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THINKING ABOUT DIVERSITY

Arthur K. Spears

Human Equality and Language Equality

This introductory textbook unites approaches to language study from the disciplines of anthropology and linguistics. Our approach could be called linguistic anthropology or sociolinguistics, the first considered a subfield of anthropology, the second a subfield of linguistics. Both overlap significantly in terms of content. In this chapter, I begin by drawing on some of the basic concepts relating to diversity from the two disciplines.

First, however, I should enter some words about a comment in the Preface: “We believe that more students from diverse backgrounds would be attracted to . . . linguistics if instructors in introductory courses made more use of course materials based on data from the language varieties of [historically excluded] groups.” However, whom do we have in mind when we speak of increasing diversity in linguistics, or increasing *inclusion*, to use the term that is currently gaining ground on *diversity*? Increasing the number of nonwhite linguists is certainly high on our agenda, but it is certainly not the only high priority.

In terms of increasing diversity in linguistics, race may well be the least understood issue, at least based on my classroom experiences in questioning students about their knowledge of the topic. Because of this, the discussion of race below is somewhat longer than those covering other types of social groups, in order to make sure the basics are dealt with. Ethnicity is closely related to race, and it is high on our agenda in terms of raising representation from nonwhite as well as white groups. Linguistics has already made great strides in increasing the participation of women, though there is clearly still work to be done. We do not have sufficient data on socioeconomic class to make firm claims about participation in linguistics by persons from working-class backgrounds, but we suspect that it

should be high on our diversity agenda. (Accordingly, several chapters treat language varieties concentrated in the working class.)

Anthropologists stress the biopsychological equality of all human populations. By this we mean simply that all human populations have an equal capacity for developing and acquiring culture, though there are indeed differences in abilities from individual to individual. This principle is stressed in introductory courses because sometimes students have erroneous assumptions. They consider the range of technological accomplishments in societies around the world and the chronology of societies' accomplishments and reach the false conclusion that some peoples have richer cognitive abilities. Negative ideas about other peoples, based on technological accomplishment, also extend to language. It is commonly assumed that the languages of people in technologically simpler societies are somehow simpler. The term *primitive* is often used. Neither of these ideas, about culture in general or language (which is part of culture), is true.

Those who study human history closely know that certain forms of culture—cities, irrigation systems, metalworking, large-scale agriculture, and so on—arise out of a complex interplay of environment, natural resources, demographics, and chance. Culture, in anthropology and other social sciences, refers to the mental, material, and behavioral patterns that characterize a society, briefly, the design for and pattern of living of that society. Culture in this sense is not solely about operas, symphony orchestras, haute couture, and similar institutions. Such institutions are often referred to popularly as “high culture,” in reference to affluent, modern societies. So, although large-scale, irrigation-based agriculture appears to have begun first in the Middle East, and modern industrialization first arose in Europe, these events were due to a complex interplay of environment, natural resources, demographics, and chance. They are not the result of any cognitive superiority of the people involved.

Often, too, people sometimes underestimate the technological achievements of particular societies due to a superficial knowledge of history. Remember also that technological achievements are only one kind of human achievement out of many. The histories of many parts of the world are neglected in our schooling, for example, those of sub-Saharan African peoples. As a result, many people assume that nothing of consequence happened there before the arrival of Europeans. They do not know, for example, that when the Portuguese arrived in central West Africa at the shore of the Kingdom of the Kongo in the fifteenth century, they found a society as culturally complex as their own. The Portuguese established formal diplomatic relations with this kingdom, as they would have with any other society of equal standing.

Conquest and empire building are also dependent on many variables, the interplay of which can explain why some peoples forged empires and others did not. Many people are unaware of the past empires of peoples existing today. How many are aware, for example, of the Serbian Empire, Poland's former status as a major power, or the sub-Saharan Ghanaian Empire in Africa, whose beginning

is dated around the eighth century AD? How many know that Spaniards were greatly aided in conquering much of Latin America by the decimation of Native American populations lacking resistance to the Old World diseases that the Spaniards brought with them? The Spanish conquest cannot be attributed mainly to extraordinary military prowess or technology.

Linguists stress the equality of all languages. We note in particular that there are no primitive languages and that all languages—and all dialects, or varieties, of those languages—have a grammar. Their grammars are all systematic, governed by strict rules of pronunciation, word formation, and sentence structuring. One language, for example, English, may seem to have a noticeably primitive noun case system, compared to, say, your average Slavic language, which has a complex case system. However, English is complex in other ways. Consider its vowel system, more complex than the systems of most languages.

CASE

Case refers to what are often called inflectional endings on nouns and other items in the noun phrase. Case endings indicate the role of the noun or the entire noun phrase in the sentence. In English we have a sentence such as the following, translated for comparison into Croatian (spoken in Croatia, in the former Yugoslavia):

(1)	The	girl	saw		the	girl.
	∅	djevojka	je	vidjela	∅	djevojku
			AUX	PAST+PPL		

'The girl saw the girl.'

In English, there is no inflection determined by whether *the girl* is the subject or direct object. In Croatian there is: *djevojka* (subject, or nominative case) and *djevojku* (direct object, or accusative case). (Croatian does not use articles.) Croatian has two numbers (singular and plural), seven cases, and three genders (masculine, feminine, and neuter), so every noun and all of its modifiers have to be inflected, taking into consideration all of these grammatical properties. Added to this, there are subclasses of nouns that do not fit the regular pattern for their gender. To the monolingual English speaker, this appears quite complex.

Linguists often elaborate the principle of all languages being equal by stating that all language varieties are equally adequate for the communicative needs of their speakers. Speakers of some languages have no need to talk about “bipartisan weapons-of-mass-destruction antiproliferation initiatives” because they have none. English speakers (in some countries) do, but we are relatively helpless when it is time to distinguish among a dozen or more types of camels, or dreams, or

relatives, or many other entities that other languages handle with precision and subtlety, with one word or a set phrase.

One dialect, or variety, of a language may seem simpler than another, more prestigious dialect of the same language. For example, African American Vernacular English (AAVE, often called Ebonics), may seem simpler than Mainstream Standard English, also called Standard English, Mainstream English, Academic English, General American English, or Network Standard English (normally heard on television and radio). However, there is no basis whatsoever for claiming this. Remember, too, that AAVE is more prestigious than the mainstream standard in some settings, to wit, in most African American churches. The mainstream standard lacks the grammatical mechanisms and associated rhetorical apparatus required for an eloquent traditional African American sermon.

To illustrate, AAVE has tenses that the mainstream standard lacks. For one, AAVE has a remote perfect tense, which indicates that a situation started a long time ago and continues to the present or continues to have relevance to the present. The following sentence, with the Remote Perfect in bold, means, ‘He left a long time ago and is still gone’: *He **BIN lef**.* (AAVE specialists spell Remote Perfect *been* with capital letters to indicate that it is stressed and to distinguish it from the *been* present in all English dialects.) AAVE also has a highly intricate mood system expressing disapproval, which is absent from the mainstream standard.

MOOD

Mood includes concepts like subjunctive, indicative, and optative, which are usually expressed in verb phrases; it is the grammatical expression of a speaker’s attitude toward the situation expressed by a sentence. (See the chapter “African American English” for more details about mood in AAVE.)

Since African Americans are discussed in several places in this chapter and in this book, and there is, surprisingly, quite a bit of confusion and disagreement about who African Americans are, something should be said about this term. It refers basically to the African-descent U.S. population whose ancestors have been here at least about 150 years, and sometimes the U.S.-born-and-raised offspring of recent black immigrants too. The word *recent* (during the past 500 years or so) is required in this discussion because all humans are of African descent. However, even this qualification ignores the fact that Africans have been traveling to Europe and elsewhere continuously throughout human history. Africans (even from sub-Saharan Africa) were settling in Europe, for example, and raising families during the Greek and Roman Empires, the Middle Ages (called the Dark Ages when I was in school), and afterwards, not to mention before. (The Middle Ages were the Golden Age for Arabs.) If one does the genealogical math, one can see that a substantial number of Europeans who immigrated to the U.S. had recent African descent.

Diversity

Given that this book was inspired by the efforts of a group of linguists to increase diversity, it would be appropriate to say something about the concept of diversity. *Diversity*, along with terms such as *ethnicity*, *race*, *social class*, *culture*, and *mores*, needs to be explained. What is this word used to refer to nowadays, and what are some of the meanings it has that we often do not think about? In looking closely at this word and associated ones, students can gain a better idea of how linguists go about studying language, politics, and ideology—and even language change.

The first point to note about *diversity* is that it is a code word often used in the political arena in connection with a policy agenda. In the process of creating a code word, speakers focus more on a certain meaning of the word than others. That is, they privilege certain meanings. Sometimes the privileged meaning can eclipse the others. *Diversity*, or its adjective form, *diverse*, may refer simply to different kinds of anything, not even people necessarily. This was the most common sense in which the word was used, say, forty years ago. It was also used in the sense of ‘being of a different kind’, but most likely this second sense was much less common (and this sense was listed as the second, normally less used one, in my dictionary).

The privileged meaning of *diversity* nowadays, however, refers to being of a different kind in the sense of belonging to a certain kind of human social group. When a corporation, for example, wants to increase diversity, we can readily assume that the aim is increasing the representation of different types of social groups in the corporation. Social scientists focus their attention on social groups that are significant because thinking in terms of them permits generalizations and predictions about social life. Consequently, social groups of interest are ethnic, racial, often religious, and sometimes sexuality based (lesbian, gay, etc.), to provide some examples. No one talks about right-eye-dominant people or bracelet wearers in social science treatises because these groupings of humans and generalizations pertaining to them do not really increase our understanding of general social life.

However, note that *diversity* as a code word does not refer to all social groups. It singles out those who have been historically underrepresented, disenfranchised, disadvantaged, and/or shut out of important institutional settings such as business and educational ones. Thus, if a college wants to increase diversity in its student body, it will not redouble its efforts to recruit Lutheran, Dutch American, white male Presbyterian, and heterosexual, white, French-ancestry students. Its focus will be on those who, for a number of historical reasons, have had less access to the college and who the college believes are underrepresented. The quest for diversity in colleges and other institutions is in line with the nation’s stated goal of equal opportunity for all and is also intended to make up partially for historical exclusion, which has important present effects.

Observe also that for many American English speakers, *diverse* is in the process of splitting into two words, each with its own pronunciation. Pronounced one

way, it tends to have one meaning; pronounced differently, it tends to have the code word meaning. [daɪvrs] (with secondary stress on the first syllable, primary stress on the second) is the pronunciation for the code word sense ‘minority’. [dəvrs] has the other meaning, ‘comprising different kinds’ or ‘of a different kind (that is, any type, not just social group related)’.

Minority

Diverse, then, has come to mean basically the same as the word *minority*. Thus, one can now hear that a certain candidate for a job is “diverse” or hear someone say, “Is she diverse?” (Compare *Is she a minority?*) Note also how *minority* as a code word can refer to women in many Americans’ speech, even though women actually constitute a majority percentage-wise. (In some textbooks on ethnicity and gender, *minority* is defined to include women.) Speaking of women as a minority makes clear that the new, code word, social-agenda sense of *minority* unhinges it from numbers and percentages alone.

There is something else that is very curious about the word *minority*. Leave aside for a moment that *minority* may refer to women. Notice that a white person cannot be a minority (except in the sense of women being a minority), but any person of color (nonwhite) is automatically one. But, one might counter, whites indeed are not a minority. That is true, in the U.S. at least. However, whites are indeed a minority in the world. Going further, one notices that whites are always lumped into one group for the majority/minority distinction, but peoples of color are always split into blacks, Latinos, Asians, Native Americans, and so on. Why are whites not ever split up so that specific white groups, for example, Polish Americans, become minorities? If you would like to ponder this question, you might also ponder why such white ethnic groups, say ninety years ago, were more often spoken of as minorities, more so than today. In the contemporary U.S., if a city has 30% whites, 20% blacks, 20% Latinos, 20% Asians, and 10% Native Americans, that city is still said to have a white majority. Why is it not said to have a people-of-color majority? White groups can be as different from each other culturally and socially as groups of color are different from white groups. Surely, white Jewish Russian Americans in San Francisco, for example, are just as different from white Italian Americans in San Francisco as they are different from African American San Franciscans. Thus, cultural similarity cannot be used as a rationale for lumping whites together. Actually, we might even ask why the highly useful terms *people of color* and *person of color* are not used in the mainstream media. Note that using these terms would often make nonwhites a majority. I hope that this discussion of *minority* will go beyond clarifying its meaning to show additionally how our choices of words and phrases and the frequency with which we use them can affect our view of social groups and society.

Clearly, a political agenda is at work in typically treating whites as one group, a (national) majority, when they are spoken of in reference to groups of color. Our language, American English, is shaped to reinforce, reiterate, and reproduce the idea of white—and male—dominance, demographically and in other ways. The shaping of language use is one of the many ways that the ideology of white supremacy—and patriarchy—is buttressed.

Ethnicity

The term *ethnicity* is intended to capture the status of a group of individuals as an identifiable group of people. An **ethnic group** is one whose members share a collective identity, one that may be based on some combination of shared history, language, religion, or culture. Sometimes ethnicity is forced onto people. The members of the ethnic group would just as soon not be members of it, but the rest of society treats them as distinct through various types of official or unofficial discrimination and exclusion. For example, African American ethnicity (and racial identity) has been enforced historically from the outside through many forms of legal and social exclusion. But African Americans have also come to use and value their ethnic (and racial) distinctiveness. They use it as a tool to build solidarity and combat discrimination and exclusion.

Quick question: what is the ethnicity of Pocahontas (the famous stateswoman in the early history of Native American–British contact in North America)? That’s right: Native American, or more specifically Powhatan (her tribe) American. What is the ethnicity of Michael Jordan (the world-renowned basketball player)? That’s right: African American. What is the ethnicity of Chita Rivera (the famous actress and dancer)? That’s right: Latina American, or more specifically Puerto Rican American. Now, what’s the ethnicity of President Reagan? President Nixon? Hillary Clinton? It seems that no one knows for sure but their biographers. *White* is a racial term, not an ethnic one. Whites in the U.S. and in other countries are of many ethnicities.

Some people’s ethnicity is very prominent, while for others—well, it seems almost perverse even to ask. Their ethnicity is what social scientists call “unmarked.” It is seen as the “norm,” unremarkable, not worth talking about, neutral. Other kinds of individuals, however, are always tagged—some would say tarred—with an ethnic label. Observe that even the term *white ethnic* does not refer to President Franklin Roosevelt (even though, strictly speaking, he had an ethnicity, more or less: Dutch American). White ethnics are whites who, as a group, have less prestige, power, and resources, in a manner similar to people of color, whose ethnicity is branded on them, so to speak. White ethnics, like people of color, are generally ethnically marked as Polish American, Jewish American, Italian American, and so forth. They *tend* to be groups with a relatively high percentage of working-class members. Nevertheless, white ethnics overall have more access to power and

resources than groups of color (Asians, African Americans, etc.) owing to their whiteness. A Polish American, for example, can rather easily lose his or her ethnicity by, for instance, changing his or her name and marrying the WASP boss's daughter or son. (A WASP is a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant.) White ethnicities are much more easily erasable than those of people of color. Ethnicity in practice is applied to groups that are to some extent discriminated against, those who suffer some disadvantage in comparison to ethnically unmarked whites. (For details on disadvantages experienced by white ethnics, see textbooks on ethnicity such as Schaefer 2012.)

Consequently, even though social scientists may say that everyone, strictly speaking, has an ethnicity, in reality ethnicity is more relevant for social groups who are lower in the pecking order. The way we actually talk about ethnicity makes it a concept similar to socioeconomic class. This is because ethnicity on the societal level virtually always involves hierarchies of dominance and access to wealth and power, as does socioeconomic class. We will turn to this kind of social grouping (class), but first some remarks on race.

Race

Several points should be stressed from the outset in talking about race. (Most of the discussions below follow Spears 1999.) First, race is not based on science; race as a concept and racial categories are sociocultural. As we would expect, then, the definition of race and racial categories differs according to society. **Race** in the U.S. is a social group category based *partially* on physical traits. The following discussion explains why it is only partially so.

Racial categorization cannot be separated from **racism**, behaviors that directly or indirectly support the inequality of racial hierarchy. A **racial hierarchy** arranges racial groups from top to bottom. The closer to the top a racial group is, the more access it has to power and wealth. The racial hierarchy is supported most significantly by the power of the state and social institutions. A racial hierarchy always involves prejudice, discrimination, and exploitation of the groups below the top of the racial hierarchy. In other words, racism is prejudice, discrimination, and exploitation with the power of the state and social institutions behind them. Often this statement is shortened to "Racism is prejudice with power behind it."

Since race is sociocultural, one's racial classification may change going from one society to another. As an example, the same person may be white in Puerto Rico or Brazil but black in the U.S. Someone who is black in the U.S. could go to another country and be white, or, if not white, not black. Instead, they might be classified using terms such as *mulatto*, *métis*, *indio*, *zambo*, *trigueño*, *mestizo*, and *coloured*, depending on what country they are in, exactly how they look, and what is known about the person's background.

Second, racial terms, as we would expect given what has just been observed, are illogical, fuzzy, contradictory, unilluminating, and confusing even though people

use them all the time and believe they know what they are talking about. Not only do they overlap and vary from society to society, but they are often confused with color terms for people. For example, U.S. blacks may be referred to as black (very dark-skinned), as opposed to brown (brown-skinned), as opposed to yellow (light-skinned), or even white (looking like a white person but actually black). But *brown* is also used sometimes to refer to Latinos as a group (whose members may be black, Asian, white, etc.), who are sometimes thought of as constituting a race, other times an ethnic group, other times simply people with a Spanish-language heritage. For example, we sometimes hear of the “browning” of American popular culture, with the increased popularity of salsa, merengue, and other types of music as well as dance from Latin America.

Sometimes, a racial (or racialized) group is physically identical to the dominant population group of a society, for example, the *burakumin* of Japan. They are socially constructed as a group that is polluted, low caste, and alien in species or race (Takezawa 2006: 6), even though history and archaeology have documented the historical origins of their exclusion and the absence of any separate origin.

Think about the bizarre racial system in the U.S., with regard to black and white. The traditional definition of black is anyone with one drop of black blood. Of course, from a scientific standpoint, there is no such thing as “black blood” or “white blood” or any other kind or racial or ethnic blood. What is meant is anyone with (recent, sub-Saharan) African ancestry. When racists first came up with the definition, they did not know that all humans originated in Africa. Moreover, there are “sub-Saharan-looking” (that is, darker-skinned and broader-featured) people in North Africa and “North African-looking” (lighter-skinned and finer-featured) people in sub-Saharan Africa. But, again, our focus here is on the non-sensical nature of racial classification.

Virtually all African Americans are mixed race, and, as noted, some “look” white and pass for white. The descendants of all the African Americans who have passed for white (normally marrying whites) are black—strictly speaking, according to the one-drop rule. Thus, many people who are white are really black. With whites who are actually black producing offspring with whites, eventually there will be no real whites left—according to the definition. Taking U.S. racial classification to its logical conclusion, this is what we conclude.

Following the Hurricane Katrina disaster that hit New Orleans in 2005, some friends and I watched news coverage of New Orleans neighborhoods, one black and one white. When the camera showed the “white” people in the “white” neighborhood, the African American group that I viewed the newscast with burst into laughter. Most of the whites in the New Orleans white neighborhood would never have been considered white in the North, where we grew up. To us, they resembled light-skinned, non-white-looking blacks. In other words, there is even regional variation in the U.S. with regards to what white looks like.

To reiterate, racial terms make reference to physical features but often in a very oblique, illogical, and inconsistent way. Thus, appearance stereotypes come

very much into play. So, a woman is said not to “look Latina,” for example. An Asian is judged not to “look Asian.” A black man is said to “look like he is white.” Actually, a black person in the U.S. may look like almost anyone in the world. As I point out in the chapter on African American English, the black people in the all-black, racially segregated African American community I grew up in “looked like” practically all peoples of the world: whites, Arabs, Norwegians, Polynesians, Senegalese, Chinese, Native Americans—or, at least, like most people’s stereotypes of what those groups look like. Some of those black people looked “whiter” than actual whites, who lived in their own racially segregated white neighborhoods.

Third, racial categories, in the end, do not tell us anything really interesting about people except how they may be treated due to the racial classification that society has imposed on them. Racial classifications may give us some clue as to what the person looks like, but then again they may be totally misleading. When humans began to get serious about racial categories in the seventeenth century, they based them on highly observable physical traits such as skin color, hair texture, facial features, and head shape and size. However, such features indicate nothing about intelligence or ability to acquire culture.

Consider, for example, the sickle-cell allele, first noted among Africans and African Americans. This allele (i.e., one of two variants of the gene governing the sickle-cell blood trait) provides resistance to malaria when a person inherits only one sickle-cell allele from a parent. However, if the person inherits this allele from both parents (ending up with two of the sickle-cell alleles), he or she falls victim to sickle-cell anemia, a potentially fatal disease. Early in our understanding of this genetic trait, it seemed to be linked to race. Subsequent research, however, showed that it also occurs in Greece, Turkey, Yemen, India, and Burma—in areas of endemic malaria—inhabited by different “races.” Thus, there is good reason to research human populations in terms of their biological traits, but they must be interesting biological traits that indicate something about human adaptation and evolution according to the environment and other factors. Such factors are most often unrelated to ones that have been used in pseudoscientific racial categories. There is no way to support race categories scientifically using the physical traits that these categories have been based on. Scientists often use the term *population* when they seek to identify a human group based on meaningful physical traits such as the sickle-cell trait or blood type. (See any introduction to general, four-field anthropology for more information about genetic polymorphism, resulting from genetic variation.)

In certain cases, all the members of an ethnic group are classified as being of the same race. As an example, all individuals who are ethnically African American are also black, in the racial sense that this term is used in the U.S. Note, however, that not all blacks in the U.S. are African Americans. There is actually a large number of ethnic groups in the U.S. who are considered black racially: Nigerian Americans, Senegalese Americans, and even others whose ancestors (that is, recent ancestors—all human ancestry goes back to Africa) are not from Africa,

for example, Fijian Americans, as well as many other groups. Some members of groups whose (recent) ancestry is not African may prefer not to be classified racially as black. However, societies have their racial classification terminologies, and they are applied to individuals regardless of those individuals' wishes.

Fourth, race categories are sociocultural constructs invented and adopted in societies at certain points in history as support for political and economic goals. Race is used to place groups in a hierarchy that determines their access to wealth and power. For example, during the seventeenth century, in the early days of the English colonies in America, racial thinking was not institutionalized with respect to the organization and running of society. The living condition of the average white indentured servant was not appreciably better than that of slaves (or black indentured servants, whose existence is often overlooked). The relations among blacks, whites, and Native Americans living in European settlements were fluid and included cohabitation and the production of mixed-race children. Social relations were governed principally by wealth. Bacon's Rebellion in 1676, in Virginia, is seen by many historians as a key event triggering **racialization** in North America, the process whereby racial categorization and racism came to be essential features of U.S. society.

Though the rebellion was caused by a number of factors, one of the key features of the rebellion itself was the uniting of the poor—of all races—against the wealthy (almost all white) landowning class. The rebellion was eventually put down, but an important outcome of the rebellion, after the old order was restored, was the initiation of laws and other official mechanisms for institutionalizing the higher status of poor whites over the population of color and the strengthening of the link between slavery and being black. There were, of course, other reasons for this strengthened linkage, including the facts that blacks did not have relatives in Native American-controlled areas to escape to and that they did not have local knowledge to aid their escape. Native Americans did. One of the key functions of racial hierarchy in U.S. history has been to provide whites without wealth the psychological compensation of knowing that there are lower-ranked racial groups to whom they can feel superior. Also, the history of U.S. labor organizing is full of cases where racial animosity in white workers was stirred up in order to prevent them from uniting with workers of color to improve the lot of white and nonwhite workers alike. This is one of the many ways in which racism hurts not only people of color but whites also. Nevertheless, racism hurts people of color more than whites without wealth—and of course more than whites with wealth.

Socioeconomic Class

The institutionalization of the racial hierarchy goes a long way toward explaining differences in access to quality education, income, and wealth between whites and people of color in the U.S. Racial hierarchies mimic class hierarchies. Socioeconomic class is basically about wealth and power. (See any introductory

anthropology textbook for more discussions on class and the other types of social groups discussed in this chapter.) **Class** is based mainly on occupation, education, income, and wealth. How these four criteria interact and are specified to create class categories is quite complex and controversial. Like gender inequality and racial hierarchy, class is a recent human invention. “[M]ost societies that depend primarily on agriculture or herding have social classes. Agriculture and herding developed within the past 10,000 years, so we may assume that most food collectors in the distant past lacked social classes” (Ember et al. 2002: 321). Early food-collecting societies showed gender equality also, with women often engaging in different types of activities but nevertheless having equal status in the overall fabric of the community. The beginning and evolution of gender inequality are linked to the rise of cities and military institutions, for which the rise of agriculture, herding, and private property was essential.

From differences in wealth and power stem differences in lifestyles, attitudes, and aspirations, which are usually strongly related to class. Along with less access to wealth, the working class (and, to a lesser extent, the middle class) has less access to quality education. This decreased access to education is one of the ways in which the class hierarchy is maintained. Generally, the better one’s education, the better one’s chances of achieving upward class mobility or at least of maintaining the class status one already has.

An important phenomenon that social scientists have frequently observed in studying social hierarchies is **internalized oppression**. This is the internalization by lower-status groups of negative ideas spread throughout society about them. Working-class students, for example, may end up believing that they are not very intelligent compared to students who have attended elite schools. They are just as intelligent; it is the lower-quality education that society has provided them with that has led to an incorrect conclusion. The problem is not their intelligence or lack of it but access to quality education. Groups who are lower in these hierarchies (based on class, race, ethnicity, etc.) are kept in their place in the hierarchy over time. Thus, most children of working-class parents end up in the working class. The mechanisms that almost shut off upward social mobility include not only educational access but also the images and ideas that are disseminated by textbooks, films, television, and many other media and institutions. Groups lower in these hierarchies are presented in less positive ways than are groups higher in these hierarchies. A result, for example, is the dearth of television programs and movies that present the working class as admirable and worthy of respect. The scarcity of positive images reinforces the great number of negative images.

Conclusion

We, the editors of this textbook, and the members of the Linguistic Society of America’s Committee on Ethnic Diversity (actually concerned with various kinds of diversity) have taken a small step that we hope will have big consequences:

presenting positive discussions and respect-promoting exercises on the languages of groups who have not always been accorded what they deserve and who to some extent may have internalized negative views of their own languages. We present these chapters also for students who are not members of these groups, for their educational enrichment also.

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