Introduction

Toward Black Linguistics

This book foregrounds contributions to research on Black languages by Black scholars in Africa and the Americas. It identifies key epistemological and political underpinnings of what we are here calling "Black Linguistics": a postcolonial scholarship that seeks to celebrate and create room for insurgent knowledge about Black languages. Black Linguistics is committed to studies of Black languages by Black speakers and to analyses of the sociopolitical consequences of varying conceptualizations of and research on Black languages. The overall goal of Black Linguistics is to expunge and reorder elitist and colonial elements within language studies. In so doing, Black Linguistic scholarship will contribute to a rethinking of the discipline. By challenging conventional constructs such as multilingualism, indigenous languages, linguistic human rights—and even the term "language" itself—Black Linguistics research will contribute to the formation of a new intellectual climate. Black Linguistics seeks to argue that a notion such as multilingualism, unless handled carefully, becomes a plural variant of monolingualism, that indigenous language is itself a product of colonial language ideology, and that it is unrealistic to imagine that social equality can be realized through linguistic human rights when notions about "language" and "rights" are both open to contestation. In this introductory essay, we examine the effects of a Black Linguistics perspective on the nature and type of research we conduct and the ways we communicate our work to our constituencies in and outside of the Academy.

Although this book is on Black languages, it has not been written in a Black language. As Black scholars from varying ethnolinguistic backgrounds, English is the language we have in common. The use of English in writing and communication between Black scholars is here a counter-hegemonic move: an attempt to challenge the hegemony of English by using English to create an intellectual counter-discourse in language studies (Pennycook 1994, 2001).

Within the study of Black languages by Black scholars, there are, of course multiple perspectives. The aim of this book is to bring these multiple voices together to explore the significance of their work for mainstream theoretical and applied language studies.

1

Despite the range and different types of Black social and linguistic experiences, numerous scholars, either explicitly or implicitly, speak to the commonalities of these phenomena in their research. Yet, no "Black Linguistics" perspective, *per se*, has emerged from the literature in the way in which Black scholars in other fields—e.g. psychology, sociology, literary criticism—have formulated well-established perspectives and paradigms. This book seeks to create opportunities to demonstrate similarities in the work we do, to relate our common shared experiences as scholars on/in the margins and to reflect on issues that consume Black language and communication scholars.

Most of our examples of Black languages in Africa are drawn from "sub-Saharan Africa." However, we do not subscribe to an elevation to epistemological status of this and other similarly divisive, demeaning, balkanizing categories, such as "Francophone," "Anglophone," or "Lusophone" Africa. While we use such terms for communicative convenience, we insist that these terms be used circumspectly because they are not particularly illuminating as conceptual tools. For example, on the one hand, "Anglophone," "Francophone," and "Lusophone" Africa have a good deal of language, social practice, and ethnocultural history in common, clearly much more than is implied by the colonial distinctions "Anglophone," "Francophone," and "Lusophone" Africa. On the other hand, these conceptual categories conceal substantial sociolinguistic diversity within these regions of Africa.

The term "Black languages" covers languages of Africa and the Diaspora. In this book, however, we are restricting ourselves to the Western Hemispheric Diaspora. These languages and those in Africa are grouped together because the problems and possibilities associated with these languages are similar. All exist in social contexts of white supremacy and resource expropriation characteristic of neoimperialism and internalized oppression. In the various communities in which these languages are spoken, there exist similar problems and possibilities. The social settings of Black languages are typically different from those of other languages in the so-called "Third World." For example, in comparison to Latin America, Africa has a greater degree of multilingualism, and it is spread over wider areas and in key administrative centers—e.g. capitals, ports, and manufacturing and mining areas. In fact, African multilingualism exists among such a high percentage of the population that Fardon and Furniss suggest that "multilingualism is the African lingua franca" (1994: 4). Further, a majority of the people in Latin America speak some form of the official language—Spanish or Portuguese—and even those who don't have speaking proficiency have at least receptive competence (understanding) in Spanish or Portuguese. By contrast, only a minority of the various creole language populations have spoken proficiency in the official ex-colonial language (although many may have a high degree of receptive competence in the official language, for example English in Jamaica).

"Black languages" are generally construed to include pidgins and creoles in Africa and the Caribbean; African American (Vernacular) English in the US

(also known as US Ebonics, African American Language, Black English); standardized and non-standardized African languages; and "vehicular" languages emerging in urban African centers (Childs 1999). The names of the languages which fall under the broad rubric of Black languages may at times be different from the names used by speakers of these languages. For example, speakers of US African American English refer to what they speak as "English"; the creole in Jamaica is referred to as "Patwa" by Jamaican speakers; in Haiti, it is "Kreyol," which is increasingly being replaced with "Haitian"/"Haitian language" (Devonish 1986; Winford, this volume). And in "sub-Saharan Africa," there are speakers who simply refer to what they speak as part of being human, "chivanhu." For example, in Southern Africa those who do not speak Shona are regarded as not speaking "chivanhu," the human language. In SiSwati, it will be said that "abatsefuli sintvu." In Zulu, it will be "abathethi isintu." In all cases what is being asserted is that the person(s) does not speak the human language. Rarely is the name of the language given.

It may come as a surprise to many that some speakers of Black languages do not have a specific name or label for their form of speech. However, languages without names are not an oddity. Naming languages is a type of consciousness, an artifact embedded in the consciousness of Western formal education. Communities with limited or very little formal Western education sometimes do not possess the type of consciousness of which language naming is a component (Romaine 1984). Naming, or more accurately namelessness, is not a criterion for excluding or categorizing a language as a "Black language." What is of central importance in Black Linguistics is that we describe and analyze the ways members of communities relate to their speech, so that we do not rely exclusively on outside analytical categories. Thus, if communities do not have distinct names for their languages, we take into consideration their "folk" terminology, rather than creating and superimposing categories and labels on their behalf, however convenient that might be for us intellectually. Our interest in taking into consideration the categories of language users arises from our concern for local-level perspectives. Further, in Black Linguistics we are acutely aware that even when a given language does have a name shared by linguists and members of the local communities, there may be vast differences in the conceptualizations of that language, in terms of where the linguistic boundaries are situated, the linguistic spaces within that language, and the social constructions of that language by its speakers (LePage and Tabouret-Keller 1985).

The naming and appropriation of languages is of crucial significance because of the conceptual complexity in the way in which language, ethnicity, and culture are compounded. The conceptual clustering of language, ethnicity, and culture has vast political significance. The injunction early on, by anthropological linguist Franz Boas, against incorrectly conflating language, culture, and race is important in dealing with Black languages. For example, the South African apartheid regime clustered the relationships between language, ethnicity, and culture in a very specific way such that the languages used by different groups

became "metonyms" (Cook 2002) for their rights, status, and privileges (or lack of privileges for the vast majority of the speakers).

There are two key themes in the languages we are analyzing. Irrespective of whether the languages are drawn from "sub-Saharan Africa," the Americas, the Caribbean, or elsewhere in the Diaspora, all are spoken and used largely by communities that were institutionally disadvantaged, at one time or another, by colonization, imperialism, and white supremacy. Indeed the formation of some of these languages was an active reaction to colonization and extreme forms of domination. Black languages in some of these contexts are a product of post-liberation whereby "new" urban speakers attempt to forge new identities, with their new languages functioning as anti- or counter-languages (LePage and Tabouret-Keller 1985). A very recent example is the adoption of US African American English by Sudanese youth in Canada who are imagined and have begun to construct themselves as "Black" in North America (see Ibrahim, this volume).

A book of this nature is now possible because of the substantial number of Black critical scholars working on Black languages, both as trained professional linguists and as native speakers in the Black communities where they are working *in*, *for*, and *with* Black languages. Several challenges relating to epistemological frameworks confront these scholars. The problem is well articulated by Skinner who writes:

> One of the major problems facing scholars and lay people of African origin is to be able to develop and use paradigms that are based on their experience. They must insist that if the paradigms are to be useful to them, they must be filtered through the African experience before being judged truly universal and not simply hegemonic.
>
> (Skinner 1999: 450)

Because of the increasing presence of Black scholars in language scholarship, language study can no longer be read as if it were a "whites only" preserve. This volume explores the implications and consequences of the "darkening" of language studies. It should be seen as the naming of a strand of language research, done by Black scholars on Black languages and written either fully or in part by these scholars.

The roots of Black Linguistics can be traced to a few monumental but institutionally marginalized works by scholars such as Devonish (1986), whose book is appropriately entitled *Language and Liberation*, and Williams (1975), whose edited volume *Ebonics: The True Language of Black Folks*, represented an interdisciplinary effort by Black scholars to treat Black language from a Black perspective. The emergence of a strand of Black language scholarship is not an anomaly. As mentioned above, there is a relatively robust tradition of Black research in areas such as psychology and anthropology (Harrison 1991a). What is different about language scholarship is that debates about the desirability of and necessity for

such an approach have not (yet) emerged. One of the objectives of this volume is to generate such a debate, to force the issue onto the language scholarship agenda.

Because Black languages are used by people who have historically been colonized and who are socially disadvantaged, their languages have been and are often used as a source of discrimination against them (see Ball, Baugh, this volume). Black Linguistics has had to confront the legacy of colonization and continued oppression manifest in several forms in the social lives of Black people—notably, limited access to resources, power, and education through a race-based hierarchy.

To the extent that we can talk at present about a Black Linguistics, it involves four main principles:

1 membership in or life experience with the communities whose languages we research and analyze;
2 use of an ideological orientation designed to analyze and expose the workings of ideology in research *on*, *about*, and *for* Black languages;
3 race as a defining feature of our linguistic autobiographies as Black language scholars;
4 analysis of language as social practice with a keen eye/ear attuned to its sociohistory, changes and continuities in the "categories of thought," and the historiography of linguistic analyses of Black languages at different historical periods.

Membership/sociological affiliation

As Black scholars we are anthropologically members of or sociologically affiliated with the communities we are working in. Our research as Black scholars is on behalf of and in collaboration and consultation with local communities. We are seeking to impact positively on speakers of Black languages in these communities. We are therefore very much concerned about the relevance and application of our work. "The socially responsible researcher acknowledges his or her responsibility to individual participants and to his or her community. Social responsibility also precludes short sighted, self-aggrandizing research that does little more than imitate or perpetuate negative stereotypes" (Harris 1996: 30).

The impact of our work might range from raising awareness about the language basis of discriminatory practices and the disempowering nature of descriptions of language in mother tongue education in Africa, to the ways language abilities are used to exclude people. Our insider status impacts on different facets of what we do, ranging from the selection of topics to be investigated and our preferred methodologies to the analysis and dissemination of results. The selection of research topics originates in the proposition that Black Linguistics must contribute toward an understanding of the nature of oppression and

strategies for conquering it, or at the very least for containing it. The selection of topics of intellectual inquiry in Black Linguistics is not a mere academic exercise. Rather, it is motivated by what the communities themselves feel is the key problem confronting them. The research topics are defined in collaboration between linguists, as "organic intellectuals" (Gramsci 1971, quoted in Dombrosky 1989: 330), and those directly affected by the "problem." For example, research on language and health in late life has traditionally focused on dementia and Alzheimer's disease. However, after conducting a series of focus group discussions with older persons from Black communities, it was clear to us that the concern of older African Americans was not dementia or Alzheimer's, but diabetes and its effect on language and cognition. The shift in focus from a preoccupation with Alzheimer's disease to diabetes research in older African Americans is an example of how our research agenda shifted to accommodate the perspectives of the communities. The shifts demonstrate the extent of our social sensitivity arising from feelings of social responsibility. Social sensitivity is also an excellent basis for good science. For example, it is increasingly being shown that a large majority of older people within ethnic minorities who subsequently get dementia have diabetes; thus diabetes is a high-risk factor for dementia.

Not only is the research topic defined in collaboration with the speakers directly affected, but also the research results are validated through the participation of the community. For example, in a research project on communication and health among speakers of African American (Vernacular) English, we ran a series of workshops and presented the data and results to the community as part of a postexperimental debriefing procedure. This has proven to be a powerful way of exploring the extent to which research interpretation resonates with the experiences of members of the communities in which the research was conducted.

Working within the paradigm of Black Linguistics, our role is clear: we are both professional linguists and members of the speech communities we work in. We are creole speakers, or speakers of Venda (a South African language), or African American Language speakers, and/or speakers of other Black languages. Because of our sense of social responsibility, we seek to bring our analytical expertise together with the social experiences of our communities. Our analysis benefits from and draws on our expertise as linguists and our insights as members of local speech communities. This dual role enables us metaphorically (to) "see out of more than one eye" (Harrison 1991b: 91), or to see more out of each eye, a welcome intellectual double vision.

Applying the notion of "double consciousness" (DuBois 1903), we argue in Black Linguistics that our double, or more accurately "multiple," consciousness arises from our professional membership in Western-dominated areas of study and anthropological membership in communities with histories and remnants of oppression. Multiple consciousness plays a key role in our struggle to develop a decolonized science of humankind in which language and communication sci-

ences play a significant role. Concurring with Worsley (1984: 36–7), Harrison states:

> Multiple consciousness and vision are rooted in some combination and interpenetration of national, racial, sexual, or class oppression. This form of critical consciousness emerges from the tension between, on the one hand, membership in a Western society, a Western dominated profession, or a relatively privileged class or social category, and, on the other hand, belonging to or having an organic relationship with an oppressed social category or people . . . the conjuncture of multiple subaltern statuses and bases of Otherness, combined with the apparent irreconcilability between them and the ideals and normative expectations of the "free world" of capitalism, the American dream, or middle class privilege, may heighten and intensify our counter-hegemonic sensibilities, vision and understanding.
>
> (Harrison 1991b: 90)

Our double vision or multiple consciousness enables us to metaphorically code-switch into the living and lived experiences of our communities, hence providing us with access to particular forms of data which might be difficult for outsiders to access. Examples in this volume include Alim's research on the language of Hip Hop artists, Pollard's analysis of the language of Rasta music, and Ball's analysis of the voices of Black teachers in the US and South Africa. Because we can metaphorically code-switch into the lived and living experiences of the communities, we are "best positioned to provide insights that may escape scholars unfamiliar with the intricacies of local contexts" (Roy-Campbell, this volume). This metaphoric code-switching creates conditions for fruitful lines of communication between Black linguists and members of local communities, as illustrated, for example, in Baugh's research on linguistic profiling (see Baugh, this volume), in Spears's (1999a) work treating language within the larger framework of race and ideology, and in Smitherman's language activist work, e.g. in *King* (the 1977–9 "Black English" Federal court case, in which Black parents filed a lawsuit against the Ann Arbor School District for using the children's language as a basis for denying them their right to an equal education).

The advocacy work we are trying to describe here is not without potential problems, particularly when the positions we want to advocate conflict with deeply held views of our local community. Under such circumstances, if we cannot change the views and practices of the community to share our professional positions, our strategy should be to follow the lead of the community and to mitigate the potentially negative effects that may emanate from the community's decision. A striking example of a context in which a language policy position held by language activists conflicts with the community's position on language can be cited from South Africa, where language activists are experiencing resistance from local communities about the use of African languages as

media of instruction for schoolchildren. The linguists are well aware of the long-established, voluminous research from around the globe about the advantages of mother tongue education. However, these South African communities have expressed an explicit preference for English as the language of education.

This "pressurizing for English" (as South Africans refer to it) is exerted perhaps more intensely in South Africa's Western Cape than in any of the country's other eight provinces. According to Pluddemann, the "pressurizing" has already begun by first grade (2000: 40). In some schools, even teachers may exert such pressure (although it is well documented that teachers encounter severe pedagogical difficulties when teaching through English, primarily because they are not fully proficient in English themselves). The pressurizing for English is not a "love" for English *per se*. Rather it reflects a sharp sensitivity to the social and economic disparities between schools. English-language schools receive more and better resources, and they have a higher level of professionally qualified teachers than African-language schools. Owing to the disparity in educational quality between African-language and English-medium schools, most advocates of African-language schools do not send their children to these schools! Because we are unlikely to change the deeply entrenched position of the communities on language in education, we should thus focus our attention on improving current teaching practices with English as the medium of instruction and on ways of reducing the educational disadvantage of students being taught in a foreign medium (Ferguson 2000). When there is a difference between our professional position on a language issue and the position of the community we work in, our strategy should be based on a "critical engagement with the wishes of the communities, their desires and histories, that is, a way of thinking that pushes one to question rather than to pontificate" (Pennycook 1998: 343).

That Black Linguistics cannot merely be an "academic" language exercise is neatly captured by Gordon when he writes:

> Intellectual production which is not instrumentalized through praxis has no liberating effect. The knowledge and truths unveiled by critical intellectuals in conjunction with the community must be assimilated by the people, turned into concrete strategies and ultimately into activities which move the collectivity towards liberation.
>
> (Gordon 1991: 155)

He further notes that activism moves the decolonizing of anthropology to an anthropology of liberation. Whether the issue is addressed explicitly or implicitly, liberation is foremost in the thinking and intellectual practices of Black Linguistics. It serves and promotes the interests of the oppressed (Gordon 1991) and seeks to contribute toward social liberation.

In the course of promoting the interests of the communities of Black-language speakers, Black Linguistics has the potential for advancing and enhancing the field of language studies. In our efforts to take the linguistic affairs of our own

people into our own hands, we as intellectual activists, trained in the methods and theories of the human sciences, may also uncover, discover, recover concepts that end up generally advancing knowledge in the field. For example, Alim's research in Hip Hop has implications for notions about language variation and code-switching (see Alim, this volume). Vaughn-Cooke's (1987) theorizing about the need for time-depth studies of African American English as a counter to notions about its postmodern "divergence" from white varieties of American English resurrected theories about longitudinal data collection research. The work of linguists in the "Ebonics Movement," dating back to 1973, and the coining of the term "Ebonics" by Black psychologist Robert Williams, has led to a reexamination of the whole notion of what constitutes a "language" (see e.g. Blackshire-Belay1996; Smith 1998; Fasold 1999; Nehusi 2001; Palacas 2001). Similarly, in South Africa, the recent emergence of urban vehicular African languages is raising fundamental issues about the conceptualization of language (Cook 2002; Makoni, this volume).

Ideological orientation in Black Linguistics

Any intellectual enterprise is ideological (Joseph and Taylor 1990; Cameron *et al.* 1992; Blommaert 1999). Black Linguistics is, therefore, ideological. The fruitful line of inquiry to pursue in Black Linguistics is not whether Black Linguistics is ideological or not—that is taken for granted—but what type of ideological orientation is a useful line to pursue in Black Linguistics. Our preoccupation is with the conditions and purpose of the production of knowledge about Black languages. Interest in an analysis of the conditions under which knowledge of Black languages is produced is justifiable because of the wide range of scholars working on Black languages and the historiography of intellectual thought in the production of knowledge about these languages. For example, historically knowledge production within Creole Studies occurred during an era when speakers of the language were considered less than human. The early work on African languages was, by and large, carried out by white missionaries and linguists with limited expertise in the languages they were describing and inventing as part of empire building. Because of the less than ideal conditions under which some of the work on Black languages began, it is logical to raise questions about the current nature of the conditions under which knowledge of these languages is being produced.

Because of our ideological orientation, our analysis of language and language varieties becomes inseparable from the sociohistories which created them. For example, an analysis of the emergence of vehicular languages in urban Africa requires an understanding of the emergence of urban youth identities. The youth seek to deliberately distance themselves from rural identities seen as "backward," and to forge a new identity and create new languages which best define them.

An important aspect of the ideological orientation of Black Linguistics is its

global and comparative perspective, unlike the tendency of much of the work done on Black languages which has been to focus on the social and linguistic phenomena of individual Black communities to the exclusion of Black experiences outside a given community—for example, work on US Ebonics that ignores creoles and African languages. Because of enslavement, slavery, wars, colonization, and the continuing migration *en masse* of Continental Africans to North America, there has been a global dispersal of Black communities. Black researchers have emerged from these communities with perspectives growing out of circumstances experienced in many societies around the world. These circumstances have led to the development of a research perspective that looks at local phenomena with global vision. The comparative thrust in Black Linguistics is consonant with that in other social science research which deals with aspects of Blackness in the Diaspora (Fredrickson 1999; also comparisons of the political and economic histories of Blacks in South Africa and the US, e.g. Walters 1993; Fredrickson 2001). Winford (this volume) provides such a linguistic perspective in his analysis of African American (Vernacular) English and Caribbean creoles. Other examples are analyses of language policies and provisions for higher education for Blacks in South Africa and the US (Smitherman 2000; Ball, this volume).

Race as a defining feature of Black Linguists

That race is not a scientific concept but socially constructed is well known. What is less well known is how this non-scientific construct impacts on our scientific work as Black researchers of Black languages. Current research by Ibrahim (1999, this volume) illustrates that even areas of linguistics such as language learning, which some scholars might feel is psychologically oriented, are not color blind. We work in communities in which color, and indeed variations in color, are perceived and endowed with social meanings (Harrison 1991c).

In Black Linguistics we explore the intellectual consequences that our identities, including those which we select and those which select us (those attributed to us), have on our academic research. We seek to examine the various ways in which our identities as scholars are implicated in our epistemologies, in the work we do, and in the research orientations we adopt. The central issue which we address in Black Linguistics is what *being Black*, or *becoming Black*, means in language scholarship. One critical thing that it means, as this volume demonstrates, is that the Black Linguistics perspective asks "fundamental-liberation oriented" questions and candidly seeks to provide language solutions to problems. In Africa and the Caribbean, particularly, language issues are central in the social lives of Black communities. More so than in the US and other "developed" countries, language in African and Caribbean communities is an integral part of the nature of statecraft and governance (Devonish 1986). Solutions to language problems in these communities vary depending on the nature and magnitude of the problem. For example, in some cases we argue for the appropriacy of

linguae francae as media for education, while in other cases we call for extended use of standard languages and the establishment of common orthographies as possible solutions to the language-in-education problem.

Language as social practice

The general thrust in Black Linguistics is to conceive of language as social and communicative practice, conceptualized within a wider framework than formalistic theories of language. Contrary to Chomskyan linguistics, which treats grammar as neutral (e.g. Newmeyer 1986), in Black Linguistics language is conceived of as socially embedded. Grammatical patterns have to be deconstructed and understood within the social and political contexts in which they are used.

From the vantage point of Black language as social practice, our analyses of language and language varieties become inseparable from the communities and the sociohistories which created these languages and varieties. This mandates a perspective and an analytical framework that go beyond the now common methodologies and scholarly practices of quantitative sociolinguistics, which, like Chomskyan linguistics, tends to dichotomize language and speaker and to focus on the former, rather than both the former and the latter. Black Linguistics is keenly attuned to the fact that we are producing knowledge about both the creation (language) and the creator (Black people). It is thus imperative that our scholarship reflects the histories, social circumstances, political economies, aspirations—and voices—of the people whose language we study.

We bring this discussion to a close by stating that Black Linguistics is concerned not only with analysis but with why the analysts are doing the analysis; concerned not only with results, but with the impact of the dissemination of the results on audiences both in and outside of the Academy.

Overview of chapters

The chapters in this volume are divided into three main sections: ideological practices in research on Black languages; conceptualization and status of Black languages; and inclusion and exclusion through language.

Ideological practices in research on Black languages

The volume begins with Winford's chapter which analyzes the political and ideological thinking that shapes linguistic debates about African American (Vernacular) English (AAVE) and links AAVE to Caribbean creoles and African languages. One of the recurring and controversial debates about AAVE is its status. In some analyses of this particular Black language, it is conceptualized as a distinct language system with its own unique structural patterns, discourse, and rhetorical style. In other analyses, it is viewed as subordinate to Mainstream (White) American English. The debate about the status of AAVE, Winford

argues, is not a purely linguistic one. In a mode consistent with the ideological orientation of Black Linguistics, Winford demonstrates that the debate is about history and the role of African Americans in shaping their own lives and destiny.

The chapters by Alim and Pollard might be said to demonstrate the operations of linguistic ideology in Black musical culture in the US and the Caribbean. Alim focuses on an analysis of Hip Hop language while Pollard analyzes the language of Rastafari and Reggae. Both scholars demonstrate the extent to which ordinary speakers are consciously in control of their language and manipulate its variability to achieve specific social and ideological goals.

Alim shows how Hip Hop artists consciously manipulate AAVE and the US language of wider communication ("standard English"). A central factor in his work is his contribution to our understanding of the relationship between identity, ideology, and Black languages. Although he presents descriptions of the linguistic characteristics of AAVE found in Hip Hop music, Alim's main focus is to illuminate how "street speech culture breathes" through an analysis of the linguistic sophistication of Hip Hop artists. His results demonstrate that these artists carefully manipulate the variability of linguistic forms as part of their identity and ideological bonding with the African American community in the US.

Using the specific situation of the language and history of Rastafari culture in Jamaica, Pollard focuses on "Dread Talk," also known as "I-ance," "I-yaric" and " Rasta Talk." It is a specific type of code, carefully crafted from the raw materials of English, the "principal lexifier of all language in Jamaica," to serve the objectives of the Rastafari as a cultural–religious group. The Rastafari regarded themselves as responsible for their own liberation, as articulated in the words of their visionary musical artist, the renowned Bob Marley: "Emancipate yourself from mental slavery/None but ourselves can free our minds" (1980). This emancipation was the chief objective of Dread Talk, a language created as a challenge to white domination which has now spread beyond Jamaica to the global community. Pollard analyzes the linguistic creativity characteristic of I-yaric and shows how semantic license and creativity are part of the Rastafari strategy of liberation and empowerment. Her work is important for demonstrating how speakers' sense of control over language manifests itself in the way speakers invent and invest new meanings in language.

Conceptualization and status of Black languages

Roy-Campbell's chapter draws on work that is largely, though not exclusively, by African scholars to demonstrate the legacy of colonial thinking in shaping language-in-education policies in East Africa. She shows how the continuing use of "ex-colonial" languages as media of instruction in education hinders learning and is also, to a large extent, a waste of resources—which resource-weakened African countries can ill afford. She illustrates that the continued use of "ex-colonial" languages in postcolonial societies benefits social classes who have greater

access to these languages—therein perpetuating existing social and economic inequality. Some Southern African countries, notably Zimbabwe and South Africa, have made serious attempts to "develop" indigenous African languages so they can be effectively utilized as media of instruction. However, as Roy-Campbell demonstrates, the massive investment in the development of dictionaries and grammar books is not improving the literacy level of local populations. The important lesson we learn from Roy-Campbell's contribution is that language development as a strategy does not necessarily achieve people development. Her work has implications for issues about the conceptualization of speaker equality. Indeed linguistic equality is one thing, but social and economic equality is another.

Hassana Alidou analyzes language-in-education policies in three "ex"-French colonies, Niger, Mali, and Burkina Fasso, and shows how conceptualizations about language in education have evolved since the 1980s. According to Alidou, the continued use of French as medium of instruction in West African schools accentuates class differences between the urban middle and upper classes and the rural poor who constitute the majority in West African countries and who have a dramatic failure rate on national examinations. In foregrounding the social-class consequences of the medium of instruction in postcolonial societies, Alidou makes an important contribution because media of instruction debates have been silent on the social and economic impact of media of instruction. Significantly also, she raises the issue of teaching learning through indigenous language materials which have not been constructed with uniform orthographies and which do not speak to the local experiences of most West African language learners. Alidou outlines how models of language learning which are historically sensitive and contextually relevant might be constructed and argues against blindly following models from outside the African context.

Following Roy-Campbell's and Alidou's analyses of East and West Africa, the chapters by Phaswana and Makoni adopt divergent perspectives on language issues in Southern Africa, specifically South Africa with its Constitutional policy of eleven official languages. Phaswana's chapter investigates the extent to which South Africa's language policy is being affirmed by the South African national government. His research involves an analysis of data collected in a wide variety of ways—e.g. Parliamentary reports and other published documents, interviews with key elected officials, and systematic observation of Parliamentary sessions and subcommittee meetings. Phaswana concludes that:

1   in spite of the eleven-official-languages policy enshrined in the South African Constitution, English is the preferred language of the South African national government;
2   the government's doctrine of language equality is a disingenuous rhetorical move;
3   for the future of freedom and democracy in South Africa, Black linguists must help politicians rethink language issues in line with Black empowerment.

The chapter by Makoni argues that, paradoxically, the problems with the implementation of the South African eleven-official-languages policy should be welcomed instead of being perceived as the national government's unwillingness or inability to abide by its Constitutional obligation. The problem of implementability forces us to examine the conceptualizations of language underlying the national language policy. He contends that the policy is linguistically unimplementable because it constructs languages as bounded discrete entities, conceptualizations inconsistent with the social experiences of most users. Furthermore, Makoni argues, implementation of such a policy would only result in entrenching existing social and ethnic divisions inherited from the apartheid era, a situation which the current South African national government is seeking to reverse. In other words, the government cannot change South Africa's social, class, and ethnic landscape by using the very ways of conceptualizing social relationships which apartheid utilized in the first place. Makoni concludes that in order for societies in transition to contain history and effect change, they need to imagine new ways of conceptualizing problems rather than trying to solve problems using the very same conceptual apparatus which created the problems.

Inclusion and exclusion through language

This section is made up of chapters by Baugh, Ibrahim, and Ball. Each takes a different perspective and setting to address issues about social and economic access and exclusion. Baugh addresses issues about access and exclusion from the perspective of access to housing, Ibrahim confronts the issue from the perspective of identity politics in language learning, and Ball addresses the phenomenon from the perspective of discourse in education.

Developing the concept of "linguistic profiling," Baugh's work demonstrates how speech cues over the telephone can lead to racial identification and influence a person's access to apartment and housing rentals. In the US, sounding "Black" or "Latino" often results in denial, i.e. the applicant is told on the telephone that there are no vacancies. However, sounding "white" opens the housing "gate." The US national government and most local governments have laws making housing discrimination illegal, but the case has to be proven empirically. Reflecting the scholarly activism that is a tenet of Black Linguistics, Baugh makes his research and expertise available to fair housing organizations who utilize legal venues to assist Black and Latino victims of linguistic profiling and exclusion from access to housing.

Ibrahim's chapter describes the social and political processes involved in the learning of AAVE by African student refugees in Canada, who were learning English as a second language. His research involved observations, interviews, and social interaction with the students, most of them Sudanese, both in and outside of school. He demonstrates how the selection of (US) African American Language was central to these Sudanese youths' objective of learning to be

Black, an identity which they became aware of only after entering the North American discursive space. They became Black through language learning. For these Francophone African youth, living in Southwestern Ontario, Canada, Hip Hop was the dominant source for learning AAVE. At the same time, they held on to their African languages which, according to Ibrahim's research, were fundamental to the youths' articulation of a sense of nationality and to the "creation of safe spaces of comfort, bonding, and familiarity."

Ball's chapter focuses on language attitudes and classroom practices of teachers in the US and South Africa. A substantial number of Ball's teacher groups over the three-year period of her study were students of color who have historically struggled for access to quality education. Within this context, educational institutions have served as linguistic gate-keepers, guarding the routes to social mobility in countries around the globe. Ball shows that this practice is particularly evident in official and unofficial language policies embedded in classroom practices in the US and South Africa. Teachers operate with a body of assumptions and beliefs, which constitute a language ideology that reflects—or resists—the national language policy. Ball examines how teachers' ideologies can be changed through an innovative educational program. The notion of ethically responsible intervention is always important in Black Linguistics because of our overwhelming sense of social responsibility to the communities in which we work.

Taken as a whole, the chapters in this book, including this introductory chapter, reaffirm our call for an international conversation that will lead toward Black Linguistics.

References

Blackshire-Belay, C.A. (1996) "The location of Ebonics within the framework of the Africological paradigm," *Journal of Black Studies*, 27 (1): 5–23.

Blommaert, J. (ed.) (1999) *Language Ideological Debates*, Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Cameron, D., Frazer, E., Harvey, P., Rampton, B., and Richardson, K. (1992) *Researching Language: Issues of Power and Method*, London: Routledge.

Childs, G. Tucker (1999) "The status of Isicamatho, a Nguni based urban variety of Soweto," in A. Spears and D. Winford (eds) *The Structure and Status of Pidgins and Creoles*, Amsterdam and Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins, 341–70.

Cook, S. (2002) "Urban language in a rural setting: the case of Phokeng, South Africa," in G. Gmelch and W. Zenner (eds) *Urban Life Readings in the Anthropology of the City*, Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 106–13.

Devonish, H. (1986) *Language and Liberation: Creole Language Politics in the Caribbean*, London: Karia Press.

Dombrosky, R.S. (1989) *Antonio Gramsci*, Twayne Publishers.

DuBois, W.E.B. (1903) *The Souls of Black Folk*, New York: Dover.

Fardon, R. and Furniss, G. (1994) *African Languages, Development and the State*, London: Routledge.

Fasold, R.W. (2001) "Ebonic need not be English," in J.E. Alatis and A. Tan (eds)

15

Language in our Time: Bilingual Education and Official English, Ebonics and Standard English Immigration and the Unz Initiative (Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics 1999), Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 262–80.

Ferguson, G. (2000) "The medium of instruction in African education: the role of the applied linguist," in S. Makoni and Nkonko Kamwangamalu (eds) *Language and Institutions in Africa*, Cape Town: Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society, 95–111.

Fredrickson, G. (1999) "Reform and revolution in America and South Africa freedom struggles," in D.C. Hine and J. McCleod (eds) *Crossing Boundaries*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 71–87.

Gordon, E. (1991) "Anthropology as liberation," in F.V. Harrison (ed.) *Decolonizing Anthropology: Moving Further toward an Anthropology for Liberation*, Washington, DC: American Anthropological Association, 149–68.

Harris, J. (1996) "Issues in recruiting African American participants for research," in G.K. Alan, K.E. Pollock, and L. Joyce (eds) *Communication Disorders in African American Children: Research Assessment and Intervention*, London: Paul Brookes Publishing Company, 19–36.

Harrison, F.V. (1991a) "Anthropology as an agent of transformation. Introductory comments and queries," in F.V. Harrison (ed.) *Decolonizing Anthropology*, Washington, DC: American Anthropological Association, 1–15.

—— (ed.) (1991b) *Decolonizing Anthropology: Moving Further Toward an Anthropology for Liberation*, Washington, DC: American Anthropological Association.

—— (1999c) "Ethnography as politics," in F.V. Harrison (ed.) *Decolonizing Anthropology: Moving Further Toward an Anthropology for Liberation*, Washington, DC: Association of Black Anthropologists/American Anthropological Association, 88–110.

Ibrahim, A. (1999) "Becoming Black: Rap and Hip Hop, race, gender, identity and the politics of ESL," *TESOL Quarterly*, 33: 349–65.

Joseph, J.E. and Taylor, T.J. (1990) *Ideologies of Language*, New York: Routledge.

LePage and Tabouret-Keller, A. (1985) *Acts of Identity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Marley, B. (1980) "Redemption Song," Bob Marley Music Ltd B.V.

Nehusi, Kimani S. (2001) "From Medew Netjer to Ebonics," in C. Crawford (ed.) *Ebonics and Language Education of African Ancestry Students*, New York: Sankofa World Publishers, 56–122.

Newmeyer, F. (1986) *The Politics of Linguistics*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 13/20.

Palacas, A. (2001) "Liberating American Ebonics from Euro-English," *College English*, 63 (3): 326–52.

Pennycook, A. (1994) *The Cultural Politics of English as an International Language*, London: Longman.

—— (1998) *English and the Discourses of Colonialism*, London: Routledge.

—— (2001) *Critical Applied Linguistics*, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Pluddemann, P. (2000) "Education with multilingualism in South Africa: an overview," in E. Ridge, S.B. Makoni and S. G. Ridge (eds) *Freedom and Discipline: Essays in Applied Linguistics*, New Delhi: Bhari.

Romaine, S. (1984) *The Language of Children and Adolescents: The Acquisition of Communicative Competence*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Skinner, E. (1999) "Hegemonic paradigms and the African world: striving to be free," in C. Hine and J. McLeod (eds) *Crossing Boundaries*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 45–71.

Smith, E. (1998) "What is Black English? What is Ebonics?," in T. Perry and Lisa Delpit (eds) *The Real Ebonics Debate: Power, Language, and the Education of African American Children*, Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 49–58.

Smitherman, G. (2000) "Language and democracy in the United States of America and South Africa," in S. Makoni and Nkonko Kamwangamalu (eds) *Language and Institutions in Africa*, Cape Town: Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society, 65–90.

Spears, A.K. (1999a) "Introduction," in A.K. Spears (ed.) *Race and Ideology*: *Language, Symbolism and Popular Culture*, Detroit, IL: Wayne State University Press, 11–58.

—— (ed.) (1999b) *Race and Ideology: Language, Symbolism and Popular Culture*, Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press.

Vaughn-Cooke, F. (1987) "Are Black and White vernaculars diverging?," *American Speech*, 62: 12–32.

Walters, R.W. (1993) *Pan Africanism in the African Diaspora*, Detroit, IL: Wayne State University Press.

Williams, R.L. (1975) *Ebonics: The True Language of Black Folks*, St. Louis, MO: Institute for Black Studies.

Worsley, P. (1984) *The Three Worlds: Culture and World Development*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.