Linguistic Anthropology: History, Ideas, and Issues

Alessandro Duranti

1 Introduction[1]

We are born with the ability to learn languages. However, the contexts in which we learn them, the manner in which we use them, and the extent to which they help or hinder us in achieving our goals is culturally mediated. If we want to understand the role of languages in people's lives, we must go beyond the study of their grammar and venture into the world of social action, where words are embedded in and constitutive of specific cultural activities such as telling a story, asking for a favor, greeting, showing respect, praying, giving directions, reading, insulting, praising, arguing in court, making a toast, or explaining a political agenda.

Linguistic anthropology is one of many disciplines dedicated to the study of the role of languages (and the language faculty) in these and the many other activities that make up the social life of individuals and communities. To pursue such an agenda, researchers have had to master the intricate logic of linguistic systems – e.g. their grammars – and document the activities in which those systems are used and reproduced through routine and yet highly creative acts. The articles collected in this Reader are a representative sample of the best scholarship in this tradition. They should give readers a clear sense of what it means to study language in a way that often starts from utterances but always looks for the cultural fabric within which such utterances are shaped and meanings are produced.

When Dell Hymes put together what could be easily recognized as the first comprehensive Reader in linguistic anthropology (Hymes 1964d), he included writings whose authors would not have defined themselves as linguistic anthropologists (e.g. Marcel Mauss, Antoine Meillet, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Roger Brown, Leonard Bloomfield). Such an editorial decision was not just a declaration of interdisciplinarity; it was also the reconstitution of a field (or subfield) relying on any solid piece of work that could give a sense of (i) the importance of language(s) for an understanding of culture and society and (ii) the relevance of cultural and social phenom-

ena for an understanding of language(s). Looking for articles to include in this Reader, I found myself in a very different situation. Since Hymes' 1964 collection there has been such a wealth of research and writing in linguistic anthropology that, although I would have liked to include articles by authors from other fields whose work has been influential to our discipline – the linguist Roman Jakobson and the sociologist Erving Goffman are the first two names that come to mind – it became very difficult to include such authors without excluding an even greater number that have recently helped to define linguistic anthropology as a discipline with its own unique vision of language structures and language practices. What is this unique vision? In what follows I will try to provide a brief overview of the field beginning with a discussion of two names that are often used as synonyms for linguistic anthropology, namely, anthropological linguistics and sociolinguistics. I will suggest that the difference between the names "linguistic anthropology" and "anthropological linguistics" has to do with different histories, professional identities, and theoretical interests. In the case of linguistic anthropology vs. sociolinguistics, I will argue that, although in the 1960s and 1970s they were thought of as one field, they have moved further apart since that time. Despite continuous cross-fertilization and sharing of topics (especially "gender and language"), sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology constitute at the moment two related but separate research enterprises. The rest of this introductory chapter provides a brief overview of the history of linguistic anthropology in the United States (section 3); a discussion of linguistic relativity (section 4), which was until the 1960s the major theoretical issue in the discipline; a discussion of the four areas of research represented in this Reader (sections 5, 6, 7, and 8); and some final comments that connect the past with the foreseeable future (section 9).

2   What's in a Name? Linguistic Anthropology, Anthropological Linguistics, and Sociolinguistics

In contemporary academic and scientific discourse, the name "linguistic anthropology" coexists with a number of other names that are often understood to be synonyms for the same intellectual enterprise. The two most common variants are "anthropological linguistics"[2] and "sociolinguistics"[2] (with "ethnolinguistics" being a distant third within the United States[3]). Although it could be argued that this semantic ambiguity has helped construct a loosely tied community of scholars – many of whom might have been intellectually isolated within the boundaries of larger disciplines such as linguistics and anthropology – there are some differences that have emerged over the years. An understanding of such differences will help us further define the discipline represented by the articles included in this Reader.

2.1   Anthropological linguistics and linguistic anthropology

There is linguistics in anthropology, and there is linguistic anthropology, but if we wish our terms to have unambiguous and pertinent reference, there is no anthropological linguistics.

(Teeter 1964:878)

Whether or not there is in fact a field called "anthropological linguistics," there is no question that the term often functions as a synonym for linguistic anthropology, both within and outside the United States. This is, for example, the way it is used in William Bright's series *Oxford Studies in Anthropological Linguistics*, which includes books that cover classic topics in the study of language and culture such as sound symbolism (Nuckolls 1996) and new theoretical perspectives such as language ideologies (Schieffelin, Woolard, & Kroskrity 1998). From the point of view of its scope, the series could have been called "Oxford Studies in Linguistic Anthropology." The same could be said about William Foley's *Anthropological Linguistics: An Introduction*, which has chapters on many of the topics and approaches represented in this Reader. Foley's (1997:3) definition of anthropological linguistics ("that sub-field of linguistics which is concerned with the place of language in its wider social and cultural context, its role in forging and sustaining cultural practices and social structures") is close to the one given in this introduction (see above) and even closer to the one given in my *Linguistic Anthropology*,[4] with one exception. Foley sees the field he is describing as a subfield of linguistics, whereas I see it as a subfield of anthropology. This difference can be explained at least in part by the different intellectual climates in which we work – Foley teaches in a linguistics department in Australia and I teach in an anthropology department in the United States. Australian linguistics was strongly influenced in the 1970s and 1980s by (mostly British) scholars who were committed to a view of language as a social tool (e.g. Halliday 1973, 1978) and to fieldwork among Australian Aborigines with the goal of producing comprehensive and sophisticated reference grammars (e.g. Dixon 1972, 1977). This intellectual heritage has meant that linguistics in Australia has been less directly affected than linguistics in the USA by the so-called "Chomskian revolution," whose followers since the 1960s have pursued and encouraged "autonomous" models of grammar and discouraged the study of cultural or sociological dimensions of language (Chomsky 1965, 1986, 1995; Newmeyer 1980, 1986).

The linguists in Australia who are still concerned with the documentation and preservation of Australian aboriginal languages live in an academic climate that is, at least in some respects, similar to the one found in the USA (and Canada) at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, when the documentation of American Indian languages and cultures was the intellectual project through which anthropology – with material support from a very interested party, the US government – became a profession (Darnell 1998a; Stocking 1974; Voegelin 1952) (see section 3).[5] It was in that intellectual climate that Alfred Kroeber and Edward Sapir matured and, through them, that an entire new generation of scholars was formed, including Harry Hoijer, Carl Voegelin, Benjamin Lee Whorf, Mary Haas, and Morris Swadesh. These researchers – like Bright and Foley today – thought of themselves primarily as linguists and thus it is not surprising to know that in the 1950s several of them chose the name "anthropological linguistics" for their work (Haas 1953, 1977; Hoijer 1961; Voegelin & Harris 1952).[6] Their main concerns were (i) the documentation of grammatical structures of American Indian languages and other indigenous languages without writing,[7] (ii) language as the medium through which myths and historical narratives could take form,[8] and (iii) the use of language as a window on culture (understood as worldview or

Weltanschauung). These goals were pursued by studying nomenclatures and taxonomies (of animals, plants, types of disease, kinship terms, color terms) – an area that eventually developed into ethnoscience (e.g. Conklin 1962; Frake 1969; Goodenough 1956, 1965; Lounsbury 1969) – generic relations among 'languages' (e.g. through the comparative method), the impact of culture on language (e.g. euphemisms, taboo words, sacred or respectful terms) or of language on culture, in various versions of linguistic relativity (see section 4). Overall, from the point of view of teaching, linguists working within anthropology departments in the first half of the twentieth century saw themselves as in charge of training graduate students from other subfields (cultural anthropology in particular) to use linguistic data for their research. It was this goal that justified what Voegelin and Harris called "technical linguistics":

The importance of relating anthropological training to technical linguistics is that the latter brings to the former a few necessary but not too difficult techniques for exploring culture. Cultural studies without linguistic consideration tend to be narrowly sociological rather than broadly anthropological. On the other hand, ethnolinguistic studies essayed by anthropologists innocent of technical linguistic training tend to be amateurish. (Voegelin & Harris 1952:326)

It was only in the 1960s that this view was revised and the subfield moved from a position of "service" to the rest of anthropology to one of independence. Two projects that instigated this new professional identity were Charles Ferguson and John Gumperz's (1960) investigation of dialect variation and language contact in South Asia[9] (see section 2.2) and Dell Hymes' call for an "ethnography of speaking" (Hymes 1962), soon renamed "ethnography of communication" (Hymes 1964c).[10] It was in those years that Hymes proposed to use the name "linguistic anthropology" – which had been first introduced in the late 1870s (see section 3) but not quite adopted by the practitioners – to designate a distinctly anthropological approach to the study of language:

Put in terms of history and practice, the thesis is that there is a distinctive field, linguistic anthropology, conditioned, like other subfields of linguistics and anthropology, by certain bodies of data, national background, leading figures, and favorite problems. In one sense, it is a characteristic activity, the activity of those whose questions about language are shaped by anthropology. Its scope is not defined by logic or nature, but by the range of active anthropological interest in linguistic phenomena. Its scope may include problems that fall outside the active concern of linguistics, and *always it uniquely includes the problem of integration with the rest of anthropology*. In sum, linguistic anthropology can be defined as *the study of language within the context of anthropology*. (Hymes 1964a:xxiii) (emphasis in the original)

This programmatic statement had at least two concerns: (i) to keep the study of language as a central part of the discipline of anthropology (instead of letting it "slip away" to the numerous linguistics departments that were being established in the 1960s); and (ii) to broaden the concept of language beyond the narrow interest in grammatical structures. However, despite the birth of sociolinguistics in the 1960s (see section 2.2) and discourse analysis in the 1970s (Brown & Yule 1983; Givón 1979; Schiffrin 1994; Stubbs 1983), the situation has not changed much since Hymes' statement. In the USA and elsewhere, many anthropologists still take lan-

guage for granted, as if it were a transparent medium for culture, relegating it to the role of what Tedlock (1983) called "a postcard from the field," and mainstream linguistics continues to be fundamentally concerned with grammars rather than with use. Of course, as Hymes himself noted, "[o]n general intellectual principle, of course, nothing linguistic is alien to anthropology" (Hymes 1964a:xxiii). For one thing, the description of previously undocumented languages is still relevant to the anthropological enterprise because, as Franz Boas and Bronislaw Malinowski reminded us, it is impossible to understand a community without an understanding of the language(s) used by its members.[11] It is also true that linguistic reconstruction, for example through the comparative method, can be a useful tool for archaeology and historical anthropology (e.g. Kirch 1984; McConvell & Evans 1997). It is only in this broad sense of linguistics as always relevant to the general anthropological enterprise (because language *is* culture) that we can make sense of the title of Joseph Greenberg's (1968) *Anthropological Linguistics: An Introduction*.[12] The book introduces the study of phonology, morphology, language change, and potential synchronic and diachronic universals. But linguistic anthropology as practiced today and represented in this Reader is more than grammatical description and historical reconstruction, and it is also more than collection of texts, regardless of whether those texts were collected in one's office or under a tent. It is the understanding of the crucial role played by language (and other semiotic resources) in the constitution of society and its cultural representations. To pursue this goal, linguistic anthropologists have ventured into the study of everyday encounters, language socialization, ritual and political events, scientific discourse, verbal art, language contact and language shift, literacy events, and media. To the extent to which anthropology can offer the intellectual and institutional support for such a broad research program, it makes sense to use, as Hymes proposed, the name "linguistic anthropology" for such an enterprise. A great part of the research discussed by Foley (1997) was in fact done by scholars who see themselves as working within an anthropological paradigm rather than within a linguistic one and for this reason tend to call themselves linguistic anthropologists.[13] On the other hand, should linguistics revise its theoretical and analytical horizon to include in the center a notion of language that is more than grammar and an interest in speakers as more than producers of linguistic forms, scholars like Bright and Foley might see their dream of a truly *anthropological linguistics* realized.

2.2 Sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology

Sociolinguistics was born in the early 1960s as the study of linguistic forms in relation to the social context of their use. Both the types of phenomena studied and the methods used for their study varied, depending on the researchers involved. For example, Charles Ferguson and John Gumperz (1960) were interested in understanding language contact through qualitative methods involving work with informants, informal observations, and (sometimes) questionnaires (e.g. Blom & Gumperz 1972). Starting a few years later, William Labov was interested in providing an empirical basis for the study of language change that could start from actual language use in urban communities. He pursued this goal by developing a method

for the study of speech in social context based on statistical analysis of a large corpus of data extracted from recorded interviews.[14] In collaboration with Joshua Waletzky, Labov also developed an analysis of the syntax and structural organization of elicited narratives (Labov & Waletzky 1966) that became very influential in a number of fields (see the contributions in Bamberg 1997).

The different methodological orientation and theoretical goals produced distinct schools of research on language use, but the term "sociolinguistics" has survived, with various qualifiers doing the work of acknowledging some differences among approaches. Thus, Labov-style sociolinguistics has been known as "quantitative," "macro," or "urban," whereas Gumperz-style sociolinguistics has been called "qualitative," "micro," or "interactional."[15] In part due to the collaboration between Gumperz and Hymes in the 1960s (while Hymes was at the University of California at Berkeley[16]), the term "sociolinguistics" was used to cover a wide range of approaches, including some distinctively anthropological and sociological perspectives. For example, such collections as Bright's (1966) *Sociolinguistics: Proceedings of the UCLA Sociolinguistics Conference, 1964* and Gumperz and Hymes' (1972) *Directions in Sociolinguistics: The Ethnography of Communication* include quantitatively oriented studies of language variation and language change in urban settings (e.g. Labov 1966a, 1972b), correlational studies between language forms and speakers' social status (e.g. Ervin-Tripp 1972a, 1972b; Friedrich 1966), specific guidelines for the ethnographic descriptions of language use within a community (e.g. Hymes 1966, 1972a), componential analysis (e.g. Tyler 1972), ethnoscience (e.g. Frake 1972), ethnomethodology (e.g. Garfinkel 1972), and conversation analysis (Schegloff 1972). Until the 1970s, ethnographic studies of language were considered part of sociolinguistics, as implied in Dell Hymes' *Foundations in Sociolinguistics: An Ethnographic Approach* (1974a).[17] Since then, however, the situation has changed considerably.

Despite Hymes' renewed attempt, especially through his long tenure as the founding editor of the journal *Language in Society*, to keep sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology under the same umbrella, or at least not to draw any sharp boundaries, since the mid-1980s there has been an increasing separation between the two subdisciplines. Except for the occasional chapter on "language and Culture" or on "The Ethnography of Communication,"[18] textbooks and edited books in sociolinguistics tend to focus almost exclusively on either quantitatively oriented studies of mostly urban speech communities or studies of patterns of language use and language change that are attentive to sociological variables (especially social status and gender) and pragmatic dimensions (e.g. politeness), but are not informed by anthropological theory or methods (e.g. ethnography). In parallel sign of incipient separatism, recently published textbooks in linguistic anthropology and anthropological linguistics dedicate very little or no space at all to sociolinguistic theories and methods (e.g. Duranti 1997b; Foley 1997; Hanks 1996; Palmer 1996; Salzmann 1993).

The roots of this separation are both methodological and theoretical. Most sociolinguists – especially quantitatively oriented ones – continue to use today the same methodology introduced by Labov in the 1960s, that is, they typically rely on statistical analysis of data collected through interviews. There is no question that through these methods sociolinguists have produced an impressive body of work

which can tell us a great deal about the internal dynamics of speech communities and the relevance of social class, sex, and age for a number of linguistic phenomena, most typically (and most effectively) dialect variation and sound change in progress. At the same time, these methods and some of the theoretical implications of sociolinguistic research are problematic for many linguistic anthropologists. First, the treatment of sociological concepts such as social class, sex, gender, race, and generation as independent variables is not universally accepted in the social sciences, anthropology in particular. From the 1980s there has been a considerable amount of writing devoted to the cultural construction of these sociological categories (Gal 1992, 1995). This literature is ignored by most quantitative sociolinguists. Second, the definition of context as a constantly changing frame that needs reference to speech itself as one of its constitutive elements (e.g. Duranti & Goodwin 1992) is usually absent from quantitative sociolinguistic studies. Third, the exclusive reliance on the interview as the only reliable method for recording spontaneous speech is viewed with suspicion by most linguistic anthropologists, who see speaking as an interactional achievement. Over thirty years of research on conversational exchanges[19] and on the speech patterns that ensue from those exchanges have taught us that speakers are constantly engaged in the business of fashioning their speech for their interlocutors and that stories rarely have only one author in conversation.[20] The texts collected by sociolinguists tend to be (or be presented as) monologic. Questions and feedback channel responses by fieldworkers are often left out of transcripts together with other features of the interaction (e.g. pauses, false starts) that do not seem relevant to the study of phonological features (e.g. deletion of final consonant). And yet, some of these features are considered important by linguistic anthropologists and other researchers who believe in the co-construction of narrative accounts and the importance of the mutual monitoring that goes on in any encounter.

On the other hand, it would be naïve not to recognize that, in turn, many studies within linguistic anthropology do not match the kind of scientific standards aimed at by sociolinguists, not simply because of linguistic anthropologists' tendency toward qualitative as opposed to quantitative analysis – with the common strategy of discussing only a few examples and then generalizing from them – but because many of the studies within linguistic anthropology, as most of those within its closest sibling, cultural anthropology, are based on data that are not easily accessible for counter-arguments or independent testing. This lack of accessibility is due to a number of factors, including (i) the anthropological tradition of working in isolated small communities or in communities that require considerable time and financial investment for anyone else to go and collect additional data, and (ii) the lack of shared corpora, in part due to ethical considerations (see Duranti 1997b:119–21) and in part to the unwillingness of researchers to expose their data to the scrutiny of others without knowing how the data might be used by others. If one rejects the idea that talk alone (whether in a recording or in a transcript) constitutes "the data," the entire idea of sharing "a corpus" becomes problematic.

These methodological, analytical, and theoretical differences are reinforced by the institutional separation due to the tendency for sociolinguists to work in departments of linguistics or foreign language and for linguistic anthropologists to work in

departments of anthropology. The result is a separation that is by no means bene-ficial to either one of the two fields, especially for training new scholars. Linguistic anthropologists could certainly benefit from the systematic attention to broad patterns of variation in linguistic forms and social networks that characterizes contemporary sociolinguistic research. Sociolinguists, in turn, could take more advantage of ethnographic methods and the theoretical concerns regarding the cultural construction of social categories of participants (e.g. ethnicity, race, gender).

One domain of inquiry where there has been some exchange between sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists is the study of gender differences (see section 8). Although it is difficult to say whether this convergence will provide a model to be emulated in other research areas, it does show that a concentration on issues (e.g. is men's and women's language different and if so why? how is gender made to count in an interaction?) can draw together researchers who are usually kept apart by methodological and epistemological differences.[21]

3 The Birth of Linguistic Anthropology in the United States

The inclusion of linguistic anthropology as an integral part of mainstream anthro-pology – the "four field approach"[22] – is a phenomenon that is unique to the USA – as opposed to European countries like Great Britain for example[23] – and must be understood within the context of the research program under which anthropology became a profession in the USA, namely, the documentation of North American aboriginal cultures. In this (largely government-sponsored) project, the study of American Indian languages played a major role. Under the auspices first of the Smithsonian Institution (founded in 1846) and later of the Bureau of Ethnology (founded in 1879 and later renamed Bureau of American Ethnology [BAE]), the documentation of aboriginal languages spoken north of Mexico became an import-ant part of the work pursued by anthropologists in private and public institutions.

The person who more than anyone else helped organize, direct, and find funds for the survey of American Indian languages in North America in the second phase of the nineteenth century was the founder of the BAE, John Wesley Powell (1834–1902). A natural scientist who retrained as a geologist and saw an obvious connection between the study of the land and the cultural tradition of its inhabitants (Darnell 1998a:25), Powell believed that languages could be an excellent instrument for classifying cultures and he employed linguists and other scholars to collect as much material as possible on American Indian languages (e.g. word lists, myths, descriptions of ritual life). On the basis of this material, those employed by the BAE worked on linguistic classifications and tried to organize the surveyed languages in families (Powell 1880). It is then not surprising that what is perhaps the oldest use of the term "linguistic anthropology" is found in the 1st Annual Report of the Bureau

> If one were asked to name the one work which has been of greatest importance and influence in the development of American anthropology, it could scarcely be any other than Powell's "Indian Linguistic Families of America North of Mexico," published in the Seventh Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology fourteen years ago.
>
> (Kroeber 1905:579)

for 1879–1880 (published in 1881), in a section prepared by Otis T. Mason (1838–1908), a curator of artifacts at the Bureau who also became fascinated by linguistic classifications (Darnell 1998a:38–9; Mason 1900). With the establishment of the American Anthropological Association (see note 25), there began a period of intense interest in linguistic matters in American anthropology, as shown by the numerous articles that provide grammatical descriptions, classifications, texts, and notes on nomenclatures (almost exclusively on American Indian languages[24]) in the first issues of the official organ of the Association, the *American Anthropologist*.[25] For example, in Volume 2 (1900), we find John R. Swanton's "Morphology of the Chinook Verb," Albert S. Gatschet's "Grammatical Sketch of the Catawba Lan-guage," and Franz Boas' "Sketch of the Kwakiutl Language." By Volume 7 (1905), the articles on linguistic topics and issues had risen to ten.

Despite the importance of Powell and the BAE, however, it is Franz Boas who is credited with transforming what was originally an almost exclusive interest in classification of American Indian languages (largely based on word lists) into a systematic study of their grammatical structures. Boas, who taught himself linguistic analysis, set the standards that were to be followed by subsequent generations of scholars through his own grammatical descriptions and his editorial work on the *Handbook of American Indian Languages* published in 1911 (Jakobson 1944; Stocking 1974; Voegelin 1952).[26] His "Introduction" to that volume was a major departure from the perspective on non-Indo-European languages that was popular at the time.

Boas argued that there was no necessary correlation between a given language and a given race or between a given language and a given culture. This claim constituted an implicit rejection of Powell's goal of using Native American languages for ethnic classification (Boas was also skeptical of genetic classification of considerable time depth and more inclined toward acculturation as an explanation for linguistic and cultural change[27]). At the same time, Boas, certainly influenced by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century German philosophical tradition, agreed with Powell that lan-guage plays a crucial role in culture and should be studied by ethnologists: "If ethnology is understood as the science dealing with the mental phenomena of the life of the peoples of the world, human language, one of the most important manifestations of mental life, would seem to belong naturally to the field of work of ethnology . . ." (Boas 1911:63). This perspective had methodological implications, one of the most important of which was that ethnographic fieldwork should be done using the native language of the people one wanted to study instead of speaking through an interpreter or using a lingua franca (e.g. a pidgin). Since he saw the categories formed in or through language as unconscious, Boas believed that lan-guages provided excellent material for the study of cultural phenomena (Hymes 1964b:7–9; Stocking 1974).[28]

In addition to being interested in language as a window on the human mind, Boas was also committed to a theoretical understanding of grammatical systems, their differences and similarities. He identified the sentence (as opposed to the word) as the fundamental unit for expressing ideas in any language[29] and listed a number of grammatical categories that are likely to be found in all languages. His criticism of some common prejudices about American Indian languages (and implicitly of other languages of the people who were then called "primitive") helped to establish

scientific standards for linguistic investigation. He stressed the importance of making orthographic conventions and analytical categories appropriate for the languages under investigation instead of uncritically extending categories originally developed for the study of ancient European languages. Boas argued against the then commonly held idea that speakers of American Indian languages are less accurate in their pronunciation than speakers of Indo-European languages. Repeating an argument first made in his 1889 article "On Alternating Sounds," Boas argued that this is a false perception due to the difficulty that linguistically unsophisticated listeners had in making the phonetic distinctions that are relevant in these languages. While stressing that different languages may classify the world differently, Boas also cautioned against interpreting the lack of certain linguistic forms as evidence of the lack of abstract thought or ability to generalize (Boas 1911; Lévi-Strauss 1966).

Thus, while continuing to use the term "primitive languages," as in vogue at the time,[30] Boas in fact showed that such languages were by no means primitive.[31]

Unlike Powell (1880), Boas did not see the different types of morphological patterns (e.g. word formation) in the world languages along an evolutionary scale, especially not one that ended with English at the top. Instead, in his investigation of grammatical structure, vocabulary, and poetry in American Indian languages, Boas found support for an underlying unity of the human mind (Boas 1911, 1925; Hymes 1999:87; Lucy 1992:11-17).

This general stance toward aboriginal languages was restated by his students. For example, Edward Sapir started his 1933 entry "Language" for the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* with a statement that echoes the Boasian view of human languages:

The gift of speech and a well ordered language are characteristic of every known group of human beings. No tribe has ever been found which is without language, and all statements to the contrary may be dismissed as mere folklore. There seems to be no warrant whatever for the statement which is sometimes made that there are certain people whose vocabulary is so limited that they cannot get on without the supplementary use of gesture so that intelligible communication between members of such a group becomes impossible in the dark. The truth of the matter is that language is an essentially perfect means of expression and communication among every known people. Of all aspects of culture, it is a fair guess that language was the first to receive a highly developed form and that its essential perfection is a prerequisite to the development of culture as a whole. (Sapir [1933] 1949a:7)

The obvious implication is that language is the most sophisticated cultural system available to human societies and to their members, and, therefore, there can be no anthropology without the study of language.

4 Linguistic Relativity

The first major theoretical issue that occupied linguistic anthropologists was linguistic relativity. The interest in this issue was born out of a marriage between an idea and an encounter. The idea is the nineteenth-century Romantic association between a language and the "spirit" (German *Geist*) of a nation or the language and the worldview (*Weltanschauung*) of its speakers. The encounter was with the languages of the indigenous peoples of the Americas and the other continents (re)discovered or conquered by Europeans. The subsequent attempt by missionaries, travelers, and linguists to describe those languages originally developed for Indo-European languages (Salmon 1986) highlighted the difficulty in translating and in adapting grammatical categories originally developed for Indo-European languages (Cardona 1976; Haas 1977), Boas' cultural relativism was extended to (or perhaps inspired by) his linguistic relativism:

As is well known, Boas's most important theoretical contribution to the study of linguistics was his promulgation of the concept of linguistic relativism, that is, that each language had to be studied in and for itself. It was not to be forced into a mold that was more appropriate to some other language. Side by side with this was his insistence on seeing the language as a whole. (Haas 1978b:195)

The efforts to find analytical categories that could adequately describe the grammatical structures of non-Indo-European languages resulted in the realization that languages have quite different ways of encoding information about the world and our experience of it. One possible inference from these observations on linguistic diversity was that languages are arbitrary systems and one cannot predict how they will classify the world (linguistic relativism). Another inference was that languages would develop distinctions and categories that are needed to deal with the reality surrounding the people who speak them (linguistic functionalism). A third inference was that the different conceptual systems represented in different languages would direct their speakers to pay attention to different aspects of reality, hence, language could condition thinking (linguistic relativity). An earlier version of this last view is found in the posthumous *Linguistic Variability and Intellectual Development* by the German diplomat and linguist Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835):

Each tongue draws a circle about the people to whom it belongs, and it is possible to leave this circle only by simultaneously entering that of another people. Learning a foreign language ought hence to be the conquest of a new standpoint in the previously prevailing cosmic attitude of the individual. In fact, it is so to a certain extent, inasmuch as every language contains the entire fabric of concepts and the conceptual approach of a portion of humanity. But this achievement is not complete, because one always carries over into a foreign tongue to a greater or lesser degree one's own cosmic viewpoint – indeed one's personal linguistic pattern. (von Humboldt [1836]1971:39–40)

As shown in this passage, von Humboldt's view was that the conceptual world represented in each language is *sui generis* and as such incommensurable with the worlds represented in other languages. This makes the perfect acquisition of a foreign language impossible unless speakers are willing and able to leave behind the ways of thinking acquired through their first language (competent multilingual

speakers – of which there are millions in the world – would then be people who can successfully switch from one worldview to another). About a hundred years later, Edward Sapir expressed a very similar view:[32]

Language is not merely a more or less systematic inventory of the various items of experience which seem relevant to the individual, as is so often naïvely assumed, but is also a self-contained, creative symbolic organization, which not only refers to experience largely acquired without its help but actually defines experience for us by reason of its formal completeness and because of our unconscious projection of its implicit expectations into the field of experience. [...] Such categories as number, gender, case, tense, mode, voice, "aspect" and a host of others, many of which are not recognized systematically in our Indo-European languages, are, of course, derivative of experience at last analysis, but, once abstracted from experience, they are systematically elaborated in language and are not so much discovered in experience as imposed upon it because of the tyrannical hold that linguistic form has upon our orientation in the world. (Sapir [1931]1964:128)

Sapir's ideas had a profound impact on Benjamin Lee Whorf (1897–1941), a chemical engineer who worked as an insurance inspector while pursuing a number of intellectual quests, including linguistics (see Carroll 1956; Lucy 1992a:24). After Sapir moved to Yale from Chicago in the Fall of 1931, Whorf attended Sapir's courses and became part of the cohort of Sapir's students (Carroll 1956; Darnell 1990). Soon after, he started to study Hopi, the language through which he was able to best articulate his views on the relation between linguistic patterns and thinking (Whorf 1938, 1941, 1956a). The frequent use of the term "Sapir–Whorf Hypothesis," as a synonym for linguistic relativity comes from the intellectual association between Sapir's and Whorf's ideas on the role of linguistic patterns on thinking and acting in the world (see Koerner 1992 for a review of the literature generated by this "hypothesis"). The term "Sapir–Whorf Hypothesis," however, is misleading.[33] The two scholars never worked out a joint statement about the relation between language and thought, and a close analysis of their writings shows some important differences, including the different conceptual level reached by the two scholars (Lucy 1992a). Furthermore, for some time Whorf's name was more closely associated with that of Dorothy Lee than with that of Sapir (e.g. Lee 1944).[34]

The "tyrannical hold" of linguistic forms, as expressed in the passage quoted above, was perhaps for Sapir a way of articulating a number of insights he had developed on the relation between language, culture, and personality. Two of them in particular are recurrent in his writing and his teaching (as reconstructed by Judith Irvine in Sapir 1994). One was the realization of what he saw as a fundamental paradox of human life, namely, the need that each individual has to use a shared and predefined (we could say "public") code in expressing what are subjectively different experiences. The other was the arbitrary (i.e. non-natural) character of linguistic structures, which makes them the most advanced type of cultural forms – a basic theme of Sapir's 1927 article "The Unconscious Patterning of Behavior in Society." The two insights inform the idea expressed in his lectures that language "is one of the most patterned, one of the most culturalized, of habits, yet that one, above all others, which is supposed capable of articulating our inmost feelings" (Sapir 1994:55).

The comparative study of typologically different languages (e.g. English and Chinese) shows that the specific properties of linguistic systems cannot be explained functionally given that what is obligatory in one language (e.g. the distinction between singular and plural nouns) may be optional in another. In order to make sense of the way in which each language has its own (arbitrary) logic, Sapir compared the logic of grammars to the logic of artistic codes: "Every language is itself a collective art of expression. There is concealed in it a particular set of esthetic factors – phonetic, rhythmic, symbolic, morphological – which it does not com-pletely share with any other language" (Sapir 1921:225). For Sapir, then, just as we cannot easily give a functional explanation of aesthetic forms and aesthetic taste, we cannot easily give a functional explanation (e.g. in terms of communicative needs) for why languages behave the way they do.[35] Linguistic rules are usually uncon-scious but with an internal coherence (Lucy 1992a:23). It is this coherence that makes it difficult for individual speakers to enter the logic of the linguistic system and alter it to their liking. Sapir ([1927] 1949a) illustrates this point with the marking of plural in English. There seem to be no functional reasons for the use of plural with nouns that are accompanied by numerals. Hence, why do English speakers need to say *five men* instead of *five mans?* For Sapir, it is a question of aesthetic taste (or, as he says in the following quote, "feeling"): "English, like all of the other Indo-European languages, has developed a feeling for the classification of all expressions which have a nominal form into singulars and plurals" (Sapir 1949b:550). On the other hand, in languages like Chinese, where nouns are not marked for number, if there is a need for being specific, numerals (e.g. words for "five," "ten") and quantifiers (e.g. "all," "several") can be added.

Cross-linguistic comparison then reveals the arbitrary nature of the grammatical distinction between singular and plural and its taken-for-granted necessity in the minds of those speakers of languages that do have such an obligatory feature. Sapir, however, never developed a conceptual apparatus for testing the implications of these observations.

Whorf started out sharing several of the basic positions held by Sapir on the nature of linguistic classification, but he went on to develop his own conceptual apparatus and his own version of linguistic relativity. This apparatus included the important distinction between *overt* and *covert* grammatical categories (Whorf 1956b; Duranti 1997b:58–9; Lucy 1992a:26–31). Overt categories are marked in the morphology of the word or in accompanying words. For example, in Spanish, gender is an overt category because it is usually given by the ending of the noun (e.g. -o vs. -a) or by a number of accompanying elements, e.g. the article (el vs. la). In English, instead, gender tends to be a covert category that is made explicit only under particular circumstances. When someone says, "I met a neighbor at the store," we don't have a way of inferring the gender of the neighbor. But if a personal pronoun is used next, we will know, without asking, whether the friend in question is a man or a woman ("I met a neighbor at the store. She was buying French wine"). The distinction between overt and covert was a precursor of Chomsky's (1965) distinction between "surface" and "deep" structure[36] and it carried an important implication for cultural analysis because it underscored that conceptual distinctions are made in languages even when no overt signs of them can be recognized. What is overt, explicit in one language may not be in another. The analyst's task is to uncover

the hidden cultural logic of the linguistic system and ascertain whether this logic has implications for thinking or acting in the world.

The statement that comes the closest to being a hypothesis about the relationship between language and thought is Whorf's "linguistic relativity principle," according to which "... users of markedly different grammars are pointed by their grammars toward different types of observations and different evaluations of extremely similar acts of observation, and hence are not equivalent as observers but must arrive at somewhat different views of the world" (Whorf 1956b:221). The same essay in which this principle is stated contains the much quoted – and later criticized – comparison of the conceptualization of time in Hopi and SAE (Standard Average European) and the English example of the wrong inference produced by the use of the word *empty* in describing drums that had previously contained gasoline. Whorf explains that the lack of contents described by *empty* is interpreted by English speakers as implying that the drum is no longer dangerous, whereas in effect it is more dangerous than when full because it contains explosive vapor (see Lucy 1992a: 50 for a clear diagram that illustrates the inference process).

Whorf's "linguistic relativity principle" generated a considerable amount of research mostly by linguistic anthropologists and psycholinguists from the 1940s to the 1960s (see Lucy 1992a). In the 1960s, in conjunction with the rise of cognitive science and other research paradigms aimed at linguistic and cognitive universals, Whorf's claims underwent a period of harsh criticism, which culminated on the one hand with Brent Berlin and Paul Kay's (1969) claim that there are cross-linguistic universals in the elaboration of color coding across a large number of languages[37] and on the other with the reanalysis of Hopi tense and aspect and the correction of some of Whorf's original claims, including the claim that Hopi does not have a future tense (Malotki 1983; P. Lee 1991, 1996). During the same period, there arose a misguided view of linguistic relativity, which continues into the present, as pertaining to differences among languages in number of words for *snow* than English dialects (see Martin 1986 for a criticism of this claim) was believed to be Thus, the (questionable) claim that Eskimo dialects have more words for *snow* than English dialects (see Martin 1986 for a criticism of this claim) was believed to be evidence of different thinking patterns between Eskimo and English speakers. Rather than talking about "habitual thought" being directly influenced by lexical choices or grammatical patterns, Whorf was focusing on how a way of thinking may arise *by analogy* with "fashions of speaking" (a term later echoed by Hymes' [1974b] "ways of speaking").

Among the new efforts to test, reframe, and extend Whorf's original intuitions, John Lucy's (1992b) comparison of the performance of speakers of Yucatec and speakers of English in a series of cognitive tasks has been so far the most successful within an experimental paradigm. Starting from the observation that English marks plural overtly and obligatorily on a wide range of noun phrases, whereas Yucatec usually does not mark plural and when it does, it is optional, Lucy hypothesizes that English speakers should habitually attend to the number of various objects more than Yucatec speakers do, and for more types of referents. The results of his experiments support his hypothesis. Another hypothesis was built on the use and distribution of classifiers (these are nouns or particles that many languages employ to encode information on the type of category represented by a given noun). Yucatec nouns that take a plural marker need to be accompanied by a classifier. Thus,

whereas in English one can say *three men* (numeral + noun), in Yucatec, one must say "numeral (óos) + human classifier (túul) + man (*máak*)." This constraint is similar to the one for so-called mass nouns in English (e.g. *sugar, cotton, zinc*), which also need classifiers to be modified by a numeral. One cannot say *²two cottons*, but must say *two balls of cotton* (Lucy 1992b:73). From these observations Lucy inferred that many English lexical items presuppose a unit as part of their meaning and for this reason no classifier is needed, whereas Yucatec lexical items do not presuppose a unit. The unit presupposed by English lexical nouns referring to inanimate objects tends to be the form or shape of the object (Lucy 1992b:89). Yucatec nouns, instead, have no such presupposed unit and their meaning implies types of substance or material composition. For example, in Yucatec the same word *che* "wood" is used to form words referring to objects like trees, sticks, and boards, which are of different shapes but are made out of wood substance. This is a different lexical strategy from the one adopted in English, where objects of the same substance (wood) but different shapes are referred to with different lexical items, e.g. *tree, stick, board, table, shelf*.[38] From these considerations, Lucy (1992b:89) hypothesized that "*English speakers should attend relatively more to the shape of objects and Yucatec speakers should attend relatively more to the material composition of objects* in other cognitive activities" (emphasis in the original). This hypothesis was tested with a series of tasks involving recognition and recollection of pictures where the number of items (people, animals, tools) and various substances (corn, firewood, rock) varied. The results demonstrated that indeed English speakers and Yucatec speakers differ in how they categorize and recall different types of referents. For example, English speakers tend to group objects in terms of common substance (e.g. wood, water). "These patterns suggest that the underlying lexical structures associated with the number marking in the two languages have an influence on the nonverbal interpretation of objects" (Lucy 1992b:157).[39]

4.1 Extensions of linguistic relativity

Over the years, the original conceptualization of linguistic relativity has often been reformulated or extended to new research questions. For example, Hymes (1966) expanded the notion of linguistic relativity to include not only the ways in which linguistic structure may influence our experience of the world but also the ways in which cultural patterns, for example, specific cultural activities, can influence language use and determine the functions of language in social life. This second type of linguistic relativity draws attention to the uses of language and the cultural values associated with such uses. Communities can be shown to differ in the ways in which they use and value names, silence, or the telling of traditional stories and myths.

Another line of research that expands on the notion of linguistic relativity is represented by Michael Silverstein's notion of metapragmatic awareness, that is, the ability that speakers have to talk about the pragmatics of their language use. This concept draws from and extends the discussion of the unconscious nature of linguistic knowledge found in the writings of Boas, Sapir, and Whorf. Silverstein formulated a hypothesis about three specific features of language structure, which,

depending on their value, can either favor or hinder native speakers' ability to interpret the pragmatic force of specific linguistic forms (Silverstein 1981) [this volume] – hence, they are indicators of metapragmatic awareness. The three features are: (i) unavoidable referentiality (i.e. whether the linguistic expression unambiguously identifies one and only one referent); (ii) continuous segmentability (i.e. whether the pragmatic meaning is expressed by a discrete and continuous linguistic segment, e.g. a word, a single suffix, an entire phrase), and (iii) relative presupposing vs. creative quality (e.g. the extent to which the linguistic expression in question presupposes the existence of a given relation, status, act or instead helps constitute that relation, status, act by being used).[40]

In addition to being used to talk about the limits of native speakers' intuitions on the force of their utterances, the same categories can also provide the foundations for a cultural critique of the ways in which certain language philosophers described and classified the social acts performed by speech. In his article "Cultural Prerequisites to Grammatical Analysis," Silverstein (1977) argues that even philosophers are not immune to the limits of metapragmatic awareness and have tended to focus on those effects of language that can be explicitly represented by linguistic expressions. For example, the "things done by language" – or speech acts – identified by the philosopher J. L. Austin (1962, 1975) are the acts that can be described by (referential) expressions such as I promise that, I declare that, I order you to … etc. In other words, Silverstein argues that "promising" is recognized as a possible speech act because it is lexicalized (through the word promise) and can be articulated in a sentence that involves the speaker as the agent of the act and an embedded clause. But there are plenty of social acts done through language that cannot be easily named by such referential expressions and therefore may not be as easily accessible to native speakers' consciousness. These phenomena have consequences for social scientists' ability to use members' intuitions in their research, and therefore they should be taken into consideration by social and cultural anthropologists who rely on the natives' intuitions in their interpretations of interactions or texts (see also B. Lee 1997; Silverstein, this volume, p. 400; Silverstein & Urban 1996).

Another extension of this work is found in the burgeoning field of language ideologies, which investigates the impact of speakers' beliefs about their language (and other languages) on language structure and language use (Kroskrity 2000b; Schieffelin, Woolard, & Kroskrity 1998; Woolard & Schieffelin 1994). In this perspective, speakers' search for an ideal common language (e.g. "the Standard") that can unite a nation or any other aggregate is viewed as a phenomenon quite similar to the working hypothesis of those linguists who want to limit their study of language to an ideal homogeneous speech community, ignoring the variation found at all levels of language use (see section 5).

In most of the earlier studies on linguistic relativity – at least up to the 1960s – language was fundamentally taken as a taxonomic system whereby speakers classify the experiential world (the objects and people around us, our actions and emotions) into distinct (and arbitrary) units. In testing whether language "guides" speakers' understanding of the world, researchers assumed that linguistic expressions (i) can be easily identified and isolated from the stream of behaviors within which they are routinely embedded in social action, and (ii) constitute an autonomous system that can be studied on its own, without regard for the other semiotic resources that

typically coexist with them, and contribute to their meaning. A different approach is pursued by those researchers who have recently stressed the importance of looking at how speaking is part of a broader array of activities. These include at a micro-interactional level the semiotic exploitation of the human body, e.g. through gestures (Haviland 1996; Levinson 1996, 1997), and of the material artifacts with which humans surround themselves (C. Goodwin 1996a, 1997).

5 Communicative Competence and the Speech Community

While Hymes (1962, 1964c) was launching his call for an ethnographic study of language use across speech communities, a new theoretical paradigm was being established in linguistics: generative grammar. This was primarily due to the writing of Zellig Harris' student Noam Chomsky, who, after attacking behaviorist conceptions of language (Chomsky 1959) and American structuralism (Chomsky, Halle, & Lukoff 1956),[41] went on to propose a mentalistic model of grammar, to be understood as "concerned with discovering a mental reality underlying actual behavior" (Chomsky 1965:4). This mentalistic perspective was foremost expressed by Chomsky's distinction between competence (knowledge of language) and performance (use of language) and his research strategy to focus exclusively on the study of competence, conceived of as an idealized system:

Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech-community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance. This seems to me to have been the position of the founders of modern general linguistics, and no cogent reason for modifying it has been offered. (Chomsky 1965:3–4)

Furthermore, for Chomsky, the focus on competence meant that the study of performance had to be postponed, until a full description of competence could be available.[42]

After praising Chomsky's approach for shifting the conceptualization of language from an independent object to a human capacity, Hymes argued that the distinction between competence and performance presented a number of problems: "The term 'competence' promises more than it in fact contains. Restricted to the purely grammatical, it leaves other aspects of speakers' tacit knowledge and ability in confusion, thrown together under a largely unexamined concept of 'performance'" (Hymes 1971a:55). Starting from a commonsense notion of competence, Hymes held that speakers are "competent" not only when they have the knowledge of grammatical rules but also when they have the knowledge of how to use them appropriately. Furthermore, language acquisition could not be restricted to the process of acquiring knowledge of grammatical rules given that in acquiring a language, "a child becomes able to accomplish a repertoire of speech acts, to take part in speech events, and to evaluate their accomplishment by others" (Hymes 1972b:277) [this volume]. To be a member of a particular community, one must know when to speak and when not to speak, how to be polite, how to request or offer collaboration, how to sound calm, surprised, interested, concerned, and so forth. Finally, not all members of the speech

community have access to the same knowledge or to the same repertoire (Gumperz 1964). Not everyone knows how to deliver a lecture or how to understand a clinician's diagnosis. Rather than focus on the innate aspects of linguistic competence – the phylogenetic correlate of the observed human universal capacity for language acquisition – Hymes shifted the focus to the diversity that is apparent when we study how language is used in social life. Instead of ignoring differences for the sake of creating a homogeneity that can be more easily accessed through a scientific method, Hymes assumed that an anthropological program for the study of language must start from the assumption of heterogeneity (Duranti 1997b:chapter 3). He defined "an ethnography of speaking" as "a theory of speech as a system of cultural behaviour, a system not necessarily exotic, but necessarily concerned with the organization of diversity" (Hymes 1971b.51).

By proposing an alternative research paradigm, Hymes replaced Chomsky's notion of competence as tacit (typically unconscious) knowledge of grammatical rules with the notion of communicative competence, which includes both tacit knowledge and ability to use language (Hymes 1972b.282). This new notion of competence is analytically tied to new units of analysis. Instead of sentences, researchers are required to look at acts, situations, events (Hymes 1972a). This change for Hymes "entails social description (ethnography)" (Hymes 1971b.52). In philosophy and cognitive science, it is perfectly acceptable to talk about acts (Searle 1965, 1969) or situations (Barwise & Perry 1983) without having to engage in the systematic observation and documentation of actual behavior (ethnography). In contrast, for Hymes the study of language as social action commits the researcher to ethnography. This commitment locates the notion of communicative competence within the field of anthropology at large. The revision of the notion of competence also implies a new way of thinking about performance, first of all giving it a positive rather than a negative definition (anything left after competence) and, second, tying it to aesthetic dimensions of speaking (see section 6).

In his criticism of Chomsky's "ideal speaker-hearer" and of the assumption of homogeneity as a necessary precondition for linguistic analysis, Hymes was by no means alone. Starting in the 1960s, sociolinguists like Labov demonstrated again and again that even within monolingual communities, there is a considerable amount of linguistic variation and that such variation correlates with social stratification (Labov 1966a, 1966b, 1972b, 1972c). The notion of "ideal speaker" is then questionable on empirical and theoretical grounds (Labov 1972c). While Labov stressed the importance of thinking of a large metropolitan area like New York City as a single speech community – based on speakers' shared norms for evaluating variation – Gumperz was motivated by his own work on multilingualism to look for analytical concepts that could help him make sense of the ability that speakers have to shift from one language, dialect, or style to another and the variation found in the access speakers have to various linguistic resources. The notion of repertoire (Gumperz 1964) was meant to account for the range of varieties speakers had access to, and the notion of linguistic community (Gumperz [1962] 1968b), later renamed speech community (Gumperz 1968a [this volume]), was meant to account for the boundaries of what should be studied as a unit.[43] People routinely switch within a predictable range of linguistic varieties, a general term that covers language, dialect, style, and register.[44]

A variety is any body of human speech patterns which is sufficiently homogeneous to be analyzed by available techniques of synchronic description and which has a sufficiently large repertory of elements and their arrangements or processes with broad enough semantic scope to function in all normal contexts of communication. (Ferguson & Gumperz 1960:3)

At the same time, variation is not simply determined by the situation and there are limits to what the analyst can predict (Blom & Gumperz 1972). A series of studies addressed the issue of language choice in multilingual communities. In looking at which language was spoken by whom to whom and when, researchers were trying to come up with hypotheses about language change that could give us hints about the causes of language change (Romaine 1995; Sankoff 1980). Gal's study of declining bilingualism in a small Austrian town connects the abandonment of Hungarian and the resulting German monolingualism of young women to their rejection of peasant life and values and their embracing of an industrial economy (Gal 1978, 1979).

Within the United States, the study of language variation and of the differences between standard and non-standard dialects carried out by urban sociolinguists gave educators the tools to avoid racial stereotypes based on prejudice and ignorance of linguistic matters. The work of Labov on the logic of Non-Standard English was particularly influential in helping define Black English Vernacular (BEV) as a dialect of English with its own distinct phonological and syntactic rules (some of which are in fact similar to other non-standard dialects of English) (Labov 1969, 1972a). The attitudes toward BEV (or AAVE, that is, African American Vernacular English) by members of the black community were then left unanalyzed. Marcyliena Morgan's discussion of the views expressed within the African American speech community was at the same time an attempt to encourage sociolinguists to face the consequences of their own scientific efforts and an occasion to look at the language ideology of African Americans, tying it to the history of race relations within the United States (Morgan 1994a [this volume], 1994b; Rickford 1997, 1999).

The attention paid to different types of variation within multilingual communities eventually led Gumperz to concentrate on the mechanisms through which speakers signal to each other how to interpret what they are saying (e.g. what the hearer should pay attention to, how the speaker feels about something). He referred to these mechanisms as contextualization cues. They are linguistic features that can operate at different levels of the linguistic system involving intonation, rhythm, lexical selection, organization of information in an utterance or in a stretch of discourse, or language or dialect selection (Gumperz 1977, 1982a, 1992). When contextualization cues are missed or misread, communication is in trouble. Since the early 1980s, miscommunication based on different ways of communicating has been known among linguistic anthropologists as crosstalk, a term originally invented by T. C. Jupp and used as a title for a well-known BBC program centered around Gumperz's work on miscommunication between British speakers and South Asian immigrants (Jupp, Roberts, & Cook-Gumperz 1982). Gumperz's work has been extended to a number of areas, including miscommunication between genders (Maltz & Borker 1982; Tannen 1990).

Despite the fact that scholars like John Gumperz had been working on language contact since the late 1950s, it was not until the 1980s that linguistic anthropologists became intellectually engaged with the issue of heterogeneity. This shift was partly

due to the difficulty in ignoring the linguistic effects of new and massive immigration and the globalization of economic markets. At the same time, there were new intellectual sources that allowed a reconceptualization of "language"; among them the writings of Mikhail Bakhtin were particularly influential (Bakhtin 1981, 1984, 1986; Volosinov 1973). In his analysis of the novel, Bakhtin (1981:261) argued that investigators are confronted with a variety of coexisting styles, which represent different "voices" (the author's, the characters'). It is through these voices that language as a fundamentally stratified and differentiated code, what he called heteroglossia (Russian *raznorecie*), can enter the novel – as well as everyday talk (Lucy 1993). In this perspective the notion of a unitary language is not just a working hypothesis, as proposed by Chomsky, but an ideological stance. Rather than homogeneity, we find differentiation, which on the one side creates ... inequality among speakers and on the other it allows for subtle aesthetic effects (through the juxtaposition of multiple voices and coexisting varieties). This work inspired a number of linguistic anthropologists including Jane and Kenneth Hill (1986), whose notion of **syncretic language** to describe language use and language ideology among Mexicano (Nahuatl) speakers is informed by teaching and learning strategies that draw from different cultural traditions. The main idea behind this notion is the belief that when different cultural systems meet, it is rarely the case that one simply replaces the other. As pointed out by Hanks (1986, 1987) for the Maya, as soon as contact takes place, any pre-existing indigenous tradition is bound to be affected by the new tradition proposed (or imposed) by the newcomers.

Until recently, linguistic anthropologists thought of communities as entities constituted by daily face-to-face interaction. This is in part due to the fact that most anthropologists worked in small rural communities. Even those who worked in the city tended to concentrate on a relatively small territory, such as a neighborhood or a block. Some even worked with isolated individuals or families who did not know each other. These fieldworkers often acted as if their subjects were isolated from the rest of the world, that is, as if there were no connection or communication with parties who were not physically present or as if such parties were not important or relevant. The situation has started to change in recent years, as some researchers have become interested in the role played by media and new technologies in the daily life of speakers all over the world and the impact of media on everyday communication. For example, Debra Spitulnik (1998a, 1998b, 1999) has analyzed the role of the audience in recontextualizing the messages produced by national and local radio in Zambia, providing a rich documentation of linguistic transfer and transformation from media discourse to popular (and everyday) discourse. Equally important has been the work on the use (and abuse) of new technologies for guiding interpretation of reality through what Charles Goodwin (1994) calls "professional vision" (see section 8).

6 A Focus on Performance

The reframing of the notion of competence came with a rethinking of the notion of performance. Chomsky's view of performance was guided by two assumptions. The

first was that to speak of performance meant to speak of perception and production. The second was that the scientific method requires us to ignore performance because it is subject to "memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic)" (Chomsky 1965:3). Hymes revised and extended Chomsky's notion of performance to include something more than the behavioral record of what speakers do when they talk. For Hymes, as for folklorists and aesthetic anthropologists, performance is a realm of social action, which emerges out of interaction with other speakers, and as such it cannot be described in terms of individual knowledge (Hymes 1972b:283 [this volume]). Rather than thinking about performance as a residual category – that is, whatever is left after having defined what constitutes competence – Hymes (1981:81–2) underscored the positive and creative nature of performance (see also Duranti 1997b:14–17). Instead of reducing our ability to generalize about language, the view of speakers as performers allows us to broaden the analytical horizon of language use in a number of ways.

First, it recognizes a different notion of creativity from the one emphasized by Chomsky's notion of grammar, which must be able to produce a potentially infinite set of sentences on the basis of a finite set of rules. The creativity of performance refers to the ability (and sometimes necessity) to adapt speech to the situation or the situation to speech – much of what we say cannot be taken to be "literal" – and both child and adult conversation is full of parallelism in ways that are related to or identical to what we call poetic language. Metaphors abound in all kinds of speech situations. [45] If it is true, as argued by Friedrich (1986), that there is a poet in each of us, one of the goals of any serious study of language use implies not only the identification of the special features that go into great verbal art and performance but also the discovery of the creative aspects of language in everyday talk. Contrary to popular belief, even scientists are not immune to the creative power of linguistic metaphors and other poetic devices; in fact they routinely rely on them in their problem-solving activities. In their study of a physics laboratory in the USA, Ochs, Gonzales, and Jacoby (1996) found that physicists discussing experiments involving changes in temperature that bring about changes of "states" (e.g. from "paramagnetic" to "domain") attribute human qualities to physical entities, for example, producing utterances like "this system has no knowledge of that system." At other times the physicists' language suggests a blend of different identities: the researchers use personal pronouns (*I, you*) with predicates that refer to change of states undergone by particles: "When I come down I'm in the domain state." In this construction, the speaker (the physicist) appears to assume the identity of a physical entity, producing a semantically ungrammatical sentence. And yet, it is through the use of such supposedly impossible sentences that scientists are able to think creatively.

Second, the view of speakers as performers also recognizes individuals' unique contribution to any given situation and to the evolution of any linguistic tradition. This has been difficult to do within formal linguistics because the emphasis (from Saussure to Chomsky) has been on the linguistic system – often described in terms of context-independent rules – rather than on what specific speakers do with language in specific situations. Both the structuralist (mostly synchronic) linguistics of the first half of the twentieth century and the rationalist (mostly synchronic) paradigm of formal linguistics, which started in the 1960s, favored linguistic forms over their users because of the

fear that a focus on individual performance detracts from the ability to generalize. This has allowed researchers to improve their descriptions of the formal properties of languages but has revealed very little about individual differences and the role of individuals in linguistic change. As pointed out by Barbara Johnstone (1996:19), "[t]hinking about language from the perspective of the individual requires a pragmatics that deals centrally with newness and idiosyncrasy rather than a pragmatics in which conventionality is the focus."

Third, the focus on performance singles out those situations in which speakers are accountable not only for *what* they say but also, and sometimes predominantly, for *the way* in which they say it (Bauman 1975 [this volume], 1977; Hymes 1975, 1981). This perspective unites a concern with the aesthetic dimensions of speaking with their social and political implications.[46] The identification of a good leader with a good orator is common enough around the world to suggest that evaluation of the way in which a message is delivered enters into and informs political judgment. Furthermore, the speaker's commitment to an audience is only one side of a complex relationship that must be understood as crucial for the shaping of messages and meanings (Duranti 1993; Hill & Irvine 1993; Streeck 1980, 1994).

Fourth, the focus on performance recognizes the role of the audience in the construction of messages and their meanings (Duranti & Brenneis 1986; Graham 1995) and the complexity underlying the apparent simplicity of the distinction between speaker and hearer (Goffman 1981; Hymes 1972a). This is a point that has been at the center of a number of recent and not-so-recent enterprises, including hermeneutics (e.g. Gadamer 1976), Bakhtin's dialogism (see above), Goffman's strategic interactionism (Goffman 1959, 1963, 1971), and conversation analysis (Goodwin & Heritage 1990). The challenge for contemporary researchers is to provide sound empirical results that can test, inform, and refine abstract theoretical positions. Despite the recurrent emphasis on dialogue and intertextuality, relatively few researchers have actually looked at spontaneous verbal interaction in everyday life, where most of the "text" of our social life is constructed. For example, Marjorie H. Goodwin's (1990b) study of teenage boys' and girls' talk in a Philadelphia neighborhood in the early 1970s remains unsurpassed for empirical rigor, depth of documentation, and ability to provide us with solid generalizations about narrative structure and argumentation in natural settings.

The role of the audience is but one of the aspects of context that linguistic anthropologists have been eager to capture (Goodwin & Duranti 1992). As demonstrated by the work of Gumperz, Labov, and others, at any given time, speakers may have at their disposal not just one or more codes (for example, English as opposed to English and Korean) but a vast range of registers, genres, routines, activities, expressions, accents, prosodic and paralinguistic features (e.g. volume, tempo, rhythm, voice quality). The choices available to speakers are a repertoire acquired through life experiences and subject to change through the life cycle, and partly due to one's social network (L. Milroy 1987; Milroy & Milroy 1992), including the effects of schooling, profession, and a person's special interests. The concern for the role of the audience and for the construction of messages across speakers, turns, and channels makes us question the view of speaking as merely the expression of an individual's intentions (Du Bois 1993; Duranti 1988, 1993; Moerman 1988; Rosen 1995). If we take a socio-historical approach, we must agree with Bakhtin (1981:294) that

"[l]anguage is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions; it is populated – overpopulated – with the intentions of others. Expropriating it, forcing it to submit to one's own intentions and accents, is a difficult and complicated process." Furthermore, our original intentions must be constantly updated by the effect we produce on our interlocutors, the knowledge we have of their background knowledge (C. Goodwin 1979, 1981; Heritage 1990/91), and their willingness or ability to go down the interpretive path we have sketched up thus far. For example, when an audience treats as humorous something that was meant to be serious, the speaker must confront a difficult choice: whether to reclaim his original interpretive key ("this is meant to be serious") or adapt ("this is meant to be funny"). A focus on performance makes us particularly aware of the relative control that we as speakers have on what Hymes (1972a) called the "key" of our messages. By moving into the realm of performance, we must face the fact that interpretation of what we say is always a joint production.

7 Language Acquisition and Language Socialization

Chomsky's hypothesis that the language faculty is innate and that the universal properties of languages can be studied and described in terms of grammatical rules (to be written using the formalism of generative grammar) inspired a new generation of psychologists to venture into the study of language acquisition. One way to test Chomsky's hypothesis about the innate quality of language was to go into great depth in the analysis of one language and find out what information is lacking in the linguistic input but necessary for a child to make generalizations and thus formulate rules for interpreting and producing speech. This was the strategy first followed by Chomsky himself, who, throughout the 1960s and 1970s, felt fully entitled to talk about language universals by working exclusively on English.[47] Another approach was to study the acquisition of as many languages as possible to see what common patterns (e.g. in the order of what is acquired, in the mistakes that children make, in their successes) they display. One of the first and most ambitious projects in this direction was the collaborative effort by psychologists, linguists, and anthropologists at the University of California at Berkeley in the mid-to late 1960s that produced *A Field Manual for Cross-Cultural Study of the Acquisition of Communicative Competence* (Slobin 1967).[48] Dan Slobin had studied at Harvard and MIT with a number of prominent linguists and psychologists, including Noam Chomsky, Roman Jakobson, Jerome Bruner, and Roger Brown. Soon after he was hired at Berkeley, he became part of a reading and discussion group that first included Susan Ervin-Tripp, John Gumperz, Erving Goffman, John Searle, and Dell Hymes, and by 1966 had also expanded to their graduate students. Prompted by Slobin's talk about language universals and his review of the existing literature on child language acquisition across languages, the group adopted Hymes' notion of communicative competence and mapped out an ambitious plan for the cross-cultural study of language acquisition. It was an attempt to merge experimental methods (from psychology) and ethnographic methods (from anthropology) and thus bring together Chomsky's cognitivism with the ethnographic approach promoted by Gumperz and Hymes.

Armed with the Field Manual, students took off for their field sites and came back after a year with lots of data and lots of questions. These early attempts at the cross-cultural study of language acquisition encountered a considerable number of problems, mostly due to the fact that it was difficult, if not impossible, to carry out the planned experiments in the field. Even the mere observation of adult-child interactions was at times highly problematic due to local expectations about how children should behave when a stranger enters the domestic space (Schieffelin 1979a:75; Ochs 1988:1-2). The discussion of these problems at Berkeley produced a new awareness of the issues involved in the extension of a paradigm developed to work with white middle-class families (where one caretaker, usually the mother, attends to one or two children) to speech communities with a different social organization (sibling caregiving, extended family) and different beliefs about children and their relationship with adults. Taking into consideration these limitations, Slobin decided to reframe the enterprise in terms of cross-*linguistic* rather than cross-*cultural* comparison and organized a collaborative effort with colleagues in other countries to study language acquisition of English, Italian, Serbo-Croatian, and Turkish. Concentrating on linguistic dimensions that seemed to be fruitful for developmental psycholinguistic analysis, Slobin and his colleagues avoided the issue of the impact of culture on language acquisition by homogenizing the sample, that is, by working only with children of literate, professional, and urban parents (Slobin, personal communication).[49]

Two studies that more fully realized the goal of studying the acquisition of communicative competence in non-Western communities were done by Bambi B. Schieffelin and Elinor Ochs, who were aware of the work done in Berkeley but had received their training at different universities.[50] In both cases, the task was approached with a different and, in some respects, richer set of intellectual and human resources than those of the earlier fieldworkers who had tried to implement the model of the Field Manual.

Both Schieffelin and Ochs had previous fieldwork experience (in Papua New Guinea and in Madagascar respectively), had already collected child language data, and were not isolated from other researchers during their fieldwork. In 1975, Schieffelin returned to Mount Bosavi, Papua New Guinea, where she had been in 1967-8 with Edward L. Schieffelin (he was also with her in 1975-7 working on spirit mediums). In 1976, they were joined by ethnomusicologist Steven Feld who carried out a dissertation project on music and emotions (Feld 1982). As Schieffelin acknowledged in her dissertation (1979b) and in her 1990 book *The Give and Take of Everyday Life: Language Socialization of Kaluli Children*, the interaction with the other two anthropologists played an important role in her study of Kaluli culture. Equally important was the training she had previously received from Lois Bloom at Columbia University. By the time she went to Bosavi, Schieffelin knew how to carry out a longitudinal study and was familiar with the existing literature on child language acquisition.

Elinor Ochs had written a dissertation on oratory in Madagascar (Keenan 1974) and had been teaching in the linguistics department at the University of Southern California since 1974. Her earlier work based on the video recording of the interaction between her own twins encouraged her to venture into the study of child language.[51] In the summer of 1978, Ochs went to a (Western) Samoan village to carry out a longitudinal study of children's acquisition of Samoan. With her were two graduate students, Martha Platt and myself. Platt followed and documented the acquisition of three of the six children in the acquisition and socialization study (Platt 1982). I concentrated on adult grammar and language use across contexts (Duranti 1981, 1994).

Ochs and Schieffelin, who had met in 1974 and collaborated on a number of articles together, went to the field with very similar goals:

The goal of my research in Papua New Guinea was the description of the development of communicative competence in a small-scale, nonliterate society.... The first endeavor... was to determine and describe the significant, recurring situations and interactions in the everyday life of Kaluli children. I needed to know the pattern of their daily activities, how and by whom they were organized (or not organized), who was responsible for feeding them, setting disputes between them, and where, when, and how these children regularly interacted with adults and other children. Initially these questions were partially answered through extensive observations of children over entire days and by interviewing adults for their views on what was going on and why. Both my actual observations and what the Kaluli themselves said about things helped formulate the first ethnographic accounts of what Kaluli children do all day and with whom they do it. (Schieffelin 1979a:78)

In making sense out of what people are saying and in speaking in a sensible fashion themselves, children relate linguistic forms to social situations. Part of their acquired knowledge of a linguistic form is the set of relations that obtain between that form and social situations, just as part of their acquired knowledge of a social situation includes the linguistic forms that define or characterize it. (Ochs 1988:2)

As discussed earlier (see section 5), the acquisition of communicative competence was always meant to be a crucial area of study in the type of linguistic anthropology proposed by Gumperz and Hymes in the 1960s (see Sherzer & Darnell 1972). However, the two longitudinal studies by Ochs and Schieffelin were the first to fully integrate an interest in the acquisition of grammar and the acquisition of other cultural patterns. The publication of their joint article "Language Acquisition and Socialization: Three Developmental Stories and Their Implications" (Ochs & Schieffelin 1984 [this volume]) - written in 1981, during a period spent at the Research School of Pacific Studies at the Australian National University[52] - set up the basic theoretical framework for what then became the field of language socialization. Starting from a definition of language socialization as (i) the process of getting socialized *through* language and (ii) the process of getting socialized *to* language, Ochs and Schieffelin re-examined prior work on language acquisition as embedded in culturally specific expectations about the role of children and adults in society. For example, they used their discovery that neither the Kaluli nor the Samoans have a register corresponding to what linguists call baby talk (Ferguson 1964) and psycho-linguists call Motherese (Newport 1976) not only to argue that (*pace* Ferguson 1978) baby talk is *not* universal,[53] but also that its presence or absence is tied to conceptualizations of children and their place in society.

Their work inspired others to look at the cultural implications of talk to children and by children in other societies. For example, Don Kulick adopted a language socialization perspective in his study of language shift in the village of Gapun in

Papua New Guinea, where children are growing up speaking Tok Pisin instead of their parents' first language, Taiap, the local vernacular. Kulick argued that macrosociological factors such as migration, assimilation, and the formation of a nation-state are not sufficient to explain the abandonment of the vernacular by these children and that we need to look at the daily practices of language use to understand "the conceptions that people have about language, children, the self" (Kulick 1992:17; see also Ochs & Schieffelin 1995).

Ochs and Schieffelin assumed that socialization is a never-ending process that starts at birth (or even earlier) and continues throughout the life span. This perspective extends the notion of language socialization to language-mediated peer-interaction, apprenticeship and everyday cognition, literacy activities, language contact, and cross-cultural encounters.[54] Elizabeth Mertz's study of the ways in which Law School students are taught how to read a text and argue its potential interpretations is a good example of how institutions and professional organizations socialize adults into **entextualization** – the process of transforming experience into text – and **recontextualization** – the process of making texts relevant to the ongoing situation[55] (Mertz 1996).

8 The Power of Language

There are two main strategies for analyzing the relationship between language and culture. One is to start from linguistic forms (e.g. words or parts of words, intonational contours, syntactic constructions, conversational routines) and then try to discover what those forms accomplish in social interaction or, more generally, in the construction of everyday life. This strategy has often been used to discuss the expression of respect or politeness (Agha 1994; Brown & Levinson 1978, 1987). The other strategy is to start from a particular cultural construct (e.g. gender, power, race, ethnicity, disability, conflict, healing, advertising, play, verbal performance) and then try to find out how specific linguistic forms participate in (or constitute) such constructs or processes.

Much of the work on linguistic relativity (see section 4) can be thought of as part of the first method. Linguistic forms, either because of their arbitrary nature (for Sapir) or because of their implicit worldview (for Whorf), are seen as constraints on the ways in which individual speakers as members of speech communities perceive reality or are able to represent it. Silverstein's work on metalinguistic and metapragmatic awareness (see section 4.1) can be seen as an extension of this tradition in that it provides a framework for thinking about the power of specific linguistic forms to reveal or to hide (from speakers' consciousness) their indexical value, that is, their dependence or ability to impact upon reality.

Maurice Bloch's (1975a) "Introduction" to *Political Language and Oratory in Traditional Society* represents another trend within this tradition. Bloch argued that the very form of traditional political oratory, especially the routinized formulae used to express respect toward tradition and politeness toward leaders, provides a framework for the unconscious acceptance of authority and the status quo. For Bloch, formalized speech – as opposed to conversation – restricts the range of possible questions and possible answers and therefore limits freedom of expression and any

real challenge of authority. Although the category of formalization he used was later criticized (Irvine 1979 [this volume]; Brenneis & Myers 1984), Bloch's ideas made it possible to rethink the power of language on human action and strengthen the ties between political anthropology and linguistic anthropology.[56]

The argument of the power of language over mind and society was also present in the discussion of the impact of the invention of literacy. Jack Goody and Ian Watt (1962) argued that alphabetic writing had a crucial role in the development of Western civilization. This role was accomplished by transforming oral messages into a permanent record and thus introducing the practice of "history" (as opposed to "myths" or "legends") and by helping the "change from mythical to logico-empirical modes of thought" (Goody & Watt [1962] 1968:43). A number of empirical studies were designed to test Goody and Watt's hypotheses about the impact of alphabetic writing on cognitive abilities and social change (Kingten, Kroll, & Rose 1988; Olson & Torrance 1991; Street & Besnier 1994). Eventually, most linguistic anthropologists have come to share Scribner and Cole's (1981) view that there are different types of literacy and that many of the earlier generalizations were conflating differences, including the difference between literacy as an isolated, autonomous activity and literacy as embedded in other activities and in institutions, for example, schools or state bureaucracies.[57] Goody's "autonomous model" of literacy was also criticized by Brian Street (1984) who proposed an "ideological model" of literacy, that is, a perspective that links writing practices to power structures in a society (e.g. establishment of authority, access to institutional resources, wealth). He also stressed the importance for ethnographic studies of literacy, based on "detailed, in-depth accounts of actual practice in different cultural settings" (Street 1993:1).

Within linguistic anthropology, the interest in literacy revived an earlier interest in schooling and classroom interaction (Cazden, John, & Hymes 1972) and Shirley Brice Heath's (1983) groundbreaking study of home literacy activities in three communities in the United States had a tremendous influence on future research. On the basis of extensive observation and documentation of the various ways in which children from different communities were engaged with written texts, Heath argued that earlier experiences within the family and the community have an impact on a child's ability to succeed in a school system whose model of literacy events is based on the same principles that guide reading and writing in white middle- (and upper-middle) class families. The study of literacy merged with language socialization and has since been an important part of linguistic anthropology, with an ever-expanding set of issues and dimensions, including the relation between literacy and the formation of class, gender, racial, and ethnic identities (Collins 1995).

The technological revolution of the 1980s and 1990s extended the notion of literacy so that now we easily talk about "video literacy" or "computer literacy." Within linguistic anthropology, a growing number of researchers have been using these new technologies for documenting and analyzing social interaction (Duranti 1997b:chapter 5). It is now common practice to use the latest audio-visual technology to store, retrieve, and code verbal behavior. Just as the invention of the portable audio tape recorder revolutionized the study of talk – it is difficult to imagine the birth of sociolinguistics without the portable tape recorder – the more recent digital innovations have opened up the possibility of a different type of linguistic anthropology. Analysts can now study in great detail the simultaneous operations that

produce and make possible any stretch of talk.[58] Through new kinds of inscription (Ricoeur 1981:198) these tools allow us to see (as opposed to only hear) talk as collaboratively produced by participants with the help of a number of semiotic resources, including the human body, the built environment, and a variety of material artifacts and tools. These technological innovations also came with a rethinking of the notion of "context," which is no longer understood as an independent variable (e.g. a speaker's social status) or a given backdrop against which to analyze linguistic forms, but as the product of specific ways of behaving. Participants in an interaction are constantly and mostly implicitly preoccupied with defining the context against which their actions should be interpreted. The analyst's job is to reconstruct such a process of contextualization (Goodwin & Duranti 1992:3–4) while being conscious of the fact that analysis itself is a form of contextualization. The power to frame events and provide a preferred interpretation is both within the interaction (as negotiated by the participants) and outside of it, as researchers (and other "experts") frame the event in order to produce an analysis of it.

In this, the work of Michel Foucault on the institutionalization of madness and other forms of social control over deviance and transgression was very important in alerting social scientists to the power of observation, documentation, and classification, as well as to their participation in social control and surveillance (e.g. Foucault 1979, 1980, 1984). Albeit coming from a different tradition (the study of face-to-face interaction), Charles Goodwin's notion of professional vision is a recent contribution to a related issue: the power that certain interpretive procedures have to convince an audience. Goodwin analyzes three practices used by experts: "(1) coding, which transforms phenomena observed in a specific setting into the objects of knowledge that animate the discourse of a profession; (2) highlighting, which makes specific phenomena in a complex perceptual field salient by marking them in some fashion; and (3) producing and articulating material representations" (C. Goodwin 1994:607, emphasis in the original). One of the events analyzed by Goodwin was the televised proceedings of one of the most widely watched criminal trials of the twentieth century, in which four police officers from the Los Angeles Police Department were accused of using excessive force against an African American motorist, Mr Rodney King. Goodwin argues that the prosecutors lost the case[59] because they treated the video of the beating (which had originally caused public outrage when broadcast on television) as a natural object, whose content would be self-explanatory. The defense, instead, treated the video tape as a document in need of interpretation and employed experts who used the three practices mentioned above to socialize the jury to see the actions recorded as justifiable.

One of the ways in which a community dominates another, or some members of a community dominate other members, is by determining the acceptable ways of speaking. For this reason linguists have long been interested in the process that defines a variety as the Standard and in its use by the dominant class to maintain control (Bloomfield 1935; Labov 1970; Baugh 1999; Rickford 1999). Standardization is common in the formation of a nation-state and is a weapon by the central government against linguistic minorities. A classic study of this process is Bruce Mannheim's (1991) reconstruction of the rise of Quechua to the status of the standard language of the Inka Empire (in Southern Peru) after the Spanish invasion,

in the sixteenth century. Minority languages, however, are not always dominated by the majority language as shown by Kathryn Woolard's (1989) research in Barcelona, where a national minority language (Catalan), spoken by the ethnic group that has economic control in the region, is the "low prestige" language. The nation's Standard (Castilian) is the "high prestige" language.

In their efforts to connect the details of language use in everyday life with the political and economic institutions and processes that allow for those details to be interpreted and be either effective or futile, linguistic anthropologists have relied on a number of theorists and concepts from other fields. I will mention two theorists here: Antonio Gramsci and Pierre Bourdieu. For Gramsci, as he wrote in his "Prison Notebooks" (Quaderni del carcere), it is not sufficient for a dominant class to rule through state institutions such as the legal system, the police, and the military. It must also succeed at imposing its own intellectual and moral standards, possibly and more effectively through persuasion. Gramsci's notion of hegemony was meant to capture the ability that a ruling class has to build consensus through the work of all kinds of intellectuals (e.g. managers in industrial societies, priests in feudal societies) who give the rest of the population a political, intellectual, and moral direction (Gramsci 1971, 1975; Williams 1977). These ideas have been adopted – sometimes critically, other times not – by linguistic anthropologists and other students of language use to illuminate the processes through which a group or class manages to impose its own view of what constitutes the prestige dialect (Standard English vs. African American English), the prestige language (e.g. English vs. Spanish, Spanish vs. Mexicano), or even the prestige accent (Philips 1998:215–16; Woolard 1985). By being interested in language use and more generally communication, of course, linguistic anthropologists cannot but be interested in the inequality that characterizes speakers' ability to control different linguistic varieties, whether they are recognized "languages" or registers (e.g. the way in which doctors or lawyers talk) (Hymes 1996). The focus on inequality, however, has been only recently conceptualized through a direct concern with the relationship between language and political economy (Gal 1989). In this endeavor, the work of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has been influential, especially his notions of habitus and cultural capital. Bourdieu's notion of habitus is related to Gramsci's notion of hegemony in that it is an unconscious set of dispositions that are connected to and recursively activated by participation in specific activities or practices. But the concept of habitus also has the meaning of "regulated improvisations" (only apparently an oxymoron) and is more easily related to socialization and the study of language as a practice that draws from and maintains traces of a variety of social sources and "voices" (Bakhtin 1981). Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital – which includes not only aesthetic taste but also linguistic skills – allows us to think of linguistic varieties as having a "value" within a "market" (Bourdieu 1982, 1985; Gal 1989; Woolard 1985). William Hanks' study of sixteenth-century texts produced by native Maya officials takes advantage of these insights in making sense of how both old and new conventions were drawn upon in the production of "boundary genres," that is, ways of organizing texts and expressing ideas that "derived from a fusion of Spanish and Maya frameworks" (Hanks 1987:677).

It is this interest in the heterogeneity of texts and their political implications that characterizes some of the most recent contributions in linguistic anthropology. Jane

Hill's (1998 [this volume]) study of Mock Spanish by government officials and the media is an example of this trend, which combines a long-standing interest in language contact (e.g. borrowings, code-switching) and linguistic creativity with a more recent interest in the use of language in the construction, maintenance, and challenging of racial stereotypes and ethnic division within a society (see also Baugh 1999; Mendoza-Denton 1999; Rampton 1995a, 1995b; Spears 1999; Urciuoli 1991; Wodak & Reisigl 1999; Zentella 1997).

After a pre-feminist era in which scholars were mostly interested in uncovering the logic of the encoding of sex differences in languages (e.g. Sapir 1929), the first generation of feminist linguists – as pointed out by Bucholtz (1999) – concentrated on the oppressive implications of ordinary speech (e.g. R. Lakoff 1973) and on the differences between men's and women's speech (e.g. West & Zimmerman 1983), whereas the second generation became preoccupied with trying to explain why there were communication problems between men and women. Borrowing from Gumperz's concept of interethnic miscommunication, some researchers suggested that miscommunication between men and women was due to the fact that the two groups belong to different cultures (Maltz & Borker 1982; Tannen 1990). A more recent trend of studies has adopted the view that gender is constructed and interacts with other identities (Anzaldúa 1987, 1990; Bucholtz, Liang, & Sutton 1999; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1992a, 1992b; Hall & Bucholtz 1995; Mendoza-Denton 1996). The role of language in helping establish gender identity is part of a broader range of processes through which membership in particular groups is activated, imposed, and sometimes contested through the use of linguistic forms that do not simply index "woman" vs. "man" or "feminine" vs. "masculine," but activate stances or perform speech acts that are associated with a particular gender (Ochs 1992, 1996). This constructivist and interactional view of gender (and more generally identity) has been more open to the integration of verbal communication with other semiotic practices within the lived space of human interaction (M. H. Goodwin 1999; Goodwin & Goodwin 2000 [this volume]; Sidnell 1997).

9 Conclusions

What needs to be clearly seen by anthropologists, who to a large extent may have gotten the idea that linguistics is merely a highly specialized and tediously technical pigeonhole in a far corner of the anthropological workshop, is that linguistics is essentially the quest of MEANING.

(Whorf 1956a:73)

In order to have a better sense of the future of a discipline, we need to have a better sense of its past. When we look back at our history, we learn a number of important lessons, including the following.

1 The basic assumption of linguistic anthropology is that to understand the meaning of linguistic messages one must study them within the contexts in which they are produced and interpreted. This commitment to contextualized language is

supported by a number of units of analysis that go beyond the word, the sentence, and the notion of language as an ideal system to include speech communities, speech events, activities, and acts as well as the notions of register and variety.

2 The different names used for referring to the study of language in/and/as culture (e.g. linguistic anthropology, anthropological linguistics, sociolinguistics) can be made sense of by a historical overview of the methods, goals, and academic affiliation of the researchers involved (section 2). The term "anthropological linguistics" reveals a strong identification with the discipline of linguistics as opposed to anthropology and a "service" mentality, that is, a view of linguistics as a tool for training social or cultural anthropologists to do fieldwork. The term "linguistic anthropology" – used as early as 1880 but more widely adopted only in the 1960s – places the enterprise squarely within the field of anthropology and starts from an understanding of speaking as an activity that has its own cultural organization, to be studied by means of a combination of linguistic (read "structuralist") analysis and ethnographic methods. As discussed in section 2.2, in the 1960s and 1970s the term "sociolinguistics" served as a cover term for a variety of approaches to the study of language in context which included quantitative studies of variation within and across communities and ethnographic studies of verbal genres and speech events (e.g. the ethnography of communication). However, contemporary sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology seem directed toward separate paths (with the possible exception of the study of gender, where there is more communication across methodological and theoretical boundaries). Despite an earlier convergence of interests (language variation, the role of context), most contemporary linguistic anthropologists subscribe to a constructivist view of social categories (e.g. gender, status) and thus reject the sharp separation between dependent and independent variables found in sociolinguistics, especially in its quantitatively oriented research. The reliance on interviews as the primary source for data collection is still a defining feature of sociolinguistic surveys whereas linguistic anthropologists tend to record spontaneous verbal interaction across a range of situations.

3 What we presently call linguistic anthropology started out in the 1880s as an attempt to document and describe aboriginal North American languages and as such it coincided for about seventy years with descriptive, historical, and (to a lesser extent) theoretical linguistics (section 3). That tradition continues through those linguists who carry out fieldwork in geographical areas (e.g. Australia, Papua New Guinea, the Amazon) where there are still languages that have not been properly described (e.g. Foley 1986; Dixon & Aikhenvald 1999) or who try to document and help revive languages that are considered endangered (Dorian 1993, 1994; Grenoble & Whaley 1998; Hale et al. 1992). Theoretically, there is also continuity between Boas' original plan (and his diffusionism) and some of the more recent work on linguistic diversity and the relationship between the spread of languages and the spread of populations (e.g. Nichols 1992, 1995a, 1995b; Nichols & Peterson 1996).

4 The earlier encounters with American Indian languages sparked an interest in what a language could reveal about a people's view of the world, while an increased understanding of the complexities of linguistic forms and their organization in systems (e.g. grammars) suggested the possibility of constraints on speakers' ability to see the world "with the naked eye." Since to be a full participant in a community, a person needs to be a speaker of the language(s) spoken in that community, in some

way our interaction with the animate and inanimate world around us is always mediated through language(s). Sapir's and Whorf's ideas on these issues inspired a series of empirical and theoretical studies around the issue of "linguistic relativity" (section 4). Some of the themes found in Sapir's and Whorf's work have been recently reframed within a number of new enterprises, including the work on metapragmatics and language ideology (section 4.1).

5 The study of language as a cultural resource has motivated the extension of Chomsky's cognitive notion of "competence" to include socio-cultural knowledge, i.e. Hymes' notion of communicative competence. The interest in language contact and language variation produced an awareness of the role played by the community in providing guidance and meaning for language use and language choice. In the future, the notion of community is likely to expand to include aggregates that are not defined by face-to-face communication and take into consideration the impact of old (print) and new media (radio, television, computers) on language use and linguistic standards.

6 Since the 1960s there has been a shift from an interest in what language encodes (reference, denotation) to what language does (performance) (see section 6). This shift has fostered an interest in the social and cultural organization of linguistic activities (e.g. speech acts, speech events) and the subtle ways in which linguistic forms are existentially connected with the situations in which they are used and the people who use them (indexicality). Verbal performance has been shown to have a cultural organization of its own, which needs to be studied by researchers who are able to combine the ethnographic methods practiced by socio-cultural anthropologists with the structuralist methods practiced by linguists (based on the documentation of actual language use).

7 The developmental dimension of the study of competence and communities has been developed in the field of language socialization (see section 7), which looks at the impact of cultural expectations and social interaction on the acquisition of language and at the role of language in creating competent and productive members of society.

8 As the most complex symbolic system developed by the species *Homo sapiens*, language has the power to convince, seduce, obscure, highlight, frame, and reframe social reality. Contemporary linguistic anthropology uses a variety of analytical tools and concepts to examine the power of language in a wide range of social situations. Social categories that used to be studied separately, e.g. race, class, and gender, are now analyzed as interdependent. While paying attention to the local and global context of communication, it is the moment-by-moment construction of "texts" – broadly defined – that is emphasized in the effort to uncover the mechanisms and resources that make the meaning of human action, words included, possible, interpretable, and consequential.

NOTES

1 Special thanks to the people who helped me become a better historian of my discipline by providing invaluable recollections, references, clarifications, and corrections: Regna Darnell,

John Gumperz, Dell Hymes, Paul Kroskrity, Dan Slobin, William Foley, Mary Bucholtz, Elinor Ochs, Bambi B. Schieffelin, and Laura Nader. I would also like to thank Vincent Barletta and Sarah Meacham for detailed comments on the first draft of this chapter and Tracy Rone for her suggestions and editorial advice. My second draft benefited from very detailed comments by Dell Hymes, who was particularly generous with factual and theoretical corrections to my representation of the history of the field. I remain, of course, solely responsible for any remaining errors, misrepresentations, or omissions.

2 A good example of apparent free variation among the different terms is Stephen Murray's *American Sociolinguistics: Theorists and Theory Groups* (1998), which alternates from one term to the other usually without warning. For example, although the title of the book promises a study of "sociolinguistics," its first sentence reads: "This study of postwar anthropological linguistics in North America ... " (p. 1). Particularly puzzling is the choice of the term "ethnolinguistics" for describing the work by John Gumperz and his students at the University of California at Berkeley in the 1980s (Murray:chapter 9), given Gumperz's preference for either "the ethnography of communication" (in his collaboration with Hymes) or "sociolinguistics" (see n. 15).

3 Except for a brief period in the 1940s and 1950s (e.g. Garvin & Riesenberg 1952; Voegelin & Harris 1945), the terms "ethnolinguistic" and "ethnolinguistics" have been more popular in European circles than in the USA (see Duranti 1997b:2; Hymes 1971a:48). A notable exception in recent years is Paul Kroskrity's monograph on the Arizona Tewa speech community where the term "ethnolinguistics" is used in the more restricted sense of "native metalinguistics" (Kroskrity 1993:34). This perspective was later developed in the study of language ideologies (see Woolard & Schieffelin 1994; Schieffelin, Woolard, & Kroskrity 1998; Kroskrity 2000a, 2000b).

4 "Simply stated, in this book linguistic anthropology will be presented as *the study of language as a cultural resource and speaking as a cultural practice*. As an inherently interdisciplinary field, it relies on and expands existing methods in other disciplines, linguistics and anthropology in particular, with the general goal of providing an understanding of the multifarious aspects of language as a set of cultural practices, that is, as a system of communication that allows for interpsychological (between individuals) and intrapsychological (in the same individual) representations of the social order and helps people use such representations for constitutive social acts" (Duranti 1997b:2–3).

5 My interpretation of the situation in Australia was largely confirmed by Foley during a recent exchange over electronic mail. On December 21, 1999, he wrote: "I think you're right about my being influenced by the Australian situation in which in most universities there are close connections between linguistics and anthropology. Due to the fieldwork emphasis, most departments of linguistics here regard some anthro expertise as essential. Fieldwork is greatly devalued in linguistics in the US, that's true, but to the extent that it is important in some departments, e.g. Berkeley [where Foley received his Ph.D. in linguistics], there is a niche for anthropological linguistics, albeit often unrealized. I suppose my own ideological position is that yes, anthropological linguistics is an integral part of linguistics, however how much hegemonic forces at work in the discipline have worked to and largely have sidelined it. That is the current situation, I agree, but things change, hegemonies don't last forever, and I would deplore any redefinition of linguistics which would actually help to institutionalize the current situation."

6 A thorough reconstruction of the history of the relationship between linguistics and anthropology in the first half of the twentieth century is well beyond the scope of this chapter. Valuable information regarding Edward Sapir's relationship with anthropology and linguistics and the impact that this relationship had on his students is provided by Regna Darnell's historical reconstructions (1990, 1998b). Regarding Sapir's association with the Yale linguistics department while chairing the anthropology department, Darnell (1998b:362) wrote: "Sapir encouraged his linguistic students to take their degrees in linguistics rather than anthropology. This was in line with the increasing autonomy of linguistics from anthropology signaled by the establishment of the Linguistic Society of America and its journal *Language* after 1925. At Chicago, Sapir's failure to establish flexible working relations with Carl Buck in classical philology effectively restricted anthropological linguists to working in anthropology.

Moreover, the linguistics that Sapir wanted his students to learn was not anthropological in the sense proselytized by Boas. The "first Yale school" in linguistics developed around Sapir and the advanced graduate students he brought with him from Chicago, with Morris Swadesh, Stanley Newman, and Mary Haas as the core, later joined by Charles Hockett, George Trager, Benjamin Whorf, Charles Voegelin, Zellig Harris, George Herzog, and others ..."

Darnell's reconstruction is supported by David Sapir (1985), who suggested that his father had a much stronger identification with linguistics than with anthropology: "Sapir considered himself a linguist. He thought of himself as only accidentally an anthropologist" (D. Sapir 1985:291).

7 For example, Harry Hoijer (1961:10) defined anthropological linguistics as "...an area of research which is devoted in the main to studies, synchronic and diachronic, of the languages of the people who have no writing."

8 I owe the articulation of this second goal to Dell Hymes' comments on an earlier draft of this chapter.

9 Ferguson and Gumperz originally approached their research as part of linguistics, as shown by the following quote: "No great effort is made to carry the interpretation far afield from linguistics, but each of the studies contains suggestive material for the approaches of other disciplines in the study of contemporary South Asia" (Ferguson & Gumperz 1960:1).

10 See Murray (1998:96–8, 101–3, and passim) for a useful historical reconstruction of this period, but beware of his occasionally inaccurate terminology. For example, Murray (1998:98) refers to Ferguson and Gumperz (1960) as "the first exemplar of what would be dubbed 'the ethnography of speech.'" But "the ethnography of speech" is not the name of a school or paradigm and Gumperz has never used it (John Gumperz, personal communication). The terms that are found in the literature are "the ethnography of speaking" (Hymes 1971b; Bauman & Sherzer 1975) and "the ethnography of communication" (Gumperz and Hymes 1964).

11 "Linguistics without ethnography would fare as badly as ethnography would without the light thrown on it by language" (Malinowski 1920:78). For Boas' position, see section 3.

12 Greenberg's vision of linguistics was also important to anthropological linguists because it was comparative-typological and provided an alternative to the Chomskian paradigm, as made evident in the following statement by Mary Haas (1978a:121–2): "Concentration on one's own language somehow seems to lead to the conclusion that there is a universal grammar that can be deduced from one's own language. Now this is certainly not a new idea but the very one that Boas and his followers had been at such pains to dispel. Fortunately it has not become for us necessary to fall back into the beliefs of the pre-Boasian period. Instead in recent years there has been another kind of linguistic activity, standing somewhat aside from both the Bloomfieldian and the Chomskian paradigms, which has come to the rescue in this impasse. The activity referred to has been the work of Joseph H. Greenberg and his staff at Stanford University on language typology and language universals. Clearly such a project cannot be pursued by limiting it to the perusal of grammars of languages written by authors who are native speakers thereof. Indeed for the purposes of a universal project, the more languages for which information can be obtained the better. Happily, then, there is now a renewed interest in all kinds of languages spoken near and far and it is by necessity accepted that information on most of them may have to be supplied through field work done by nonnative speakers. Consequently, there has been a renewal of interest in field work."

13 This is particularly true of Foley's (1997) Part V "The Ethnography of Speaking" (chapters 13-18). The one topic treated by Foley that does not include research by linguistic anthropologists is chapter 2, "The Evolution of Language." This topic has not been a subject of interest within linguistic anthropology in recent years. Agha (1997) is a rare exception.

14 "The most detailed contributions [on the relation between language and society] have come from the anthropologists working in Southeast Asia. However, for the study of the complex communities of the United States and Western Europe, it appears that quantitative methods are required" (Labov 1966b:23). The implicit reference here is to Ferguson and Gumperz (1960) and Gumperz (1958), both of which are mentioned by Labov earlier (Labov 1966b:21).

15 "Interactional sociolinguistics" is the title of Gumperz's Cambridge University Press series, which includes contributions by Gumperz himself (Gumperz 1982a), Jenny Cook-Gumperz (1986), some of his former students (Brown & Levinson 1987; Gumperz 1982b; Tannen 1992), discourse analysis (Schiffrin 1987), and conversation analysis (Drew & Heritage 1992).

16 See Murray (1998:100–3).

17 This view is confirmed in an earlier publication, where Hymes defines the ethnography of speaking as "a particular approach" within sociolinguistics, understood as "an area of research that links linguistics with anthropology and sociology" (Hymes 1971b:47).

18 For example, Wardhaugh (1986), out of 16 chapters, dedicates one (chapter 16) to "Language and Culture" and another to "Ethnography and Ethnomethodology." Ralph Fasold, in the second volume of his Introduction to Sociolinguistics, includes one chapter on "The Ethnography of Communication" (1990:chapter 2).

19 The work on conversation was pioneered by sociologists Harvey Sacks, Emanuel A. Schegloff and Gail Jefferson in the 1960s and has since expanded its influence on a number of disciplines, among them pragmatics (e.g. Levinson 1983), child language studies (e.g. McTear 1985; Ochs & Schieffelin 1983), and grammatical analysis (e.g. Ford 1993; Ochs, Schegloff, & Thompson 1996). For a discussion of conversation analysis from the point of view of linguistic anthropology, see Duranti (1997b:chapter 8).

20 The literature on this subject is vast. It includes methodologically oriented studies such as Briggs (1986) and a voluminous body of empirical research on conversation that shows how speakers are constantly monitoring and adapting their speech according to the type of recipients they are interacting with (e.g. Duranti & Brennes 1986; C. Goodwin 1981; Schegloff 1972, 1986), detailed discussion of how stories in conversation are typically co-authored (e.g. Capps & Ochs 1995; Goodwin 1986; Mandelbaum 1987a, 1987b, 1989; Ochs 1997; Ochs & Capps 1996), and the role of interaction in the shaping of grammar itself (Ochs, Schegloff, & Thompson 1996; Silverstein 1997).

21 As often in history, the efforts of a few individuals who manage to win a minimal institutional support can make a difference. A good example is the interdisciplinary enterprise known as the Berkeley Women and Language Group, which started in 1985 with a small conference organized by Sue Bremner, Noelle Caskey, Elisabeth Kuhn, and Birch Moonwomon. In 1992, a second conference was held with about 80 papers and over 300 participants (Hall, Bucholtz, & Moonwomon 1992). The group held three other large conferences (every other year) with a rotating group of facilitators, until the fall of 1999 when it was disbanded. Its legacy is expected to be continued at Stanford University as the International Gender and Language Association (IGALA).

22 The four fields are archaeology, biological anthropology (formerly "physical"), linguistic anthropology (formerly "linguistics" or "philology"), and sociocultural anthropology (formerly "ethnology"). The Boasian conceptualization of anthropology as a four field discipline is often contested today given the recent multiplication of subdisciplines and the internal debate regarding the goals of anthropological research and the limit of the Boasian, holistic approach.

23 Hillary Henson convincingly argued that, despite the influence of Bronislaw Malinowski's work on British anthropology, "[i]n the period from about 1920 until 1960, British social anthropologists paid no serious attention to language" (Henson 1974:119). For a review of anthropology departments in Canada, with some data on linguistic anthropology in that country, see Darnell (1998c).

24 A notable exception is a series of articles by William Edwin Safford on Chamorro, one of the two major languages spoken in the Philippines.

25 The American Anthropologist was started in 1888 as the organ of the Anthropological Society of Washington, which relinquished it in 1899 when the founders of the American Anthropological Association (AAA) asked to use the same name for the AAA journal. Since the AAA did not officially start until 1902, the journal predates the Association (the first meeting was held in 1901).

26 "Bureau members did collect considerable bodies of linguistic material, but prior to Boas' time they published relatively little in the way of extended grammatical analysis. And despite all this material, despite decades of speculation on the "incorporating" or "polysynthetic" character of American Indian languages, the amount of detailed and systematic study of specific Indian

languages which would stand professional scrutiny – at least as far as Franz Boas and Edward Sapir were concerned – was virtually nil" (Stocking 1974:458–9) (emphasis in the original). Although Stocking gives Boas credit for his important role in the planning and editing of the *Handbook*, he rejects Voegelin's (1952) claim that Boas should be considered the author or co-author of most of the grammatical sketches contained in it.

27 Boas was a strong believer in the power of acculturation and some of the articles collected in American Indian languages. For example, in an article originally published in 1920, he wrote: "In other words, the whole theory of an 'Ursprache' for every group of modern languages must be held in abeyance until we can prove that these languages go back to a single stock and that they have not originated, to a large extent, by the process of acculturation" (1940:217).

28 "The great advantage that linguistics offer in this respect is the fact that, on the whole, the categories which are formed always remain unconscious, and that for this reason the processes which lead to their formation can be followed without the misleading and disturbing factors of secondary explanations, which are so common in ethnology, so much so that they generally obscure the real history of the development of ideas entirely" (Boas 1911:70–1).

29 This idea is the linguistic equivalent of the position held in logic by Gottlob Frege, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and others that meaning is not to be found in words but in propositions (the distinction made by English-speaking philosophers between "sentence" and "proposition" is vacuous in German, where the term *Satz* has been used to mean "proposition" or "sentence").

30 This practice continued for several decades, in concomitance with the reference to "primitive society" and "primitive culture." For example, the 1931–32 catalog for the graduate program in anthropology at Yale, which is very likely to have been written by Sapir (Darnell 1998b:363), mentions "primitive linguistics" (which could not possibly mean "a primitive form of linguistics" but "a linguistic study of primitive languages"). The belief that anthropological linguists study "primitive communities" is unfortunately still found in some circles, as shown by the following definition of anthropological linguistics in David Crystal's *Dictionary of Linguistics*: "A branch of LINGUISTICS which studies language variation and use in relation to human cultural patterns and beliefs, as investigated using the theories and methods of anthropology. For example, it studies the way in which linguistic features may identify a member of a (*usually primitive*) *community* with a social, religious, occupational or kinship group ..." (Crystal 1997:20) (emphasis mine).

31 See also Hill (1964) and the Editor's "General comments and references" after Hill's article (Hymes 1964d:89).

32 It is not clear whether Sapir actually read von Humboldt, although there were several ways for him to be exposed to von Humboldt's ideas, for example, through Boas (see Drechsel 1988).

33 For example, Hill and Mannheim (1992:383) argue that the term "hypothesis" is not appropriate in this case: "We maintain that 'linguistic relativity' as proposed by Boas, Sapir, and Whorf is not a hypothesis in the traditional sense, but an axiom, a part of the initial epistemology and methodology of the linguistic anthropologist. Boas, Sapir, and Whorf were not relativists in the extreme sense often suggested by modern critics ..."

34 Dell Hymes, personal communication.

35 The second part of the twentieth century saw the establishment of a strong functional tradition in linguistics that tries to explain grammatical forms in terms of communicative needs or discourse functions (e.g. Hopper & Thompson 1980; Givón 1989; Hopper & Traugott 1993). Somewhat paradoxically, the argument in favor of the non-functional, autonomous nature of linguistic forms has been pursued not by linguistic anthropologists but by formal grammarians who have shown little or no interest in the relationship between language and culture.

36 This connection is not acknowledged by Chomsky, who prefers to trace ancestry within the French rationalist tradition (Chomsky 1966) rather than admitting any link to Whorf, whose basic approach he harshly criticized in the context of an unflattering introduction to Adam Schaff's (1973) *Language and Cognition*: "My impression is that Schaff vastly over-estimates the quality of the material that ethnolinguistics can provide. It sheds no discredit on the anthropological linguist, who is faced with problems of vast complexity and scope, to point

out that the evidence that he can provide is of an altogether superficial sort" (Chomsky 1973:ix).

37 For a revision of the original theory of "basic color terms," see Kay and Maffi (2000). For a criticism of the model, see Lucy and Shweder (1979) and Levinson (2000).

38 This is the same phenomenon illustrated by Boas' (1911:25) example of the distinct lexical items through which English expresses the shapes of WATER: *lake, river, brook, rain, dew, wave, foam.*

39 A similar line of work on linguistic relativity has been pursued since the early 1990s by researchers at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics under the direction of Stephen Levinson, who launched a comparative study of the ways in which space is conceptualized across typologically different languages (Levinson 1992). A programmatic paper by Gumperz and Levinson (1991) was followed by a conference where a number of linguists, anthropologists, and psychologists reopened the discussion of linguistic relativity that had been almost forgotten (Gumperz & Levinson 1996).

40 For an interesting use of this classification, see Merlan & Rumsay (1991:97–8).

41 For an appraisal of Chomsky's ability to redirect American linguistics, see Murray (1993:chapter 9) and Newmeyer (1980, 1986).

42 "There seems to be little reason to question the traditional view that investigation of performance will proceed only so far as understanding of underlying competence permits" (Chomsky 1965:10). Despite the considerable amount of research on language use within quantitative sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, discourse analysis, and conversation analysis, Chomsky's position has not changed on this issue over the years, as shown by the following statement: "it would be unreasonable to pose the problem of how Jones [a typical speaker of English] decides what he does, or how he interprets what he hears in particular circumstances. But highly idealized aspects of the problem are amenable to study" (Chomsky 1995:18).

43 "We will define [linguistic community] as a social group which may be either monolingual or multilingual, held together by frequency of social interaction patterns and set off from the surrounding areas by weaknesses in the lines of communication. Linguistic communities may consist of small groups bound together by face-to-face contact or may cover large regions, depending on the level of abstraction we wish to achieve" (Gumperz 1968b:463). For a recent critique of the notion of "speech community," see Silverstein (1996a).

44 On the term "variety," see Hudson (1980); on dialect and contact among dialects, see Trudgill (1986); on register, see the essays in Biber & Finegan (1994); on speech communities, see Romaine (1982).

45 See Goodwin & Goodwin (1987), G. Lakoff (1987), Lakoff & Johnson (1980), Ochs & Schieffelin (1983), Sapir & Crocker (1977), Silverstein (1984, 1997), Wilce (1998).

46 See Briggs & Bauman (1992), Beeman (1993), Caton (1990), Du Bois (1986), Keane (1997), Keating (1998), Keil & Feld (1994), Kuipers (1990), Palmer & Jankowiak (1996), Sherzer (1983, 1990), Yankah (1995).

47 "A valid observation that has frequently been made (and often, irrationally denied) is that a great deal can be learned about U[niversal][Grammar] from the study of a single language, if such study achieves sufficient depth to put forth rules or principles that have explanatory force but are underdetermined by evidence available to the language learner. Then it is reasonable to attribute to UG those aspects of these rules or principles that are uniformly attained but underdetermined by evidence" (Chomsky 1982:6).

48 The following recounting of the Berkeley project owes a great deal to personal correspondence with Dan Slobin, who generously provided me with a historical account of his involvement in the design of a cross-cultural/cross-linguistic study of language acquisition.

49 These efforts culminated in a number of articles on universals of language acquisition (Slobin 1973, 1982, 1985a, 1985b) and a series of edited volumes that included acquisition studies by linguists, psycholinguists, and linguistic anthropologists.

50 In 1975 Bambi Schieffelin was a Ph.D. student in anthropology at Columbia University, where she had received an M.A. in developmental psychology under the direction of Lois Bloom. Before and after her fieldwork, Schieffelin spent time at Berkeley, first preparing for fieldwork and then writing her dissertation on Kaluli language acquisition (Schieffelin 1979b). In 1979–80, after completing her dissertation under Bloom's supervision, she had a postdoctoral

fellowship in developmental psychology at the University of California at Berkeley, taught a course with Dan Slobin, and participated in the group he led on the cross-linguistic study of language acquisition. Elinor Ochs (formerly Elinor O. Keenan) received her Ph.D. in anthropology in 1974 from the University of Pennsylvania, where she studied with Dell Hymes (her primary advisor), Ward Goodenough, and David Sapir.

51 The reader for her first seminars at USC on children's discourse became the basis for *Developmental Pragmatics*, the first collection of essays Ochs edited with Schieffelin (Ochs & Schieffelin 1979). Ochs and Schieffelin's earlier joint papers were later collected in Ochs & Schieffelin (1983).

52 They were part of a Working Group on Language and Cultural Context organized by Roger Keesing that included Penelope Brown, Alessandro Duranti, John B. Haviland, Stephen Levinson, Judith Irvine, Edward Schieffelin, Michael Silverstein, and Robert Van Valin.

53 This discovery is still ignored by psychologists who continue to write as if baby talk and Motherese are universals (e.g. Gopnik, Meltzoff, & Kuhl 1999) and it is even difficult to accept for linguistic anthropologists who worked in societies where adults do modify their speech to infants. Blount (1995), for example, first concludes that one cannot take Ochs' findings as conclusive because the youngest child in her corpus was 19 months old (Blount 1995:560) and then tries to explain the Samoan data (which he had previously dismissed) and some of his own findings on the Luo by extending the notion of accommodation to include accommodation to the local cultural model, suggesting that even when parents do not accommodate to children, they are in fact accommodating, because they are adapting to their own cultural model: "In one sense, the form of Samoan and Luo parental speech behavior could also be viewed as accommodative, since it was selected to be consistent with and thus to model the appropriate language interaction with children, appropriate according to cultural expectations. In other words, the absence of salient linguistic markers in Samoan parental speech does not mean that no accommodation is made to the child's linguistic interactive capacity. To the contrary, the speech appears, in fact, to be tailored to the cultural definition of the child and thus consistent with the broader cultural parameters" (Blount 1995:561). This position stretches the notion of accommodation to such an extent that it becomes difficult to see its value.

54 On peer-interaction, see M. H. Goodwin (1990b, 1999), Goodwin & Goodwin (1987), Schlegel (1998); on apprenticeship and everyday cognition, see Lave (1988, 1990), Lave & Wenger (1991), Rogoff (1990), Rogoff & Lave (1984), Scribner (1984); on literacy activities, see Besnier (1995), Heath (1983), Kuipers (1998:chapter 6), Scribner & Cole (1981), Street (1984); on language contact and linguistic syncretism, see Errington (1998), Hill & Hill (1986), Kulick (1992), Zentella (1997).

55 There is now a considerable amount of work on the transformation of experience in text or entextualization; see for example Briggs & Bauman (1992), Capps & Ochs (1995), Ochs & Capps (1996), Silverstein & Urban (1996).

56 Some scholars independently argued that the use of formal language can be used to restrict the choices that a person of higher rank has (e.g. Duranti 1992b; E. Goody 1972; Irvine 1974).

57 There is also a considerable amount of published research on the differences between spoken and written language, e.g. Tannen (1982), Biber (1988).

58 See Duranti (1992a); C. Goodwin (1981), Goodwin & Goodwin (1992, 2000), M. H. Goodwin (1990a, 1995), Woolard (1998).

59 Two of the police officers were convicted of violating Mr King's civil rights at a second, federal, trial.

Part 1

Speech Community and Communicative Competence

Introduction

Any effort to study such a complex phenomenon as language must start fro[m] shared understanding among researchers of the units of analysis that are needed collecting information and identifying interesting phenomena. *Speech commu...* and *competence* are two such units. They help us think about a language not sin... in terms of a grammatical system but also in terms of the people who use it a ... powerful intellectual tool in their daily life. Linguistic anthropologists start from ... assumption that for speakers to be able to acquire and use language skills, they n... be members of a community within which those skills are transmitted and val... (Gumperz). Furthermore, to understand what a language is, what its boundaries ... and how communication is made possible or difficult, we need to pay attentio... the relation between utterances and their contexts of use. "Communicative com... ence" is the ability to make language relevant to the context and, in turn, sustain context through language (Hymes). For a truly anthropological understanding ... speech community and its members' communicative competence, we not only n... to describe language use, we also need to gain an understanding of how speak... value their own language and see it connected to their history (Morgan). Rec... work on discourse generated through the media extends the notion of spe... community and reveals the subtle recontextualization of media discourse in eve... day life (Spitulnik). Finally, the observation and recording of service encoun... between members of two groups who have blamed each other for lack of "respe... allows us to examine the role of divergent verbal strategies in the production ... conflict (Bailey).

Linguistic Anthropology

A Reader

Edited by

Alessandro Duranti

Drawing from some of the most significant scholarly work of the 19th and 20th centuries, the *Blackwell Anthologies in Social and Cultural Anthropology* series offers a comprehensive and unique perspective on the ever-changing field of anthropology. It represents both a collection of classic readers and an exciting challenge to the norms that have shaped this discipline over the past century.

Each edited volume is devoted to a traditional subdiscipline of the field such as the anthropology of religion, linguistic anthropology, or medical anthropology; and provides a foundation in the canonical readings of the selected area. Aware that such subdisciplinary definitions are still widely recognized and useful – but increasingly problematic – these volumes are crafted to include a rare and invaluable perspective on social and cultural anthropology at the onset of the 21st century. Each text provides a selection of classic readings together with contemporary works that underscore the artificiality of subdisciplinary definitions and point students, researchers, and general readers in the new directions in which anthropology is moving.

BLACKWELL
Publishing

Contents