LINGUISTIC ANTHROPOLOGY

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ABSTRACT:

Linguistic anthropology is the interdisciplinary study of how language influences social life. It is a branch of anthropology that originated from the endeavor to document endangered languages, and has grown over the past century to encompass most aspects of language structure and use. In this case, linguistic anthropology closely studies those societies where language defines a culture or society. For example, in New Guinea, there is a tribe of indigenous people who speak one language. ... The anthropologist would likely study a society and the way that language is used to socialize its young.30 May 2019

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Linguistic anthropology is the sub-discipline that studies communication systems, particularly language. Using comparative analysis, linguistic anthropologists examine the interaction of language and culture. They look at the connection between language and thought and how it informs about social values and norms. Linguistic Anthropology is the study of human communication across the globe, attempting to understand how language and linguistic practices intersect with cultural processes, worldviews, ideologies and identities. It is one of the four traditional subfields of Anthropology.

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**INTRODUCTION:**

**Marcel Danesi, in International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences (Second Edition), 2015**

Linguistic anthropology (LA) is an approach to the study of language that focuses on the relation between language, society, and culture. It is considered by some to be a branch of general linguistics, by others a branch of anthropology, and by still others as an autonomous discipline. Its roots are in the foundation of linguistics as a science in the nineteenth century after English scholar Sir William Jones (1786) remarked that Sanskrit, Persian, Greek, and Latin sprang from the same source and thus belonged to the same ‘language family.’ This suggested that languages shared structural features and evolved over time from older forms to develop their own distinct forms. A full-fledged science of language emerged after Swiss philologist Ferdinand de Saussure (1916) provided a theoretical framework for studying language as a system in his book, titled Cours de linguistique générale, which was published posthumously from the notes taken by his students at the University of Geneva.

In 1957, the American linguist Noam Chomsky argued that any serious scientific approach to language would have to focus on why all languages reveal a similar pattern for constructing their grammars, independently of culture. His perspective became a dominant one, and still has a large following. Chomsky's claim has always been that cultural and communicative phenomena are separate from strictly grammatical ones (Chomsky, 2002). Since the late 1960s, various arguments have come forward to challenge this stance, reinstating the original view of Boas and others that grammar develops in relation to communicative and cultural forces, not separately from them. This approach came to be called anthropological linguistics (to distinguish it from theoretical linguistics) and was renamed linguistic anthropology by Dell Hymes (1962). To this day, the two terms are used interchangeably, although the latter is now more widespread. LA is a thriving field today, sometimes overlapping with so-called cognitive linguistics, which focuses on the relation between language, cognition, and culture. The most prominent figure in the latter approach is the American linguist George Lakoff (1987). Lakoff's main argument is that the conceptual backbone of language is figurative and thus tied to the specific historical experiences and worldviews of the users of language. He cites, as an illustration, the emergence of grammatical gender categories in an indigenous Australian language called Dyirbal. In European languages, the gender of a noun is often unpredictable from its meaning and, thus, is typically thought to be arbitrary. For example, the word for ‘table’ is masculine in German (der Tisch), feminine in French (la table), and neuter in Greek (to trapézi). But in Dyirbal this is hardly the case. One of its four gender categories includes all nouns pertaining to women, all those pertaining to fire, and all those indicating things that are dangerous (snakes, stinging nettles, and the like). Gender assignment is culturally based, being determined by Dyirbal's cultural worldview.

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NJUMBE BENEDICT NGYIA Atlantic international university USA. The study of language and culture in

Linguistic Anthropology from an African perspective date back to or before thee eighteenth century with the era of the princes1769 1855, from the 16th to the 19th centuries. This written most had and is still be written since the dark ages did not actually allow access into the hinterlands where intertribal wars resulted from linguistic disparities leading to one ethnic group displacement and relocation in other places.

With the case of my country former British Cameroon and current UN trust territory and through a plebiscite in 1961 is said to have joined the already independent La Republic du Cameroun, a German protectorate that was divided between the British and the French on the 10/07/1919. The University of Yaounde I in its achieves has his on linguistic anthropology dating back to between 1962-2008:

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Ethiopia, The Era of the Princes: The Challenge of Islam and the Reunification of the Christian Empire, 1769-1855 by Mordechai Abir; The Igala Kingdom by John Boston; The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census by Philip D. Curtin; A Historical Geography of Ghana by Kwamina B. Dickson; Man in Africa by Mary Douglas, Phyllis M. Kaberry; Africa to 1875: A Modern History by Robin Hallett; The Sokoto Caliphate by Murray Last; Zamani: A Survey of East African History by B. A. Ogot, J. A. Kiernan; History and Social Anthropology by I. M. Lewis; West African Trade and Coast Society: A Family Study by Margaret Priestley; Benin and the Europeans, 1485-1897 by Alan Ryder; The Oxford History of South Africa: Vol. I. South Africa to 1870 by Monica Wilson, Leonard Thompson

Review by: Daniel F. McCall

**Language Ideology and the Colonial Legacy in Cameroon Schools: A**

**Historical Perspective**

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Cameroon prior to colonization had many languages, with none having precedence over the other. With thedevelopment of trade and the installation of missionaries along its coast, a number of local and European languages gained prominence. English became the most widely used western language. It established itself as the language of trade and of the court of equity while some local languages and Pidgin English were standardized and used in evangelization. With the triple presence in succession, and concurrently, of the German protectorate, the British and the French administrations, the ideology of ‘one nation, one language’ that developed in eighteenth century Europe was pursued, with varying degrees of effectiveness, in Cameroon by these administrations. This ideology was applied with resolve in education, mostly by the French rule, and made an impact on pre- and post-independence Cameroonian authorities who adopted English and French as official languages of the country.

Keywords: language ideology, linguistic imperialism, language policy and planning, language education, official biculturalism and multilingual education. According to Breton and Fohtung (1991) Cameroon has about 248 languages spoken by an equally diverse ethnic population. The country’s name originated from the Portuguese word Camarões (prawns) around 1472 when Portuguese visited the Wouri estuary. Since then, the name mutated in accordance with the various colonial and postcolonial administrations of the country, while Cameroon’s historiography during the colonial era and beyond has been authored in relation to colonialist and imperialist underpinnings. The rendering of the country’s name, in its various orthographies during the colonial period, from Kamerun (German) to Cameroons (British) and Cameroun (French), apparently highlights a visualization of each imperialist rule and the underlying mission pursued by them. It is not surprising therefore that the language policy applied in education by these colonial administrations differed significantly. Reynaud-Paligot (2006) suggests that the moral principles underpinning colonialism might have justified the difference in the application of colonial policies between imperial powers while White (1996) points out that such difference reflected the agenda of mostly the French and British administrations which was that of assimilation and indirect rule. Before colonization, however, the language situation of Cameroon was far from being marked by an ideological denomination between ‘language’ and ‘dialect’ as such designation became institutionalized during colonial times.

Linguistic Imperialism and Language Ideology in Europe as a Prelude to Colonization While colonialism consists of the occupation of a place (the term colony comes from the Latin word colonus, which means farmer) 1, Harmand (1910) argues that imperialism (the word originated from the Latin term imperium, which means to command) which is the ideology underpinning such occupation, endows it with a civilizing mission (see also March and, 1971 and Conklin, 1997). However, in its rationalization, imperialist ideology was perceived by some as a moral predicate rather than presupposing a confrontational rapport between the ‘civilized’ and the ‘savage’ (Hardy, 1917). In the theorization of imperialism, the colonizer’s language was, in most cases, conceived as the supreme medium for the mediation of its ideologies and the subjugation of the colonized. Ideology refers to a ‘science of ideas’. The term was coined in 1796 by French philosopher Antoine Destutt de Tracy who thought that ideology would reveal people’s unconscious habits of mind. Ideology thus relates to the very habits of mind, beliefs, assumptions, expectations, which govern the life of an individual or a group and which often are superimposed on the world in order to give it structure or meaning. It serves to direct political, economic or social Journal of Education and Training Studies Vol. 4, No. 4; April 2016

169 activities and could be conceived of as a doctrine or belief system; a system of Journal of Education and Training Studies Vol. 4, No. 4; April 2016 169 activities and could be conceived of as a doctrine or belief system; a system of presentations that explicitly or implicitly claim to absolute truth. In the field of linguistic anthropology, the link between language and ideology is conceived as ‘the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests’ (Irvine, 1989, p. 255). This study examines language ideology from the perspective of the ‘one nation, one language’ model of language and identity that developed in Europe in the eighteen century.2 This model is a construct, given that there was no linguistic uniformity in countries like Britain and France around that time, even though, in the case of France and Germany, there was a move towards language uniformization through education and the inculcation of a common sense of identity and loyalty to the state highlighted by the use of one language (Orosz, 2008, p. 1). Nowadays, in these supposedly monolingual countries there are varieties of the same language and language ideological discourse has led to social categorizations on the basis of language use. Such social ascriptions have been transposed in education settings where the promotion of a standard language, perceived to be the variety of the mainstream cultural group, is encouraged. In multilingual contexts like Cameroon, where colonizers transposed their ideologically mediated common-sense about the West with regard to language uniformity and where former colonial languages have been adopted as official languages, language ideology has consisted in a discourse of utilitarianism, unity and globalization and the resultant marginalization of local languages. This work seeks to explore the development of language ideological discourse underpinned by the concept of ‘one nation, one language’ in eighteenth century Europe and how this concept was exported to colonial Africa and Cameroon where different colonial administrations provided rather dissimilar approaches to the implementation of their language in education policy. The dissimilarity in language policy application reflected colonizers’ underpinning linguistic ideologies and suggests that in French Cameroon such policy was largely assimilationist while in British Cameroons it was accommodative of local languages.

**This is what other researchers have to say as much as this Linguistic Anthropology and political evolution is in THE TWO Cameroon**:

This paper discusses my efforts during several decades of research to understand the interaction of schooled literacy, language diversity, and social inequality. It draws on semiotic and Marxian traditions to investigate language diversity and social inequality in contemporary European and North American settings. Focusing especially on racialization practices and class dynamics, the arguments present early studies of minority language and schooling, which build toward and frame a recent study of federal education policy and immigrant experiences of schooling and language hierarchy. That study draws from sociolinguistic and ethnographic research among multilingual migrant families and communities in upstate New York, with particular focus on children’s experience with multilingual repertoires and monolingual language polices in schooling (COLLINS, 2012). Examining federal education policy and debates and comparing classroom interaction processes involving different ethnolinguistic groups, I identify two “state effects” (TROUILLOT, 2001) as they operate across different institutional sites. I argue that such effects are ways in which contemporary states attempt to regulate globalized class and racial dynamics. By shaping educational subjects whose social and linguistic characteristics, and especially their class characteristics, are both obscured and employed in school-related categorizations and school-based communicative processes, such effects contribute to the hegemonic reproduction of social, linguistic and educational inequalities (HYMES, 1996; MENKEN, 2008).

Ethnography; Hegemony; Indexicality; Literacy; Migration; Multilingualism; State effects

Introduction

We live in a time of increasing awareness of social inequality, including a sobering recognition that schools must engage the divisions of class inequalities, ethnoracial stratification and fractionated citizenship while attempting to draw students’ linguistic and social resources into a common project of learning. The studies discussed below examine language difference, schooling practices, and social dynamics. They are drawn from investigations into language use and such topics as schooled literacy, the interplay of race and class in minority status, and social reproduction. My enduring research engagements have been with language and literacy practices (an educational arena and field of study), linguistic anthropology (a research tradition) and social inequality (an ethical-political project as well as research area).

In my work, prior to the advent of the literacy practices framework,1 the study of literacy events was part of an effort to understand institutional processes leading to social reproduction. In this initial work, I came to ideas of practice through Bourdieu’s work on reproduction as practice (BOURDIEU; PASSERON, 1977) and have always viewed the study of practice as committed to investigating the dialectic of the subjective and objective in social life and social structures. This dual focus on events and structures has been shaped by conceptual frameworks and knowledge commitments originating in Linguistic Anthropology as well as what came to be called the New Literacy Studies. In particular, my research has been influenced by Gumperz’ insistence on the interactive bases of meaning (1982; 1996), Silverstein’s work on semiotics and indexicality (1976; 2003) and Hymes’ vision of ethnography as a critical, democratic mode of knowledge (1996), as well as Street’s original formulation of an ideological model of literacy (STREET, 1984), which pushed forth both an event-centered methodology and a set of productive if unsettled questions about power. My studies of literacy have been motivated by a desire to understand its relationship to social inequality. My intellectual horizon for understanding inequality – how it comes about, what forms it takes in everyday life, how it is reproduced, what opposes or lessens it – has been a Marxian tradition encompassing studies of economics (HENWOOD, 2003; MARX, 1906), politics (GRAMSCI, 1971), language (OHMANN, 1987), global systems (ARRIGHI, 2011; WALLERSTEIN, 1983), and intersections of class, race and gender (FOLEY 1990; WEIS 1990). Among the subjects that I have studied as a linguistic anthropologist, dispossession of linguistic resources has always accompanied economic precariousness and material scarcity, whether the people concerned were Native Americans (COLLINS, 1998), working-class African-Americans and whites struggling with school in the U.S. (BRANDAU; COLLINS, 1994; COLLINS, 1999a), or migrants in Belgium and the U.S. (COLLINS, 2012; COLLINS; SLEMBROUCK, 2006).

In the argument that follows, I briefly discuss several studies of literacy and literacy practices, conceptualized from evolving perspectives within linguistic anthropology that illustrate aspects of both social practices and reproductive processes. These studies employ semiotic concepts of indexicality and ideology to examine how situated communication is linked to differing social-institutional scales in classroom settings, wider debates about language and education, and multilingual literacy practices in urban migrant neighborhoods. A final study, presented at greater length, analyzes language and education policy as social practice. It examines the implications of the federal legislation and implementation of No Child Left Behind for English Language Learners (ELLs), a large category of bilingual students in the U.S., many of whom are immigrants. It analyzes “state effects” (TROUILLOT, 2001) as they operate in and across differing institutional sites. I conclude by arguing for the interplay of theory and ethnography in studying how broader political and institutional processes interact with language diversity in and out of schools. Perspectives on literacy practices; or, an evolving conceptual framework My earliest academic research on literacy emerged from a context where the primary empirical and analytic focus was on the social interaction that accompanied acts of reading or writing. The overall study was the School-Home Ethnography Project, which involved year-long classroom interaction analyses of classroom literacy events as well as research into students’ social networks and their language use at home (COOK-GUMPERZ, 2006 [1986]).

**Literacy events and indexes of identity**

My study investigated differential treatment2 in classroom literacy lessons, based on a year-long study and analysis of tracked or streamed early elementary reading groups. Because I was in regular conversations with educators and sociolinguists Sarah Michaels, Jenny Cook-Gumperz, and John Gumperz, the nature of literacy events, which we discussed as activity types, and the interactional meaning making in such events, which we discussed as situated inference, were among the primary descriptive and conceptual concerns. So also was a concern with socialization, viewing teaching and learning as an exchange, in which all parties shaped one another’s evolving sense of what reading consisted of as over time students learned and teachers taught particular ways of reading in events of reading (COLLINS, 2006[1986]; COOK-GUMPERZ, 2006 [1986]).

The primary findings from this research were that students classified as “low-ability” and “high-ability” had different approaches to text. These approaches resembled what was reported in the educational psychology research literature on the reading styles of good and poor readers as a lifelong profile: poor readers conceived of and performed reading as word-based decoding, and speed and fluency were hallmarks of good performance; good or skilled readers conceived of reading in terms of meaning, and understanding text content was the hallmark of successful reading. A question, not answered in the psychological literature on this subject, was how such differences emerged and persisted. My study was of first-grade reading groups as they developed over the course of a school year. There was evidence that the different initial orientations to reading emerged very early and persisted over the school year. My final analysis was that teachers and students socialized each other to different styles of reading. This was in part because we had evidence that students’ language use, both their use of intonation to segment syntactic and rhetorical units and their ways of pronouncing English words differed between groups. This seemed to influence their interaction with the teacher in reading lessons, during which they read aloud from text as well as answered questions about meaning.

The implications of the study were several-fold. First, viewing reading lessons as literacy events orients analysts to the diverse sources of meaning making, in the text, in participants’ expectations, and in their interactive responses to each other. Second, event-based processes cohere over time; as we would now say, they travel across discursive sites. In that coherence, that inter-discursive trajectory, there is evidence of socialization to school identities as “good” or “poor” readers, and thus as “good” or “poor” students. Put otherwise, we find evidence of a pathway for how differential treatment emerges and persists, helping to produce distinct literate identities. These implications, in turn, raise questions about social reproduction, that is, how schooling perpetuates social inequalities among students; and they raise questions about practice, that is, how mundane, everyday activities are connected to larger-scale entities, processes, and outcomes. In the case at hand, the salient question is how early primary school experiences with literacy can reinforce hierarchies of race and class in educational attainment. Let me focus on one aspect of this multi-faceted issue, the treatment of nonstandard English, that is, the

correction or rejection of nonstandard English in classroom settings. I have examined this issue in historical and comparative perspective (COLLINS, 1988); explored it in a re-analysis of primary school responses to dialect, models of reading, and group interaction, using new empirical material from Chicago (COLLINS, 1996); and discussed it as part of a general argument about schooling and social reproduction (COLLINS, 2009). All of these studies explore the interplay of social categories, language use, and language evaluation. A primary question has been how responses to class differences in language use, intertwined with ideas about ethnoracial identities and associated ways of speaking, influence the school project of promoting universal literacy in Standard English (COLLINS; BLOT 2003).

During the forum that night, several African-American speakers commented on the controversy and spoke to their affection for Black Speech. One audience member described it as the language she learned from her mother and family, but she and others on the panel and in the audience argued also that the vernacular, Ebonics, should be banned from any classroom setting. The conflict between intimate association and il-legitimate language was painful and telling. What I took away from a study of this event and the wider controversy over Ebonics (COLLINS 1999b) were several points relevant for how we think about literacy practices and social inequality. First, language ideologies are often about kinds of language and kinds of people, and those ideologies shape social subjectivities, including intimate domains, such as pride and shame. Second, language-ideological debates are conflicts over what Bourdieu called “the linguistic field” (1991, p. 57, passim). All fields concern value, often hinged on fundamental cultural contrasts of good and bad that are themselves rooted in material inequalities in society. With the question “Ebonics: Legitimate Language or Gibberish?” we pose a stark question of value: whether a major social dialect of American English, a primary language variety for tens of millions working-class African Americans (MUFWENE et al., 1998), can be a legitimate vehicle for acts of learning, for practices of reading or writing; or, conversely, whether Ebonics is gibberish – that is, unintelligible or meaningless noise.

I suggest that the society-wide dynamics of language hierarchy just described – in which the variety of English known as Ebonics is forbidden from the fields of education and legitimate language – must be part of the analysis of literacy practices. Here I am arguing that the analysis of literacy practices entails both the situated, ethnographic study of literacy events coupled with analysis of inter-event, structuring principles such as language hierarchization (ROGERS, 2003; WORTHAM, 2005). In the two cases discussed so far, such inter-event structuring principles are (a) investigated as processes unfolding during the ordinary course of an ordinary school year, in the classroom reading study, or they are (b) revealed in the analysis of exceptional, national debates and conflicts about legitimate language, in which an enduring national language hierarchy is challenged and powerfully re-asserted, as in the society-wide controversy over Ebonics in school. Let us note that the hierarchy involves overt issues of class and race in relation to language and education. The field of linguistic anthropology, because of its emphasis on situated, interactional meaning and its intensive study of communicative events and inter-event structuring principles, has specific contributions to make to educational research on literacy practices. The semiotic concept of indexicality is central to the field, as are the related concepts of language ideology and indexical ordering. Indexicality rests on a principle that the communication of non-referential, non-literal social meaning depends on knowledge of “regular relationships between language use and social structure” (GUMPERZ, 1968, p. 45). The study of such “regular relationships” has been the bedrock of linguistic anthropology, for it underpins both the normativity and performativity of language use (GUMPERZ, 1982; SILVERSTEIN, 1976). Language ideology, at its simplest, consists of statements connecting ideas about language difference to ideas about social difference, and such ideas are always suffused with moral judgments as well as political interests (IRVINE; GAL, 2000). The Ebonics controversy is a case in point. In recent decades, like much social science research, linguistic anthropologists have grappled with the challenge of reconciling micro and macro analysis. Semiotic-functional research has benefitted from Silverstein’s (2003)clear conceptual argument that we must understand interaction to extend beyond face-to-face processes, involving dialectic relations between situated, micro-analytic processes and macro-scale phenomena that, in their real-time unfolding, typically produce multiple, layered indexical orders (see also BLOMMAERT, 2005). Such orders can range, for example, from (a) the indexical layers involved in the “social meaning” signaled by the habitual classroom correction of a child’s reading aloud in a nonstandard dialect, as in the classroom study above, to (b) the indexical layers involved in the social meaning about kinds of language and kinds of people that is at stake in nation-wide debates about legitimate and illegitimate language, as in the Ebonics controversy. If we add to this semiotic focus Hymes’ vision of ethnography as a critical, democratic mode of knowledge (1996), then we have a tradition of linguistic anthropology that has contributed much to the study of communicative events in relation to wider cultural orders, social structures, and historical frames. It is a tradition that shares with the study of literacy practices assumptions about the communicative underpinnings of social orders and a desire to use critical inquiry to make a better world (COLLINS, 2006).

**CONCLUSION:**

LINGUISTIC ANTHROPOLOGY is critical and its this comprehension that brings about the harmony that the world most admires and needs in our current day generation of an ever increasing literacy pace. A mastery of the inter religious differences and ethnic and cultural diversities is quite fulfilling and that is what today is seen as religious freedom freedom of worship. Conflicts of ethnic as well as political origin are often as a result of anthroplogical background biased placement non recognition of traditional institutions and the uniqueness of cultural importance in human development and the part that these institutions play in the welfare of the entire people. Today the manifest is clear across the political divide and the situation in sit tight administrations around the world is regrettable especial where post colonial influences continue to under mine the fundamental rights of certain citizens and people to their sovereignty and human rights. This on the one hand gives comfort to political subordinators of imperial pseudo-administrators especial in francophone Africa where the French post colonial influence continue to undermines the principles of both linguistic and cultural anthropologies of the two peoples. The situation between the English and French Cameroon is a glaring example today but political hand clappers from the Anglophone divide continue to give support to a regime that terms the Anglophones as a minority group that needs to be heard and seen as they the majority francophone thereby subjecting the latter to a black on black colonization in the political affairs of a country that has never been “one and indivisible” as they claim. Unfortunate thin the 21st century. This situation has brought the two peoples on their knees as the regime militia continue to battle for retain of the English speaking people of the former British Cameroon and the French speaking semi independent La Republique du Cameroun.

Atlantic International University is keeping the records straight with lessons that brings the world together undermining the distances that exist between use through technology using information and communicating technology to reach out to the academic needs of the have and the have-nots and the needy of the neediest so that together a world of illiteracy can become the story of the past. A world in which the uniqueness of each ethnic, cultural, and linguistic differences are not a misfortune but an added advantage to give us a deeper understanding of our complexities and oneness. A world where equity undermines academic inferiority in the face of a political and economic advancement to achieve balanced development. A world where social integrations gives us a universal advancement and a shared value of our humanity and our responsibilities over one another without prejudice of bias.

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4.(HENWOOD, 2003; MARX, 1906), politics (GRAMSCI, 1971), language (OHMANN, 1987), global systems (ARRIGHI, 2011; WALLERSTEIN, 1983),

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