an inability to function fully in that language. One of the clearest of these signals is an accent, and this must undoubtedly influence his efforts to lose his native accent in speaking Dutch. (Schatz)

Other negative attitudes I have heard expressed toward English speakers’ trying to communicate in an incompletely learned foreign language include the response of a Turkish taxi driver who insisted ‘Americans are supposed to speak English’, and that of a Chinese student who was insulted by the implication that she could not communicate adequately in English (which my attempt to use Chinese conveyed). Such attitudes present a formidable barrier for foreign language learners, but the American and British assumption that anyone will welcome another’s trying to use their language is ethnocentric.

STEREOTYPING

Making judgements about people according to linguistic features is a common form of stereotyping; it is possible because of the highly ‘visible’ nature of the markers in language which are correlated with extralinguistic categories in a society, such as race, sex, age, social class, religion, and ethnicity (discussed in Chapter 3). The social categories in turn carry with them traditional attitudes and expectations which strongly influence all communication, and which govern what Goffman (1967) calls ‘interaction ritual’.

Social ‘typing’ or categorization is probably a necessary part of our procedures for coping with the outside world. It allows us to quickly define our orientation to other individuals, and is a basis for our cultural sense of ‘manners’ and other conventions of interpersonal relations. It is a means for establishing preliminary relationships (Abrahams 1972). If we did not ‘know’ how to relate appropriately to different groups of people before we were acquainted with them personally, we would be socially ineffective to say the least, and perhaps even unable to function normally in a society. ‘Social structure is the sum total of these typifications and of the recurrent patterns of interaction established by means of them’ (Berger and Luckmann 1967:33).

Social typing should thereby be seen as a potentially positive and in any case inevitable process. The typing may assume negative aspects, however, and then it ceases to be just a mode of socialization. It may become a means of disaffiliation or rejection, or of rationalizing prejudice, and it is this negative connotation that is usually associated with the term ‘stereotyping’. Further, the process of stereotyping involves ‘an exaggerated belief associated with a category. Its function is to justify (rationalize) our conduct in relation to that category’ (Allport 1954:187).

Because of their negative connotations and consequences, we might like to claim that stereotypes have no basis at all in observable reality, but they often do. Tannen’s (1979a) contrast of New York Jewish and Los Angeles non-Jewish conversational style, for instance, documents that New York Jewish speakers talk more, interrupt (overlap) other speakers, and use ‘machine-gun’ questions, all of which supports common stereotypes about the way ‘they’ talk. Stereotyping departs from observable reality, however, when such attributes as ‘pushy’ or ‘rude’ are inferred from these conversational strategies: i.e. judgements not about how people talk, but about what kind of people they are. From the perspective of the Jewish speakers in the study, the conversational strategies are intended as positive moves to develop rapport.

Another claim we might like to make about stereotyping is that it operates between members of different groups only at
initial or superical contact, and does not survive repeated interaction. Unfortunately, this does not necessarily lead to ‘better understanding’.

On the contrary, it tends to reinforce mistaken judgements of the other’s intentions and tends to increase expectations that the other will behave in a certain way. . . . Misjudgement is calcified by the conviction of repeated experience. (Tannen 1979a:161)

Stereotypic expectations may well become self-fulfilling prophesies. Our preconceptions of how a doctor ‘should talk’, for instance, are usually met; if not, patients may be suspicious of the doctor’s credentials or professional competence. I know from years of residence in the state of Texas that most Texans do not actually say Howdy in greeting, but the stereotype is reinforced each time I step up to the counter of a Texas-based airline in other parts of the country and hear Howdy, Ma’am (which is probably used intentionally to reinforce the corporate Texas image). The stereotype of southerners speaking more slowly than northerners, on the other hand, is generally not supported by objective observational data; it is evidently a misinterpretation of their typical ‘breaking’ of vowels as a slower rate of speech.

Another type of stereotyping is not based on observable traits at all, but is a negation of the values held by the group which is typing. In this case, the traits which are attributed are not specific to the language or culture of the target group, but tend to be the same for all ‘others’ (Abrahams 1972). These are universally dehumanizing, imputing childish or animalistic behavior, immorality, and absence of manners, rules, or laws: i.e. absence of culture. The group doing this kind of stereotyping defines culture in terms of its own beliefs and practices, and then interprets all differences as deficiencies. Information about these judgements provides no insights about those being typed, but may be interesting and useful with respect to understanding the values of the source group.

When groups remain at a distance from one another, stereotypes have little effect. Similarly, the stereotypes which a subordinate group holds toward the dominant group in a society have little or no effect on that group, although it clearly affects intergroup communication. In both cases, the stereotyping serves to strengthen group boundaries and emphasize group unity. Stereotypes which the dominant group in a society holds toward subordinate groups, on the other hand, are often adopted by those groups as part of their own self-image.

Recognition of the stereotypes which are held by and about a speech community as such are relevant for ethnographic description in at least three important respects: (1) as a dimension of the attitudes related to language which are part of the content of the description; (2) as part of the framework of sociocultural expectations within which communicative behavior must be interpreted by participants or observers; and (3) as a check on the reliability of reported data when doing research in a community other than one’s own. When ethnographers are working in their own speech community, stereotypes must be recognized so that they will not bias perceptions, and so they can be brought under conscious control.

**APPROPRIATENESS**

Many studies of attitudes toward language use (including, but not limited to stereotypes) have not been toward language in general, but what language or variety of language is considered more appropriate in a specific context. This is basic to all sociolinguistic survey procedures, and has included studies of Spanish and English (e.g. Fishman et al. 1971), varieties of Arabic and English (El-Dash and Tucker 1975), varieties of Norwegian (Blom and Gumperz 1972), and Black English (Hoover 1975). Findings generally show that attitudes towards the appropriate use of codes in a speech community have a very high correlation with their functional distribution, and the relative social status of their speakers.

Many of the attitudes reported relate to which language or variety is considered appropriate for formal education, as
opposed to informal interaction. These attitudes are particularly strong in areas where creoles are for the first time being considered viable media for instruction, at least in primary grades. The following quotation is from a letter to the editor of the Trinidad Guardian in response to a report on a Language Arts syllabus which includes recognition that English is not the native language of most Trinidadians:

If the language of the barrack yard and the market is to be the accepted mode of expression in the school-room . . . there would be no need for teachers . . . we could save the high wages of these experts and set them free to go and plant peas . . . where they can give full vent to this dialect stuff. . . . What if not broken English is this dialect? . . . I feel that such discussions should be banned from our news media as a most damaging . . . exercise. (Reported by Sealey)

Conversely, Trinidadian Creole is considered the most appropriate code in events associated with local culture, conversation between intimates, joking, and 'liming'. According to Sealey, a person telling a joke in Standard English in her speech community will be a laughing stock, and calypsoes sung in a variety of English nearer to the standard end of the creole continuum are marked as being 'for export': i.e. not for the people. At the same time, many parents can be heard telling their creole-speaking children to 'speak properly'; the notion that somehow the creole code is improper is instilled from early childhood in the home, and is reinforced in the schools.

Although Cape Verdean Creole has been introduced in bilingual programs in New England, there is a residual attitude among native speakers that it, too, is not appropriate for written communication. In its African context (the Republic of Cape Verde), Crioulo was the Low variety in a diglossic situation, and Portuguese the High. Even if proficiency in Standard Portuguese was not achieved, all written communication, regardless of its nature, was produced in some attempt at Standard Portuguese. This attitude is clearly reflected in Silva's recollection of an experience in Massachusetts:

My cousin's younger sister, having come to the U.S. before starting school and having to leave her sister a note, since the older sister did not know any English, resorted to writing the note in Crioulo. The mere fact that Crioulo was used to communicate the written message produced laughter among Crioulo speakers.

The addition of English for the immigrant speech community has resulted in a trilingual situation. The high and low functions of Standard Portuguese and Crioulo remain essentially the same as they were in Cape Verde, with English used without a strict allocation to domain. According to Silva, rejection of Crioulo in favor of Portuguese is interpreted as more of a rejection of the cultural values and identity of the community than is symbolized by the use of English. The recent influx of Cape Verdeans from Portugal and other former Portuguese colonies has accentuated this situation.

Another reference to the High variety of a language being associated with writing is reported by an Indonesian, where bahasa resmi is the official/standard language associated with education, and bahasa sehari-hari the daily/colloquial language associated with conversations with intimates, instructions to servants, etc. Although the High variety is more prestigious, a speaker who uses it exclusively is considered pedantic, or worse, 'putting on airs'. Gunawardan reports:

I remember one occasion when, during a casual conversation, a friend made a mistake of using the literary word semalam 'last night' instead of the everyday word tadi malam. Another friend responded mockingly, saying Si Didi belajar membaca 'Didi learns to read', referring to a reading series formerly used in the elementary school.

There has been only minimal acceptance of native language literacy within the Navajo speech community, where Navajo generally functions for oral communication and English for
written. Even in a single communicative situation, such as a meeting of tribal representatives, business is conducted in Navajo and minutes recorded in English. Unlike the cases of Cape Verde and Indonesia, relative prestige is not a factor in considering Navajo inappropriate for literacy: Navajo is currently accorded at least as much prestige as English, although that was not always so. Spolsky and Irvine suggest the reason is that “when the introduction of literacy is associated with a second language, an alien culture, and modern, technological functions, literacy in these new domains is preferred in the alien, second, or standard language” (1982:76). Resisting native language literacy in this instance might thus be seen as a means of protecting traditional culture from the modernizing (and more public) influence of writing.

The appropriateness of one language or variety in a multilingual, international context is even more complex, but rules for selection are quite distinct, and strong negative attitudes often accompany inappropriate language selection.

Speakers generally have some positive feelings about their native language, at least for expressive purposes in intimate or informal contexts with members of the same group. Attitudes toward acceptability and appropriateness for other functions can be understood only in relation to a complex of social and historical factors. Since these include the language in which questions about them are being asked, and the ethnic and linguistic identity of interviewers or observers, data on this aspect of language attitudes are particularly susceptible to biases in elicitation and interpretation.

LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY

Positive feelings about one’s own language are often engendered by the role it plays as a marker of desired group identity, and negative feelings if such identity is rejected. Code alternation or shifting often signals changing feelings about group identity for an individual in different contexts, or as different emotions are aroused during a single communicative event.

One dimension of language-related attitudes which is central to the ethnographic description of a speech community is the extent to which linguistic identity is a criterion for group membership. Many American Indians who have lost their ancestral languages in the process of assimilation to English express profound regret and sense of deculturation, expressing the feeling that “We can’t be Indians without an Indian language”. So do many immigrants, yet many other ‘hyphenated’ Americans who speak only English after two or more generations of residence in this country retain ethnic identity only through preservation of a little folklore, with perhaps a few traditional foods or celebrations, and express few regrets about losing ancestral languages. Others who cannot speak the language of their grandparents or great-grandparents have still inherited their linguistic values, which language attitudes outlasting the language itself, while still others have fully ‘melted’.

The diverse attitudes about language and identity are very salient in teaching or learning a second language. Most students value their own group membership; some reject their own group and wish to change; many may wish or need to function as members of more than one group and be ‘bicultural’ as well as bilingual. Any of these attitudes can be compatible with learning a second language, but they are often viewed in a negative light. Those who value their own group membership and do not wish to acculturate to the dominant group may be treated as not ‘well adjusted’ to that society. As I said earlier, those who reject their own group and wish to change may be viewed as disloyal to family and old friends. Those who wish to belong to more than one group may be mistrusted by both.

Whatever choice is made regarding group membership, language is a key factor – an identification badge – for both self and outside perception, and this has significant implications for education. The standard middle-class English speech patterns presented as a model in our schools are likely to be considered effeminate and thus rejected by lower-class boys approaching adolescence, especially when these patterns are used by female teachers. The English of male teachers or of older boys would be much more likely to be adopted by boys wanting to establish a male identity. Studies of the acquisition
of English by Puerto Rican adolescents in New York and Mexican Americans in Chicago document that the variety being learned and used is not the language taught in English classes, but the language of the dominant peer group in the communities - which in these cases is Black English (Wolfram 1973). A similar phenomenon is reported by Harrington (1978:3) in New York City:

I was once observing an ESL [English as a Second Language] classroom in which the students were predominantly Spanish-speaking. The teacher’s sole job was to try to get the children to speak English. An Egyptian child came to the school who spoke neither Spanish nor English. . . . After a month in the ESL classroom, the Egyptian child was speaking Spanish.

Even very young children are aware of the function of language in establishing group identity, and use the appropriate variety to identify with friends. One six-year-old child I knew developed a lisp when a best friend lost his front teeth, and many middle-class Anglo parents found during the early years of integration in Southern states that their children were adding the nonstandard forms of some Black and Spanish-speaking classmates. Middle-class Black parents were often distressed in turn that their standard-English-speaking children were being influenced by the non-standard speech of lower-class White students.

Preadolescence is the age when children in the US are most influenced by peer norms, however. This perhaps accounts for Labov et al. (1968) finding that junior high school (12 to 14 year old) boys use more of the stigmatized features of Black English than they did when in the fifth or sixth grade (10 to 11 years old). This social fact of maximal peer influence is as likely as neurological factors to explain certain psychological consequences:

For example, one can become confused about one’s personal identity, or begin to behave as though one actually were inadequate and inferior. As these sentiments spread through a social system, members of the system may be prone to give and accept one’s ‘inferior’ fate, at the same time as they ready themselves to counter-react in the sense of rejecting the accepted image of one’s group, starting often with an exploration of the opposite view – that one’s own group is as good if not better than the high prestige group. As the counter-reaction gains social force, the relative attractiveness and status of the two or more ethno-linguistic groups in the society can change. (Lambert 1979)

Lambert further suggests it was this type of reaction that triggered the French Canadian ‘revolt’ of the 1960s, and the demands exerted by minority groups in the United States at about the same time for bilingual and multicultural education. Temporary shifts are common in the process of intergroup communication, and research on their occurrence and effect is providing additional insight about language and identity. Giles et al. (1973) attribute linguistic convergence, or the modification of language toward the variety used by other speakers in an encounter, to a desire for listeners’ social approval. Linguistic divergence, on the other hand, occurs when a speaker wishes to dissociate himself from listeners. This may be an unconscious emotional response, but can be a deliberate tactic of ethnic dissociation and psychological distinctiveness (Bourhis et al. 1979). Both experimental and naturalistic studies are being conducted on convergence/divergence phenomena in various languages and contexts, and include analyses of verbal codes, prosodic features such as pitch contours and rate of speech, kinesics, and other indicators of interactional synchrony (cf. Erickson 1976; Kempton 1979).

Convergence need not be perceived positively, of course, since the listener may not want to have the speaker identify with him, or may interpret the process as mocking or condescending if his own group is lower in prestige. Also, divergence may not be negative, but merely a sign of less formality and decreased monitoring of speech. In social situations where speakers of American, British, and Australian
English are represented, for instance, the dialect differences often increase as speakers become better acquainted and more relaxed.

The relationship between language and identity along this dimension is thus bidirectional: feelings of closeness or distance may trigger similarity or dissimilarity in language patterns; conversely, the feeling of being on the same linguistic ‘wave length’ is likely to promote solidarity.

Language may also serve an important function in political or national identification. The resurgence of pride in ethnicity (and associated languages) in the United States is very threatening to many citizens of the country as a symbol of diversity and separatism; to speak a language other than English is considered un-American. Even great intolerance may be shown toward other languages in the process of nation-building, as evidenced by the social sanctions against the use of Yiddish in Israel. The process of selecting an official language in developing multilingual countries often involves identifying which subgroup is most powerful or prestigious. Nigeria officially continues to use English in large part because to select Hausa, Igbo, or Yoruba would give preeminence to the segment of the country which identifies with that language and exclude the others. In this case English was a neutral choice, a language with which no one identified. The functions of Yoruba are expanding, however, with continuing national development. It is particularly interesting to note ways in which Yoruba is being integrated with English for ceremonial purposes. Bemghose reports, for instance, that

the wedding reception which used to be an opportunity for displaying ‘big grammar’ is now almost invariably conducted in Yoruba with the well-educated bridegroom making an effort to speak a brand of Yoruba sprinkled with English. (1986:30)

The relationship of language and identity is very complex, and important clues to its nature may be found in changing patterns of language distribution and use through time, as well as in synchronic phenomena.

A basic assumption in most theories of culture change is that there are always two counterforces operating in a society: one for change and one for persistence, stability, or maintenance of the status quo. Especially in culture contact situations, the possible outcomes for the multiple languages or language varieties involved include their maintenance as separate entities, changes in one or both language systems under influence from the other, or the abandonment of one in favor of the other: i.e. one of the counterforces prevails. Of central interest is how different attitudes toward language may determine linguistic fate.

One important factor is the instrumental versus affective functions which a language is felt to serve in the community. Yiddish and Ladino are cases in point. Yiddish made it possible for Ashkenazic Jews from all over Europe to communicate with one another regardless of their national language, serving for both ethnic and religious identification. A similar function was served by Ladino (or Judeo-Spanish) for Sephardic Jews, who were widely dispersed throughout the Middle East and Latin America. With Hebrew serving religious functions, and with its selection as the national and official language of Israel, Yiddish and Ladino lost much of their raison d’être. Harris (1979) reports over three-fourths of her Ladino informants in New York and Israel could think of no valid reasons why the language should be passed on to the next generation, even though they themselves might feel a strong sentimental attachment to it. Not a single one of their grandchildren in either location can speak the language.

In contrast, the Armenian language is still maintained in the United States and Syria, coexisting with English and Arabic, respectively. One reason this has continued is the need to know the language in order to participate in religious services, since the prevailing attitude is that Armenian is the appropriate medium for worship. Armenians who reside in the United States and have visited relatives in the Soviet Union report that religious ties there are considerably weaker, and that use of the Armenian language there seems
to be in a state of rapid decline. Similar attitudes toward the use of language in religion are also largely responsible for the survival of Assyrian in immigrant communities in the US and Europe, and at least the marginal existence of Geez in Ethiopia.

The surest symptom of impending language loss is, as with Ladino, when parents no longer see a reason to transmit it to their children, and may even view it as a handicap to their children's education and advancement. As summarized by Dorian (1980):

Language loyalty persists so long as the economic and social circumstances are conducive to it; but if some other language proves to have greater value, a shift to that other language begins.

Stability of multiple languages in contact, on the other hand, occurs where each has a unique domain (cf. Fishman 1972; 1985), and is thus reserved a continuing function in society. The reason why bilingual education is as likely to result in more rapid linguistic assimilation of minority groups as in minority language maintenance is that it tends to break down the diglossic language distribution between the domains of home and school.

A second major consideration in language maintenance, shift, and spread is the social organization and ecology of the community or communities involved, and attitudes related to these factors. This may include the nature of their boundary mechanisms and political organization, as reported in Barth's (1964a) study of language shift between Pashto and Baluchi speakers in Pakistan. In this case, both groups are part of a single ecological region, with intergroup mobility and a common culture, but with the two languages in differing relationships to social organization. Among the Pathan, Pashto is required for full political participation, but the structure of the Baluch tribes allows bilingual participation, and thus more easily assimilates non-Baluchi speakers. For complex historical reasons, this has contributed to the spread of Baluchi at the expense of Pashto in the region.

The capacity of the US economic and political structures to assimilate waves of immigrants of diverse ethnic origins is a significant factor in their concomitant assimilation to English, but the process has not applied equally to all. It is not coincidental that the more 'visible' minorities, who have encountered negative attitudes towards their assimilation from the dominant groups, are most likely to have maintained separate linguistic and cultural identity.

Attempts at forced assimilation may also support language maintenance, as evidenced in Dozier's (1956) contrast of linguistic acculturation among the Yaqui Indians of Northern Mexico and Arizona and the Tewa Indians of New Mexico. The Yaqui were subject to quite tolerant early colonization by the Spanish, relatively free of friction, and the Yaqui language and culture readily adopted Hispanic traits (about 65 per cent of the lexicon is Spanish-derived). But when the colonizers became less permissive, a crystallization occurred, and no further assimilation took place. The Tewa language and culture remain relatively free of Spanish influence, in large part because of strong coercive attempts to repress them. The Tewa language is now in more danger from English 'because their attitudes toward Anglo-Americans are generally more favorable than toward Spanish-Americans' (Dozier 1956:149).

Imperialistic expansion may also result in language spread, as evidenced in history by periods of expansion and then contraction of Turkish, Quechua, Nahuatl, and Portuguese, and more recently the spread of English and Russian. The contraction phase of Quechua and Nahuatl (languages of the former Inca and Aztec empires, respectively) is attributable to Spanish military conquest and subsequent political and economic domination. The continuing process of replacement of Nahuatl by Spanish has been analyzed by Hill and Hill (1980; 1986), who attribute the shift to a narrowing range of functions for the indigenous language. Nahuatl is still highly valued for identification and solidarity, but Spanish is highly valued for its political and economic functions as the 'language of power' (cf. Brown and Gilman 1960). Unlike the case of Tewa, the functional differentiation of Nahuatl vis-à-
Spanish is not remaining stable, for solidarity is apparently losing ground to power and prestige. The present situation, therefore, 'is probably a transitory stage which will lead rapidly to language obsolescence' (Hill and Hill 1980:345).

When the dominated area has a strong cultural tradition and feelings of cultural superiority, the indigenous language may prevail: e.g. Greek under Roman rule, and the adoption of French by Norsemen. The spread of religions has also resulted in language spread. This is especially true for Arabic with the rapid spread of Islam because of the firmly rooted belief that it is impossible to translate the Koran into another language.

Patterns of marriage and kinship may also be factors in maintenance or shift. McLendon (1978), for instance, attributes much of the rapid shift among Eastern Pomo speakers (a native California language) to exogamous marriage patterns, and extended family residence and child care is a strong force for language maintenance. Attitudes toward the value of family and group versus individual welfare and achievement also appear to be significant factors.

The role of women in the community is also significant. Where they are uneducated and remain in the home they tend to remain monolingual and contribute to maintenance of the ‘mother’ tongue; where they are educated, bilingual, and participate in trade or other external activities, exactly the opposite has been observed (cf. Gal 1978, Austro-Hungarian border; Trudgill and Tzavaras 1977, Greeks of Albanian descent; and Wilhite 1977, Mayan in Highland Guatemala).

Language shift may be concomitant with the change in the nature and identity of the entire speech community:

Frequently the community itself is transformed along with the linguistic switch. That is, only as the community is surrounded and absorbed into a larger community, does it tend to drop its old language and to take on that of a larger group (Swadesh 1948:234).

Geographic or social segregation, on the other hand, contributes to maintenance. Isolated communities in Central Texas which were settled by immigrant groups in the nineteenth century still preserve conservative varieties of Polish, German, and Alsatian French, which have been lost for generations to those who immigrated to heterogeneous cities, and Spolksy (1971) reports that the proximity of a paved road has a significant effect on Navajo maintenance or loss. The spread of modern technology and mass media are additional forces for social and linguistic integration. On this dimension, attitudes toward the desirability of change play a major role.

The social stratification of a community is also relevant, including the degree of access that speakers of low prestige languages and varieties have to those which are more prestigious, and to jobs which require their use. The key here is motivation and opportunity, as well as the acceptability of assimilation by the dominant group mentioned above.

A third major area of consideration is values and worldview. In a broad sense, this includes attitudes toward borrowing foreign words, and the value placed on uniqueness versus homogeneity. The effect of the latter is illustrated by Hamp (1978) in his discussion of the maintenance of Albanian by settlers in Italy, where localisms are valued, versus its loss by settlers in Greece, which exclusively values all things Greek. The pattern persists through immigration to the United States, as Italian-Americans quickly assimilate to the local language, and Greek-Americans cling tenaciously to Greek style for generations, even when they are speaking English (cf. Tannen 1981). Robert DiPietro has made the interesting observation that Albanian has been preserved within the Italian immigrant community in Wisconsin, with the Italian language (and values) probably serving as a buffer zone against English.

The social valuation of linguistic features is important to Labov's view of the 'linguistic variable' as a unit of change. He analyzed the subjective attitudes of residents of Martha's Vineyard (1963) toward such matters as summer tourists, unemployment compensation, work on the mainland, and other aspects of island life, finding typical 'Vineyander attitudes' most closely associated with the occurrence of
in summarizing my findings concerning current language maintenance among pre-World War I arrivals in the United States coming from rural Eastern and Southern European backgrounds, I reported a long-term distinction between attitudes and use, namely, an increased esteem for non-English mother tongues concomitant with the increased relegation of these languages to few and narrower domains of language use. . . . Younger second and third generation individuals were found to view these mother tongues (almost always via translations) with less emotion but with even more positive valence. Instead of a ‘third generation return’ there seemed to be an ‘attitudinal halo-ization’ within large segments of all generations, albeit unaccompanied by increased usage. (1964)

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Fasold (1975) offers corroboration in the finding that adolescents who are not learning Tiwa along with English still express very positive attitudes toward their language, but this has not prevented the encroachment of English into previously Tiwa domains, and is ultimately unlikely to save the language from extinction. A similar situation pertains in Ireland, where it was found that ‘strong sentimental attachments to Irish were not accompanied by language use, nor by desire to actively promote it’ (Edwards 1985:51, citing the Committee on Irish Language Attitudes Research 1975; emphasis his).

Miller (1970) studied the attitudes of Pima children living on the Salt River reservation toward which of the languages used in their community is best. The majority expressed preference for English with such practical explanations as ‘most people speak it’, although several chose Pima because it is spoken by parents or grandparents and for ethnic identity: Pima is ‘best for Pimas’. It is interesting to note there is an increasing preference for English with age. Miller concludes:

younger children are more influenced by the standards and language of the home and still largely unaware of attitudes and school and the outside world. With the gradual influence of the school and one’s peers, the older child becomes more and more impressed with the success on the outside and the practicality of identifying with the affluent majority. (1970:54-5)

It seems quite likely that linguistic awareness and influence for conformity with the ‘outside world’ may come at a much younger age and much less gradually if a child is exposed primarily to children from the dominant language group. In the US, bilingual parents who speak other languages at home often report their children wanting to speak only English at home once they begin school; some children exacerbate this situation by insisting that their parents also speak English, or expressing feelings of shame if they cannot or will not. Children in bilingual school programs, however, exhibit much less of this home language rejection.
School programs in themselves, however, cannot be counted on to develop or maintain minority language use among children if there is not both need for the language in the community and support among the children's peers. Evidence for this comes from study of a French-language elementary school in Canada, for instance, where it was determined that the school (St-Michel) has not been able to impose its goals and its conventions on its students: the experiences of children outside school, and the influence of their peer group networks evidently constrain the extent to which schools can be depended upon to be the source of language maintenance and cultural continuity in a minority community ... (Heller nd:13)

In a longitudinal study of over three hundred children of foreign graduate students and visiting faculty in the US (Kleifgen, et al. 1986), we found a dramatic shift to English dominance in spite of support for native language maintenance at both home and school. If children had arrived in this country at age five or less, they typically had difficulty communicating in their native language after two years in residence; only those who arrived at age seven or more generally maintained productive balance between their native language and English after that period of time.

Our database included children from a number of different countries, and there were some intergroup differences which illustrate some of the social factors that are involved. Japanese and Korean children experienced the least shift. Most importantly, they seldom stayed in this country for more than a year; their parents expressed concern about keeping children in the US longer for fear they would get behind in their own school curricula, and they were less likely to bring with them older children who were at a more 'critical' period of school than were parents from other countries. Also, the Japanese and Korean mothers generally spoke little or no English themselves, and the time their children were at home was frequently spent almost exclusively with other speakers of the same language background. These two groups had large and well organized support networks in the university community, including baby-sitting pools which insured consistent native language input to young children even when mothers were absent from the home. No similar network existed for the other groups in the sample.

There were also group differences in child rearing practices which must be taken into account, and in the value accorded learning English versus developing and maintaining native language skills. The faster rate of shift among Arabic children, for instance, can be attributed in part to the greater opportunity they had to play with children from other backgrounds in the community context, and in part to the value parents generally placed on their children learning English.

The most notable change among children who first encountered English at age five or less was the effect it had on their pronunciation. Young Arabic speakers lost post-velar and pharyngeal articulation, for instance, and young Chinese speakers used incorrect tones. The general impression of our collaborators who speak the children's languages natively was that they spoke with a foreign (American) accent.

First language attrition for older children who were in the US two or more years was limited almost entirely to loss of productive vocabulary; tests we gave (including translations of the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and sentence repetition tasks) indicated relatively little attrition in their receptive competence. These children expressed a feeling of awkwardness in using their native language by that time, however, and a preference for English.

Evidence can also be found in the very limited success of 'language recovery' programs in American Indian communities where the school has tried to develop ancestral language competence in children who have not been taught that language at home. To repeat, the surest symptom of impending language loss is when parents no longer see a reason to transmit it to their children. These same parents apparently cannot then expect the school to give it back to the children and the community, except in unusual cases and limited domains.
An interesting situation is created when a child's parents speak two different languages. In the case of different American Indian languages, Miller (1970) reports there is almost always loss of one Indian language in mixed marriages, and often both, with children speaking only English. (For similar loss in 'Anglo-ethnic' marriages in Australia, see Clyne 1982.) Among the Tucano in the Amazon region, however, where exogamous marriage restrictions result in wives' primary languages being different from their husbands', Sorensen (1967) reports both languages are usually maintained. Most Tucano grow up at least bilingual, and often speak several languages. There are individual cases where it appears that neither language is fully developed for children in this situation, however. Plausible accounts of this fortunately rare phenomenon come from teachers in isolated villages in Alaska, for instance, where the father in a family may speak only English (but is seldom home to provide input for the child), and insists that the mother not use the Eskimo language of the community (which is her dominant tongue). Children raised in a home with the impoverished language input which results reportedly cannot function effectively either in the English-medium school or in the Eskimo community. I know of no case of this nature which has been adequately documented by a sociolinguist, but I do not believe the possibility of 'semilingualism' under such social conditions should be discounted merely on theoretical or philosophical grounds (also discussed in Chapter 2; cf. Martin-Jones and Romaine 1986).

When language loss is occurring at a community level, 'there are some individuals [at lower levels of "semispeaker" proficiency] who actually say very little yet continue to interact in a highly successful fashion with fluent speakers' (Dorian 1982:33). This is because such individuals have receptive competence in the language and are always younger than the fluent speakers, and thus not expected to take a more active role. They participate appropriately in the interaction by using a few words when that is called for, and by following communitarian norms for nonverbal behavior and silence. Dorian contrasts these aspects of the semispeakers' communicative competence with the foreign language learner who may have more verbal fluency, but 'betray[s] his nonmembership in the speech community by social failures in the use of the language: speaking when he should be silent, asking "rude" questions, failing to recognize a situation in which greetings are obligatory, and the like' (Dorian 1982:33-4). Even when languages have been completely lost, as in some American Indian communities, indigenous 'ways of speaking' may be maintained which continue to differentiate community members from the dominant English speech community whose language forms they have adopted.

Sometimes the issue is not why languages die, but why they do not. My own research on the Alabama-Coushatta (Koasati) reservation in Texas has provided more questions than answers about why the language of that community is being maintained. Why is a small (less than 200 member) tribe continuing to transmit its language to children? All attend English medium schools, and all monetary rewards are attached to the use of English, yet monolingual Alabama-Koasati speakers are still present in each generation of children. Clearly the relationship between attitudes and language maintenance, shift, and spread remains a viable topic for investigation.

TABOOS AND EUPHEMISMS

Attitudes toward language considered taboo in a speech community are extremely strong, and violations may be sanctioned by imputations of immorality, social ostracism, and even illness or death. No topic is universally forbidden: what cannot be said in one language can in another and vice versa. Neither are linguistic taboos arbitrary; they relate integrally to culture-specific beliefs and practices in religion or magic, decorum, and social control.

Taboos related to religion or magic may affect a wide range of linguistic phenomena, and include animal-name avoidances in many speech communities. It may be believed that animals or spirits understand human language, and that mentioning
their names would either drive them away (undesirable if one is hunting), or attract them near where they might inflict harm. Related are the restriction in the former Bangalam Upper Congo against using men's names at home while they are fishing (Frazer 1922); replacing an animal name with a semantically unrelated word which begins with the same sound (e.g. zagwara 'leopard' becomes zambara 'disc of wood to cut bread') in Ethiopia (Leslau 1959); and the substitution of a metaphorical expression for the animal terms (e.g. calling a wolf 'uncle' or 'nice little dog') by peasants in the Ukraine (Smal-Stocki 1950).

In some cases a broader scope of the linguistic system is involved, as among Faroese fishermen who use sjómál 'sea language' for protection from spirits and to conceal their business and destination (Lockwood 1956), or where everyday language is considered unworthy of sacred use, as in Zuni prayers and songs in New Mexico (Newman 1955). Complimenting children is thought to be very dangerous to their health in Turkey because it may attract the evil eye, but this danger may be lessened considerably by immediately repeating the ritual phrase masallah 'what God hath wrought'.

Language is perhaps most awesome when words themselves are accorded power, as in speech communities where a curse literally invokes supernatural wrath, where to be in possession of individuals' names gives control over their well-being, or where to speak or write down a name will allow the soul to escape. In these cases names are concealed, or replaced, for self-protection.

All language may be banned under certain circumstances. When sacrifices are made by Igbo speakers, for instance, the officiating priest usually imposes the observance of strict silence, particularly when the purpose is diverting the attention of malevolent spirits from the carrier. If the silence is violated (a rare occurrence), the sacrifice must be repeated, and the offender has to make an additional sacrifice. Greetings were also taboo between Igbo from different villages during times when there were smallpox epidemics, because of the belief that disease can take human form. Without a greeting, no encounter has taken place (Nwoye 1985).

Taboos which relate to decorum include avoidance of terms or euphemistic reference for aesthetic or moral reasons (often for body parts or bodily functions), interlingual taboos, and respect forms.

A wide range of euphemisms in America intended to soften the verbal impact of dying, death and burial was collected by Pound (1936). These include categories of general literary and figurative expressions (is out of his misery, climbed the golden stair), metaphors of sleep and rest (laid to rest, called to the eternal sleep), metaphors of departure (crossed over the Great Divide, gone to the Great Beyond), metaphors from occupations (answered the last muster, gave up the ship), and metaphors from sports (ran the good race, struck out). The material adjunctions are also renamed, as the dead (the deceased, the late lamented), the cemetery (the Marble City, memorial park), the coffin (casket, eternity box), the grave (long home, deep six), and the funeral (planting, cold meat party).

Grimes (1977) illustrates the range of euphemistic processes used in Mexican Spanish to refer to body parts and functions, such as metaphor (cortar flores 'to cut flowers' = to defecate), metonymy (el de hacer niñitos 'the thing for making children' = penis), generic expressions (hacerlo 'to do it' = to urinate [the same phrase means 'to fornicate' in English]), infantile expressions (hacer caca 'to defecate'), proper names (Doña Josefina 'vagina'), and borrowing (cuiatl Nahuatl cuiatl feces'). Use of scientific or 'cultured' terms, as in the above translations, may also be considered a euphemistic process. It was common practice for nineteenth-century scholars translating Greek and Roman tales, or recording the folklore of 'primitive' groups, to switch to Latin for the passages which violated English language taboos.

Linguistic taboos are often related to language change: e.g. the word 'bear' probably disappeared in Slavic, Baltic, and Germanic languages because of animal-name avoidance (cf. Slavic 'honeyeater', Baltic 'one who licks', and Germanic 'brown'), and Tonkawa (an indigenous language of Texas) underwent rapid and extensive lexical change because of the practice of changing words which sounded like the names of people who died. Scholars do not know what the original
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word for ‘God’ was in Hebrew because of the restriction against using it. Euphemisms have also caused semantic shift, as in Mexican Spanish where huevos ‘eggs’ was used for ‘testicles’, and blanquillos ‘little white ones’ took over its reference function for ‘eggs’.

Interlingual taboos occur in multilingual contexts, where an acceptable word in one language sounds like one which is taboo in another. Haas (1975) describes the dilemma of Thai students trying to avoid using words in their own language which they know sound like obscene words in English. In reverse, many students learning English as a foreign language refuse to pronounce some words ‘correctly’ because of phonetic similarity to obscene words in their native language (e.g. Turkish speakers do not want to say English: peach). A useful dictionary of Dangerous English (Claire 1980) is available for foreign students, including words which English speakers consider ‘vulgar’, along with their meanings (illustrated) and appropriate euphemisms; a reverse guide to English words which are obscene in other languages is still needed, and would undoubtedly explain some resistant pronunciation ‘problems’ in English as a foreign language classes.

Personal names create one of the most common problems in this area, with English-speaking professors unwilling or embarrassed to call on any student named Fucks, and Jesús is usually rechristened Jessie by the second week of class.

Taboos associated with respect forms include avoidance of the name of a ruler, a husband, the aged, or a mother-in-law, or silence in their presence. Total silence is observed by widows in some communities (Cohen 1956).

Perhaps the most stringent linguistic form of social control is social ostracism, where collective or group silence is a weapon. Among the Igbo, for instance, this is accomplished by passing a law which makes it punishable by some stipulated penalties for any member of a village to greet, accept greetings, or be aided by the person considered deviant. This extreme measure is resorted to only when all other measures adopted to bring the offender to repentance and submission to the will of the people have failed. When this happens, the entire village – men, women, and children –

are forbidden to talk to him and members of his immediate family. When he re-establishes himself in the good graces of the community, the embargo on speech is lifted and he becomes a full member of the society again (Nwoye 1985).

A similar communication taboo (called ‘shunning’) is practiced by the Amish community in the United States, and informally by anyone who is ‘not on speaking terms’ with someone who has displeased them, or who refuses to talk to an errant spouse or child.

Knowing what not to do or say is obviously of great interest and importance for the ethnographer, but by their nature, taboos are difficult to elicit. Since many are sex-specific, or applicable only in cross-sex contexts, it is useful for a male and female to work as a team in collecting data. But violations may have such serious consequences for the prospects of continued acceptability in a community, sensitivity to areas where questions should not be asked is often more important that finding the answers.