Chapter 4
Linguistic Anthropology

Relating Language and Culture
Overview

• To use language is the essence of being human.
• Culture is stored in language and transmitted using language. It is our “ultimate tool”.
• Question: Can we do things without language? Think without language?
  • Do things? Yes. Think? No.
• Thee life history of Helen Keller, a young girl both blind and deaf illustrates the importance of language to being human.
  • When Anne Sullivan teaches her ASL her life opens up; before that she lacked the ability to think abstractly.
  • Here is a modern example of what happens if one lacks language (listen to the story of “Maria Noname”)
• Why do we care about language?
  • Language is our primary means of communication.
  • Language is transmitted through learning, as part of enculturation.
  • Language is based on arbitrary, learned associations between words and the things they represent.
  • Language is a uniquely effective vehicle for learning that enables humans to adapt more rapidly to new stimuli than other primates.
• Anthropologists study language in its social and cultural context.
Communication is the larger category, with language a subset of this category. Communication is defined in different ways:
- As the sending of signals.
- As both sending and receiving of signals.
- Sending, receiving and responding is communication according to some researchers.
Communication is often limited as to what it can send.
Language is a system of communication consisting of sounds, words, and grammar. This definition emphasizes three features:
1. Language consists of sounds organized into words according to some sort of grammar.
2. Language is used to communicate.
3. Language is systematic.
We can address this question in two ways:
1. The evolutionary origins of language (our biological capacity for language as a whole)
2. The historical development of specific languages (how languages are related to one another and have changed through time).
Is language uniquely human? The area we need to explore to answer this is called ethology (animal behavior studies).

**Evolutionary perspectives**

- **Teaching apes to use sign language**
  - Nonhuman animals communicate using sounds, gestures, and movements.
  - To differentiate them from human language, these types of communication are classified as animal communication systems, or *call systems*: patterned forms of communication that express meaning.

**Four key characteristics that distinguish language from call systems:**

- Call systems most often communicate emotions or occur in response to immediate stimuli. In comparison, language is effectively limitless in terms of the content that may be expressed.
- Call systems are stimuli-dependent, referring to nearby objects or present circumstances. In contrast, people can talk about the past, future, and entire worlds of the imagination.
- Animal calls are distinct and not combined or modified to produce calls with a different meaning. Language sounds can be combined in limitless ways to produce meaningful new utterances.
- Animal call systems are instinctual and generally shared across an entire species, regardless of geographic distance. In contrast, contemporary humans speak between 5,000 and 6,000 different languages, each with its own complex patterns.
Evolutionary perspectives (continued)

Call systems and gestures

- There are certainly nonhuman animals that *appear* to speak.
- One impediment to animal language is the anatomy of the vocal tract. Even our closest living relatives, the chimpanzees, cannot produce the vast range of sounds that comprise human languages.

- While other primates can learn sign language, spoken language is difficult as their vocal tract is not suitable for speech.
  - As Philip Lieberman showed, this is due to a difference in the human vocal tract.
  - In humans, the larynx (where vocal cords are located) is lowered.
  - This causes the lengthening of the pharynx
    - So there is more space for tongue.
    - Increased vowel resonance results.
    - This means there is differentiation of vowels: [i] [a] [u]

- Some new information is now available that looks at the physiology of language:
  - An example is the discovery of the **FOXP2 gene**
  - In humans the trajectory of the **arcuate fasiculus** extended past the normal pattern of the other primate species and so it looks that humans evolved to include a network that connects the language areas in such a way to supplement our greater language abilities.
• Evolutionary perspectives (continued)
  • Teaching apes to use sign language
    • The human brain and vocal tract combine to form the biological basis of our extraordinary linguistic ability.
    • Despite high intelligence and cognitive capacity, great apes in the wild do not use language.
    • Ape vocal tracts limit spoken language, so for decades researchers have probed the limits of ape communication by teaching them signed languages.
    • For example, a chimpanzee named Washoe and a gorilla named Koko have demonstrated the ability to produce hundreds of signs and even combine them into simple sentences.
    • Others worked with orangutans such as Chantek
    • Kanzi seems to be the most gifted of the bonobos
      • This ape was self-taught; he learned by watching his mother.
      • Read more here
  • Here are some websites if you are interested in reading more:
    • Koko
    • Orangutan Foundation
    • Iowa Primate Learning Sanctuary
Paralanguage means alongside of language and is a term developed by linguistic anthropologist, George Trager.
- These are the sounds that accompany speech but are not a direct part of language.
- Paralinguistic sounds contribute to the meaning of one’s words but are not considered words themselves.
- Trager called them ‘voice cues’.

Trager discussed paralanguage as being made up of 3 characteristics:

- **Voice sets:**
  - Delineate the context in which the speech takes place.
  - Gender of speaker, age, the mood you are in, your culture.
  - Can you tell the difference between an old man and a young woman speaking?

- **Voice qualities:**
  - Tone of voice or voice quality is one of the most commonly noticed kinds of paralanguage.
  - It includes features such as loudness, pitch, speed of speaking, rhythm
  - Voice quality also includes vocal modifications such as whispering, cooing, breathy voice, rising intonation
  - Rising intonation is where phrases end with a rise in pitch
  - Valley girl is the classic example.
  - The Super bowl commercial is another.
Paralanguage (continued)

Trager’s voice cues (continued):

- **Vocalization** is further divided into 3 sub-categories:
  - **Vocal segregates** (also called vocal gestures and ideophones): Sound productions that are similar to the sounds of language.
  - Do not appear in sequences that can properly be called words (shh or um or ah).
  - One researcher suggests thinking of these as what would be displayed as written words in a comic book.

- **Vocal characterizers**: Sound productions such one makes when laughing or crying.
  - This is the idea that humans "speak" through (the emotion).
  - One researcher suggests thinking of these as what would be displayed as written words in a comic book.

- **Vocal qualifiers**: Including intensity (overly loud or overly soft), pitch height (overly high to low) and extent (extreme drawl to extreme clicking)

- Non-vocal (silence): Is a form of communication.
Nonverbal Communication (NVC) 1

• Nonverbal communication is split into two subgroups: Kinesics and proxemics.
• Kinesics is the study of communication through body movements, stances, gestures and facial expressions.
• Also known as body language.
• Typically the motions supplement verbal communication.
• Eckman & Friesen, 1960s, created a different approach and developed 5 general types of gestures:
  • Emblems: gestures with direct verbal translations, discrete gestures with meanings independent of speech. (waving good-bye, the finger).
  • Illustrators: gestures that depict or illustrate what is said verbally; they accompany speech but are not independent of it.
    • They generally do not stand alone
    • Steering wheel gesture or Butterworths: the emblems used when trying to recall a word or other speech structure.
  • Affect displays convey emotion (smiling).
  • Regulators control or coordinate interactions such as whose turn it is to talk (indicate your turn to talk).
  • Adaptors facilitate release of body tension or similar types of gestures (wiggling).
Nonverbal Communication (NVC) 2

• Nonverbal communication (continued):
  • **Proxemics** is the study of how people perceive and use space.
  • The word was coined from prox- (near) + -emics (insider view, from phonemics).
  • This study was developed by Edward T. Hall in the 1950s & 1960s.
    • Inspired by earlier studies of animal behavior and territoriality.
    • Most famous was the set of studies that showed high levels of aggression among Norway rats when the populations were too high.
  • Distance between people, degree of eye contact, vocal volume, degree of touching, and shoulder axis angle between two people are common areas of proxemics studies.
  • Hall suggested there were 4 kinds of proxemically-relevant spaces or body distances that can be compared across cultures.
  • For Euroamericans:
    • Intimate space (0-1.5 feet)
    • Personal space (1.5-4 feet)
      Social space (4-12 feet)
      Public space (12+)
  • Here is a YouTube.com clip of college students testing the “rules of proxemics”
    • What they are doing is a set of Garfinkel’s experiments (also called ‘breaching experiments’)
    • Garfinkel argued that to best understand a set of cultural norms, break them as a test.
    • This is done in social psychology, but not in anthropology.
Hockett’s Design Features 1

- What is language? Most anthropologists would agree that the place to really begin answering this question is to look at Hockett’s Design Features.
- Thirteen (13) features were identified by Hockett (later 3 by other researchers)
- Nine design features are shared with other animals (according to Hockett):
  1) Vocal/auditory channel: Sender, medium and receiver.
  2) Broadcast transmission/directional reception: Message is blasted into the environment.
  3) Rapid fading: Speech messages do not last. (Also called transitoriness).
  4) Interchangeability: Speaker can receive, receiver can send.
  5) Complete feedback: Can monitor what you speak.
  6) Specialization: The design feature that refers to the idea that language is for transmitting information.
  7) Arbitrariness: No necessary or causal connection between a signal and its meaning.
  8) Semanticity: Words have meaning. Specific sound signals can be directly linked to specific meanings.
  9) Discreteness: the units of communication are separable into units that can not be mistaken for each other (,[b] & [p] in English; these are phonemes, which we discuss later in the lecture notes)

- While Hockett discussed spoken language, these same design features are found in gestural languages as well.
Four design features are unique to human language (According to Hockett):

- He suggested that if we could determine how these 4 features emerged we could better understand the origin of language.
- The 4 features that are unique to humans (according to Hockett)
  10) **Displacement**: The idea that you can talk about things that are not present (in time and/or place) or even about things that do not exist (purple people eaters)
  11) **Openness** (also called **productivity**): The feature wherein one can create brand-new utterances never heard before.
  12) **Cultural transmission**: Means that language is learned in social groups. Even though we are innately capable of language, the learning takes place in social settings.
  13) **Duality of patterning**: This seems to be the combination of discreteness and productivity.
    - The idea that the sounds of language combine to create different kinds of units at another level
    - Think **phonemes** and **morphemes** (later in this lecture).
- Over time other scholars added new features to the list:
  14) **Prevarication**: False messages are possible.
  15) **Reflexiveness**: refers to the capacity of language to communicate about itself (self-awareness and self-monitoring)
  16) **Learnibility**: Learn a second language.
- Which of the design features do primates lack?
  - Aha, this is the core of the debate.
  - Some suggest reflexivity and others duality of patterning (Heider for instance).
Historical Linguistics 1

- Historical linguistics was the primary approach prior to the 20th century in linguistics.
- Anthropologists are interested in historical linguistics because cultural features sometimes correlate with the distribution of language families.
- Historical linguistics began in the eighteenth century as philology: the comparative study of ancient texts and documents.
  - There was often the view that certain languages (Greek and Latin) were superior to others (English or French).
  - There was little interest in the dynamic changes in languages until the 19th century.
- Genetic models of language change
  - Historical linguistics studies the long-term variation of speech by studying protolanguages and daughter languages.
  - It was clear to early philologists like Jakob Grimm that European languages had patterned similarities and differences. Grimm hypothesized that these patterns were a result of shared ancestry.
  - Many modern languages evolved from a few (or even one) language, what linguists now call a proto-language: A hypothetical common ancestral language of two or more living languages. interpreted by linguists as evidence for a common linguistic ancestry.
• Genetic models of language change (continued)
• Sir William Jones was the first linguist to suggest the concept of ‘common descent’. That languages are related to each other via ancestral languages.
• This shift represents a powerful understanding of the relationship between language and culture.
• One example of its usefulness was the construction of an ancestral Indo-European parent language.
• Historical linguists study the “genetics” of language change.
• Sir William Jones found that language sounds change in a regular pattern.
• That modern languages are derived from earlier ones.
• Historical linguists search for clues in cognate words: words in two languages that show the same systematic sound shifts as other words in the two languages, usually.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDO-EUROPEAN INITIAL CONSONANT</th>
<th>ENGLISH</th>
<th>GERMAN</th>
<th>LATIN</th>
<th>SANSKRIT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*p</td>
<td>foot</td>
<td>Fuß</td>
<td>pes</td>
<td>pet</td>
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<tr>
<td>*p</td>
<td>father</td>
<td>Vater</td>
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<td>zwei</td>
<td>duo</td>
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<td>heart</td>
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<td>*k</td>
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<td>Hund</td>
<td>canis</td>
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Non-genetic models of language change

Languages also change in non-genetic ways (not based on descent).

How languages change: In general, linguists talk of two ways that languages change: External change and internal change.

1. **External change** refers to changes due to language contact and borrowing between speakers of different languages.
   - Words are the most easily borrowed items between languages.
   - The way the word is pronounced can either be a careful sounding of the original, or it can be filtered through the native sound system.
   - For example, the pronunciation of “r” (trilled or flapped) in southern Europe varies depending on location.
   - Pronunciations move across language boundaries from community to community like a wave (see Figure 4.3).

2. **Internal change** refers to the modification of language by the native speakers, over time
   - Pronoun shift is one example of this structural pattern change and is an example of loss (and replacement).
   - New concepts are also the source of new words.
All languages that have been studied are complex and highly structured, even those languages that are unwritten or spoken by very few people. In other words, there are no “primitive” languages.

Most people have little understanding of the formal structure of their language, but they do have a remarkably intuitive sense of pronunciation, syntactical, and grammatical rules. Mistakes are easily noticed by any native speaker.

Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure distinguished langue (language) from parole (speech). Langue is the technically correct manner in which people should speak. Parole is language in its living, breathing sociocultural context—that is, language as it is actually used by people.

Descriptive linguistics

We now call the study of the formal structure of language descriptive linguistics and the study of the social context of language use sociolinguistics.

Descriptive linguistics is the systematic analysis of a language’s sound system and grammar. Linguists divide language structure into three aspects or levels:

• Phonology: The structure of speech sounds.
• Morphology: How words are formed into meaningful units.
• Syntax: How words are strung together to form sentences and more complex utterances, such as paragraphs.

All languages have predictable phonological, morphological, and syntactic structures.
How Language Actually Works 2

- **Phonology:** Sounds of languages
  - **Phonology** is the study of the sounds used in speech.
  - **Phonetics** is the study of human speech sounds. Phonetic analyses are culture-neutral or the study of the physics of sound.
  - They are written this way: [b] or [p] to indicate they are culturally-neutral sounds.
  - **Type the alphabet.** The complete IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet): [http://www.paulmeier.com/ipa/charts.html](http://www.paulmeier.com/ipa/charts.html)
- **Phones** are the sounds made by humans that might act as phonemes in any given language.
  - Most languages have an average of 30 sounds (called phonemes).
  - English has about 40 phonemes, but it varies by dialect.
  - Rotokas, Papua New Guinea has one of the smallest alphabets (12) but t and s produce the same sound.
  - **Ju/'hoan language** in Nambia, has one of the largest with 4 tones, about 30 vowels and about 90 consonants (including 48 clicks).
- **Phonemics** is the study of phones as they act in a particular language.
  - **Phonemic analyses** study only the significant sound contrasts of a given language.
  - One of my favorite commercials: [German Coast Guard](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H7oWxQf8nD4)
• **Phonology: Sounds of languages (continued)**
  • **Sound contrasts**
    • Linguists studying the phonology of a language catalog its meaningful sounds by identifying **minimal pairs**: pairs of words that differ only in a single sound contrast.
    • Since there is a difference in meaning between the words “pat” and “bat,” we can label [p] and [b] as distinct sounds within the English language.
  • **Dialects and accents**
    • **Dialects** are mutually intelligible regional or social varieties of a single language.
      • British English and American English have systematic differences in pronunciation, words, and grammar.
      • These dialects can be easily understood by any English.
    • Prior to the 1970s linguists assumed that American English would become increasingly homogeneous, owing to the spread of mass media and its standardized, “unaccented” English.
      • Instead, regional dialects and sound changes between generations **within** communities are greater than ever.
      • This suggests that, despite media homogenization, peer groups play a much stronger role in the transmission of linguistic forms.
    • Which accent do you have? Take this [NY Times quiz](https://www.nytimes.com/quiz).
• **Morphology: Grammatical categories**
  • **Morphology** is the next level and is the study of how phonemes combine to form units that have meaning.
  • Morphologists study the forms in which sounds are grouped in speech.
    • **Morphemes**: Phonemes make a difference in meaning but usually do not, by themselves, have any meaning; to take on meaning, they must be organized into morphemes (duality of patterning, as discussed above).
    • **Morphemes are the smallest linguistic units that have a definite meaning.**
  • **Tenses**
    • Grammatical elements like tense, word ordering within sentences, and gender markings are structured according to patterned rules. For example,
      • The concept of gender markings is relatively foreign to English speakers but common in many other languages.
      • In English, the pronoun *you* may refer to one person or many people. French features the informal *tu* and formal *vous*. The Awin language of Papua New Guinea includes equivalents of *you* (one person), *you* (two people), and *you* (more than two people).
  • **Syntax**
    • **Syntax** refers to the rules that order words and phrases into sentences.
    • This is a famous example of how a nonsense sentence looks (one that is grammatical, but lacks meaning):
      • "Colorless green ideas sleep furiously." (Chomsky says it lacks linguistic competence)
      • "Furiously sleep ideas green colorless." (Chomsky says it lacks both linguistic competence & syntax)
    • Most English speakers will agree that the first one is more acceptable, though it is bizarre.
How Language Actually Works 5

• **Syntax**
  • Syntactic analysis uses substitution frames; also called ‘slots and fillers’.
  • Asks how easily words and phrases can be substituted into specific contexts (called frames)
    • These are grammatical frames into which you can place related words.
    • Useful for discovering relationships among groups of words or identifying categories of words in a language.
  • Example, the phrase “the ____ in the hat”, versus __ cat in the hat, versus ___ cat ___ the hat.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>the cat in the hat</th>
<th>the cat in the hat</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the rat in the hat</td>
<td>the cat on the hat</td>
<td>the cat in a hat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the dog in the hat</td>
<td>the cat under the hat</td>
<td>a cat in a hat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the person in the hat</td>
<td>the cat behind the hat</td>
<td>a cat in the hat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Each frame helps us to understand the syntax of the language being studied.
• Order of adjectives
  • The large, red balloon (Is this phrase correct?)
  • The red, large balloon (Is this phrase correct?)
• This is a famous example of how a nonsense sentence looks (one that is grammatical, but lacks meaning):
  • "Colorless green ideas sleep furiously.“(Chomsky says it lacks linguistic competence)
  • "Furiously sleep ideas green colorless.“ (Chomsky says it lacks both linguistic competence & syntax)
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Syntax (continued)

- How syntactic units are arranged.
- Not enough to identify and describe substitution frames, need to know which ones you can use in which parts of a sentence.
- All languages seem to have substitution frames for Subjects (S), Verbs (V) and Objects (O)
  - But not all languages arrange those three possible frames in the same order.
    - SVO is used by 75% of languages (English is one example)
    - SOV languages include Inuit, Japanese, and Farsi
    - VSO languages include classical Arabic and Irish
    - VOS languages include Cakchiquel (Guatemala) and Fijian
    - Klingon (Star Trek) is an OVS language.
    - OSV languages include Apuriná and Xanante (Brazil)
  - Some languages use more than one pattern: German uses both SOV and SVO sentence patterns.
- Some phrases are just hard to decipher and they indicate alternative substitution frames. They are called linguistic ambiguities.
  - Here are some examples.
    - Cow kills farmer with ax (newspaper headline).
    - Fruit flies like a banana (attributed to Groucho Marx).
  - Depending on the substitution frame you use the meaning changes.
• A language’s **lexicon** is a dictionary containing all of the smallest units of speech that have a meaning (morpheme).
• Meaning is found both at the level of morphemes, but also at the level of semantics.
  • **Semantics** is the study of meanings and usually on words and **semantic fields**.
    • Semantic analyses looks for relationships between terms such as those associated with kinship, emotions, or religion.
  • One method for doing so is called **ethnosemantics**.
  • It is a fieldwork method whereby one tries to determine the **categorization system** (and also tries to learn the language).
    • Here is how one does ethnosemantics:
      • Collecting as many words as is possible (**semantic domain**)
      • Try to build a taxonomy (how words are related to each other).
      • Look for the culturally appropriate features by which speakers of the language distinguish the words in the domain using statistical measure.
• Learning a language means learning how the cultural group organizes ideas into words, phrases, and sentences.
  • **Ethnoscience** is the study of linguistic categorization of difference, such as in classification systems, taxonomies, and specialized terminologies (such as astronomy and medicine).
  • **Ethnolinguistics** is the focus of linguists interested the relationships of language to culture.
Different Speaking, Different Reality? 1

- Language is learned in social settings so that learning language requires one also learns the socially acceptable ways of using language.
  - For instance, active encouragement by adults may or may not occur in a particular culture.
    - Americans use baby talk (parentese).
    - The Kaluli (PNG) wait for the first signs of adult speech and then encourage children to perfect their attempts.
- Here is a very interesting TED Talk about how this works (The linguistic genius of babies).

- Ethnolinguistics
  - The idea that language reflects the culture of its speakers suggests that the areas of linguistic reflects areas of cultural emphasis.
  - For anthropologists, the idea that vocabulary reflects cultural emphasis is pretty much a given (an axiom) and we spend time in the field learning how people divide the world.
    - **Linguistic emphasis** is this creation of a large vocabulary
      - Elaboration of vocabulary in those areas of the world that have more vocabulary are likely to be of greater importance to a cultural group (the what is talked about)
      - Finer distinctions between items also reflect greater importance (the number of words used to talk about it)
    - **Cultural emphasis** is the idea that something is an important area of a culture.
Different Speaking, Different Reality? 2

- The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (SWH)
  - Franz Boas trained Edward Sapir, while Sapir trained Benjamin Whorf.
  - According to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, the language we speak does affect our perception of the world.
  - In the 1920s, linguistic anthropologist Edward Sapir (1929) argued that a language inclines its speakers to think about the world in certain ways because of its specific grammatical categories.
  - Sapir’s work was an early expression of linguistic relativity: the idea that people speaking different languages perceive or interpret the world differently because of differences in their languages.
  - Benjamin Lee Whorf (1956) later expanded on Sapir’s work. Whorf’s research of the Hopi language led him to argue that people who speak different languages perceive and experience the world differently.
  - There are three most often cited examples of the SWH; all have been challenged.
    1. Hopi notions of time
       - Whorf concluded that the Hopi language lacked past, present, and future tenses as used in English.
       - **Hopi verbs** indicate:
         - Aspect: Duration the event occurs
         - Validity: Is the action completed, continuing, anticipated, regular/predictable). These indicate whether the speaker reports, expects or speaks from previous knowledge
         - Clause-linkage: Groups 2+ verb clauses together.
         - Whorf suggested that translating Hopi into English fundamentally altered its meaning. In other words, it was not effectively translatable.
         - There is still disagreement over Whorf’s interpretation of Hopi.
2. 100 “Eskimo” words for snow
   - Franz Boas noted in his fieldwork among the Inuit that there were a relatively large number of words for such things as snow, ice, and seals.
   - It is often stated that Boas said there were 100 words for snow among the Eskimo languages like Yupik (spoken primarily in Alaska) or Inuktitut (spoken primarily in North Central Canada).
     • Anthropologists spread the word, in an effort to promote cultural uniqueness.
     • False statement: The Inuit have 100 words for snow.
     • They have about the same as in English, FYI. I finally learned the English term for this kind of snow: graupel (or popcorn snow).
   - Evidence of its long-term (erroneous) spread:
     • I heard in a movie about the 400 Eskimo words for snow (can’t remember the movie’s name)
     • There is a band named One Hundred Words for Snow
3. Ethnoscience and color terms

- In the 1960s, anthropologists continued to explore language and perception with ethnoscience: the study of how a people classify things in the world, usually by considering some range or set of meanings.
- Early ethnoscientific studies proceeded from the assumption that differences in classification were simply different ways of mapping categories onto empirical reality.
- Berlin and Kay (1969) analyzed the color terms of more than 100 languages and found that basic color terms are consistent across languages.
- Speakers of vastly different languages did not appear to perceive colors differently; they just classified them differently.
- Classic example of linguistic relativity is the way different languages divide up and name the rainbow of colors seen in a prism.
- Biology: In reality, there are no bands in the rainbow, but the biology of the human eye sees 6 colors.
- Culturally: ROYGBIV: In American English there are 6 colors (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple). Indigo was introduced by Isaac Newton who thought because musical scales had 7 notes, so should there be 7 colors.
- Today most anthropologists accept a weak (nondeterministic) version of the linguistic relativity argument: the language habits of a community create tendencies to think about the world in certain ways and not others.
Dynamic and Stable at the Same Time

- Linguistic change, stability, and national policy
  - Creole and pidgin languages
    - Increased global communication, migration, and commerce over the past few centuries have spurred language change.
    - Societies blended by colonialism developed dynamic new languages, such as creoles and pidgins.
    - In the Americas, local colonized societies developed hybrid languages called creoles.
      - Creole languages: a language of mixed origin that has developed from a complex blending of two parent languages and that exists as a mother tongue for some part of the population.
      - For example, the Haitian language combines several African languages with Spanish, Taíno (a native Caribbean language), French, and English.
    - In Asia and the Pacific Islands, similar hybrid forms are usually called pidgins
      - Pidgin languages: a mixed language with a simplified grammar, typically borrowing its vocabulary from one language and its grammar from another. Pidgins have historically been developed for the purpose of business and trade.
      - For example, in Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu, pidgins that combine local languages and English have become national languages along with the colonial languages of French and English.
  - Characteristics of pidgins and creoles
    - Pidgins have no native speakers, creoles do.
    - Restricted pidgins are the result of marginal contacts, extended pidgins are characterized by nativization (more words come from the local context).
    - Pidgins have a limited range of uses, creoles a wide range.
    - Pidgins typically evolve out of contact languages, creoles evolve out of pidgins.
Dynamic and Stable at the Same Time

- Linguistic change, stability, and national policy (continued)
  - National language policies
    - How languages will change (and they are *always* changing) is ultimately decided democratically by speakers—each linguistic choice is a “vote.”
    - Nevertheless, there are many historical examples of national language policies which attempt to prescribe language use from the top down.
      - Twice during the twentieth century, Dutch monarchs altered the official spelling of words to match contemporary pronunciations, formally recognizing choices made by speakers of the language.
      - In contrast, France made efforts to preserve “traditional” French by outlawing increasingly borrowed English words. Such laws have little effect on the everyday use of English words borrowed by French speakers.
  - Language stability parallels cultural stability
    - The connection between cultural stability and language is critical. Indigenous groups around the world are facing language death: when a language no longer has any native speakers.
      - It’s possible that as many as half of the world’s languages face extinction within the next century as thousands of small languages are gradually replaced by fewer, bigger ones.
      - Here is a great website to learn more about this and related issues: Ethnologue
    - There are many efforts in place to combat language loss (language revitalization).
    - In light of linguistic relativity, language is a primary way that people experience the richness of their culture, and loss of language represents the loss of a culture’s fullness.
Sociolinguistics is the study of the relation between linguistic performance and the social context. Sociolinguists focus on the use of signs, symbols, and metaphors in daily life. Language makes use of signs, symbols, and metaphors to continually reinforce cultural values in the community.

- **Signs** are the most basic way of conveying simple meaning. Stop signs in the United States capitalize on the fact that Americans identify red as a “dramatic,” attention-getting color.
- **Symbols** are elaborations on signs, with a wider range of meanings. Anthropologist Sherry Ortner (1971) distinguished between:
  - **Summarizing symbols** such as the American flag; democracy, free enterprise, hard work, competition, progress, and freedom.
  - **Elaborating symbols** like the cow among the Nuer and Dinka peoples of southern Sudan; food, wealth, symbol of society and its parts.
  - **Key scenarios** imply how people should act. An American key scenario is the Horatio Alger myth; the idea that anyone can go “from rags to riches” with hard work and perseverance.
- **Metaphors** are comparisons that emphasize the similarities between things.
  - Often, this involves using a physical action in a more abstract sense, for example, “She rose to the challenge and lifted the spirits of those around her.”
  - The **Nuer of the Sudan** (pastoralists) have more than 400 words to describe cattle. Among these are names for colors, location of these colors, horn configurations and lists of metaphorical terms.
  - Social relationships are referred to in terms of cattle
  - Herds provide ‘calendar’ and ‘clock’
  - Cattle terms are used in names and titles of address.
• Gender and language
  • A classic study in sociolinguistics (Lakoff, 1975) explored how gendered expectations of how women speak English in our culture can reflect and reinforce the idea that women are inferior to men.
  • According to Lakoff’s research, female speech patterns were expected to express hesitation, repetition, and uncertainty more than male speech.
  • Unfortunately, the appearance of uncertainty can be detrimental in many professional settings.
  • In America and England, there regular differences between men’s speech and women’s speech that cut across sub-cultural boundaries.
  • The fact that women in these populations tend to speak a more “standard” dialect and use fewer “power” words is attributed to women’s lack of socioeconomic power.
  • FYI: Myth that women in the US speak more than men.
• Marked and unmarked words
  • Unmarked terms are those we consider to the neutral (but they are not), or broader, or even dominant version: man, mankind, actor.
  • Marked terms are those that are considered specific, narrower, or even subordinate version: woman, womankind, actress.
Language and power and inequality

Language ideology refers to the beliefs people have about the superiority of one language or dialect and the inferiority of others. It links language with identity, morality, and aesthetics, shaping our image of who we are as individuals and members of social groups and institutions.

Language ideologies are viewed as truths. These truths are reflected in social relationships as a group’s assumption of the superiority of its language justifies its power over others.

1. The example of mock Spanish outlined by Jane Hill
   - Mock Spanish is best described as the deliberate perpetuation of racial stereotypes through the use of indirect indexing.
   - One example is when an ‘o’ is added to the end of English words. “Passo meo the breado”.
     - This is a covert form of racism.

2. National policies of assimilation.
   - French language.
   - English-only movement in the US.

Language and identity

The ethnic and class diversity of nation-states is mirrored by linguistic diversity.

Single individuals may change the way they talk depending upon the social requirements of a given setting --this is called style shifting.

Dialects are variants of a language.

Diglossia is the regular shifting from one dialect to another (e.g., high and low variants of a language) by members of a single linguistic population. High and low German is one example.
• Language and social status
  • Language ideologies are closely tied to the creation and maintenance of social status.
  • On the Indonesian island of Java, individuals are extremely conscious of status.
    • Position within the social hierarchy is expressed in nearly every sentence.
    • Words are spoken in three different registers: informal speech, intermediary register, and polite speech (see Table 4.2).
  • Javanese words used by each speaker and listener will be different and mark their relative social positions in society.
  • Think of the use of honorifics (titles of status) as another example:
    • If you hear Professor Clarke referred to as Mrs. Clarke is there a perception difference?
    • How about when someone calls her Cynthia?

• Language and the legacy of colonialism
  • Nineteenth-century European colonial powers often introduced their own language as the official language in places like sub-Saharan Africa.
  • They viewed indigenous languages as socially inferior and sought to replace them with European languages, languages that persist in these former colonies decades after their independence.
  • The book gives the example in Zambia
  • In the Solomon Islands, English is the official language.