Annual Review of Applied Linguistics (2003) **23**, 187–201. Printed in the USA.
Copyright © 2003 Cambridge University Press 0267-1905/03 $12.00

11. GENDER ISSUES IN LANGUAGE CHANGE

Deborah Cameron

It has long been apparent to scholars that gender exerts an influence on language change. Recently, however, the patterns of gender differentiation attested in empirical studies have been reinterpreted in the light of current social constructionist understandings of gender. Drawing on recent work in variationist sociolinguistics, sociology of language and linguistic anthropology, this chapter focuses on new approaches to explaining gender differentiated patterns of sound change and language shift, the success or failure of planned linguistic reforms, and changes in the social evaluation of gendered speech styles.

There is a relatively long history of folk and scholarly interest in the differing roles played by women and men in processes of language change. In 1922, Otto Jespersen repeated (albeit with some caveats) the observation that "women do nothing more than keep to the traditional language which they have learnt from their parents and hand on to their children, while innovations are due to the initiative of men" (Jespersen, 1998, p. 230). Somewhat later, by contrast, the English dialectologist Harold Orton preferred male to female informants on the ground that the speech of older rural men was most likely to preserve traditional dialect forms (Orton, 1962). In the 1970s, variationist sociolinguists using quantitative methods to study language change in progress noted that women were typically more advanced than men in changes toward a prestige norm. This linguistic innovation was attributed, however, to a kind of social conservatism: women were motivated to adopt standard forms because of their greater "status consciousness" or "linguistic insecurity." Clearly, then, debates about men, women and language change have been going on for some time: this review does not deal with a sudden flowering of interest in a previously neglected topic. Rather it considers the influence on recent research of new ideas about gender and its relationship to linguistic phenomena.

Before proceeding, I should clarify what is encompassed by the term *language change*. In some discussions the term is used narrowly, to refer to changes within a single language system (albeit such changes may involve contact between subsystems, e.g., dialects spoken in adjacent areas). The prototypical phenomenon studied under this heading is sound change, a topic that continues to dominate

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190503000266 Published online by Cambridge University Press

research in variationist sociolinguistics. In addition to discussing recent work on sound change, however, I will consider several other types of change that are of interest to applied linguists. One is language shift, where one language in the repertoire of a bilingual speech community progressively encroaches on the functions of the other and eventually replaces it. Shift typically occurs intergenerationally, as younger community members become increasingly limited in their bilingual competence, and eventually monolingual. Since women and girls in most societies are primary carers for young children, researchers have paid attention to their role in promoting shift—and, conversely, in maintaining ancestral languages or revitalizing those which have become endangered. The formation of pidgins, the development of some pidgins into creoles, and the process of decreolization that creoles may subsequently undergo are also relevant topics, and I will comment briefly on recent work which addresses the relationship of gender to pidgin and creole development (see also McWhorter, this volume). Finally, I will consider the influence on language of recent and ongoing *social* changes relating to gender. An obvious case in point is the impact of overtly feminist linguistic reforms such as the promulgation of "nonsexist" or "inclusive" language policies. Also of interest are shifts in gendered language ideologies and verbal hygiene practices (i.e., representations of language and efforts to regulate its use in accordance with particular value judgments—for more detailed definitions and illustrations, see Bergvall, Bing, and Freed, 1997; Cameron, 1995; Finegan, this volume; and Woolard, 1998). Though not, strictly speaking, examples of language change, these developments affect the value attached to different ways of speaking, and thus have the potential to influence the direction of language change in future.

Rethinking Gender: The Rise and Rise of Social Constructionism

In modern feminist theory, it is axiomatic that gender—socially constructed masculinity or femininity—is not reducible to biological maleness or femaleness. The sex/gender distinction was not, however, available to pre-feminist scholars like Jespersen, and many later researchers in practice made no use of it (Eckert, 1990). The explanations most commonly proposed for observed linguistic differences between women and men relied on large-scale generalizations about the roles or personality traits that were supposedly typical of each sex; even when the term "gender" was used, accounts of it were often shaped by an underlying assumption that it referred to an inherent natural attribute.

Feminists always regarded gender as a social rather than natural phenomenon, but in feminist theory during the 1990s there was a shift in the direction of a more radically social constructionist approach. In that approach gender is not seen as the stable outcome of early socialization, but as something constructed continually in social interaction. It is recognized that the construction of gender takes different forms across cultures and through time—there is no universal *essence* of masculinity or femininity—and that gender may be produced differently by individuals in a single society or community. 'Women' and 'men' are no longer treated as discrete and internally homogeneous categories about which one can make universal statements ("women do X, men do Y"); there is variation within each

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190503000266 Published online by Cambridge University Press

group, and overlap between the two. In language and gender studies, researchers have turned away from the quest for universal generalizations about men's or women's speech, and focused instead on the particular conditions shaping the behavior of men and women in specific locales. More attention has been paid to the interaction of gender with other dimensions of social identity such as race/ethnicity, class, generation, and sexuality (see contributions to Hall & Bucholtz, 1995); gender is no longer conceived as a simple binary opposition (Bing & Bergvall, 1997), and explanations of gender differences have accordingly shifted away from generalities about sex roles or personality traits. Alternative frameworks adopted by researchers have included variants of post-structuralist/postmodernist theory (cf. Livia & Hall, 1997), and the notion of the "community of practice" drawn from the work of Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (e.g., Wenger, 1998; for the application of this model to language and gender studies, see Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1992; 1999).

The impact of new theoretical approaches on the study of gender and language *change* has been mixed. Since the topic is of interest to scholars located in several fields and traditions, not all of them committed to feminist approaches or conversant with feminist theory, more conservative theoretical assumptions persist alongside accounts that challenge them. There has also been at least one recent theoretical development that goes strikingly against the social constructionist grain, namely a revival of interest in quasi-biological (neo-Darwinist) explanations for sex differentiated linguistic behavior. The evolutionary scientist Robin Dunbar (1996), for instance, has proposed that the main survival advantage conferred on humans by language was the ability to maintain cohesion in larger social groupings. He argues that women (playing *ex hypothesi* the same pivotal role in early human social groups as females do in many nonhuman primate species) were the major force in the evolution of natural languages, and that this may have a bearing on the contemporary observation that women outperform men on various tests of verbal ability. The sociolinguist Jack Chambers (1992; 1995) has also cited women's evolved, neurobiologically-based verbal superiority as a potential factor explaining their tendency to display greater "stylistic flexibility" than men. This is relevant to the question of linguistic change because social and stylistic variation is the synchronic raw material from which change over time is produced. It should be noted, however, that the postulate of female verbal superiority is controversial (Hyde & Linn, 1988). At present, discussions framed in terms of Darwinian natural selection remain highly speculative, and I will concentrate here on the social constructionist approach.

Gender and Language Change in Recent Variationist Sociolinguistics

Since its beginnings in the 1960s, variationist sociolinguistics has attended to differences between women and men, but the perceived importance of those differences has increased over time. Gender is no longer considered, as it was in the early years of the paradigm, secondary to class as a factor influencing language change. The ubiquity of gender differentiation within speech communities offers a particularly compelling illustration of the point that linguistic variation (and therefore, language change) is not simply the outcome of separation between groups in society, while conversely, sustained close contact does not necessarily produce

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190503000266 Published online by Cambridge University Press

homogeneity. In the words of William Labov: "No one can deny that husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, are involved in intimate communication in everyday life. Yet gender is a powerful differentiating factor in almost every case of stable social stratification and change in progress that has been studied" (Labov, 2001, p. 262).

As I noted above, variationist sociolinguists using quantitative methods to study language change (typically, sound change) in progress developed an early account of the relationship of gender to change, which laid emphasis on the "status-consciousness" and "linguistic insecurity" of women. That account was later refined, however, in the light of accumulating evidence. After reviewing relevant research, Labov (1990) proposed the following generalizations (the formulation below is from Dubois and Horvath, 2000, p. 289, parenthetical explanations mine):

- Principle I: For stable sociolinguistic variables (i.e., those not involved in change), men use a higher frequency of nonstandard forms than women.
- Principle Ia: In change from above (i.e., where speakers are conscious of the existence and social meaning of competing variants, women favor the incoming prestige form more than men.
- Principle II: In change from below (i.e., where speakers are not conscious that change is occurring), women are most often the innovators.

Labov has drawn attention to the "gender paradox" his principles embody: women as a group "conform more closely than men to sociolinguistic norms that are overtly prescribed, but conform less than men when they are not" (Labov, 2001, p. 293). Though studies have documented the existence of individual women speakers whose behavior exemplifies the predicted pattern—simultaneously conservative with respect to stigmatized changes and innovative with respect to nonstigmatized changes (e.g., Maclagan, Gordon, & Lewis, 1999)—it is also important to note that the leaders of change from above and change from below may be different individuals. In the communities studied by Labov and his associates in Philadelphia, the leaders of both kinds of change are upper working class women, but they are distinguished by their degree of social conformity. Women's behavior is not uniform, then, and cannot be explained in terms of some essential characteristic common to all members of the group. The question does remain, however, of why the leaders of most changes are women rather than men.

Labov (2001) offers a multicausal account. In relation to change from above, he cites women's greater concern or responsibility for ensuring the social mobility of their children as a key motivation for adopting prestige norms, while his discussion of change from below refers to an assortment of proposals by other scholars—some of them problematic from the point of view of social constructionism, since they belong to the "biological" tendency mentioned above (e.g., Chambers, 1995; Gordon & Heath, 1998).[1] In line with the overall aims of this review, the discussion below will not look closely at arguments to which sex rather than gender is central, but will concentrate on accounts framed in social constructionist terms.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190503000266 Published online by Cambridge University Press

One such account is particularly associated with the sociolinguist Penelope Eckert, though it has also been taken up by others (an accessible recent summary appears in Eckert, 1998, see also Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 1999; Wolfram and Schilling-Estes, 1998). This account suggests that women as social subordinates are more dependent than men on symbolic resources for asserting identity and group membership. Eckert carried out research in a suburban high school near Detroit, Michigan, where identity and social practice were organized around the contrast between 'jocks' (who embraced the official definition of school success, e.g., participating actively in both academic and extracurricular pursuits and going on to college) and 'burnouts' (who rejected the school's values and resisted active participation in its official culture). The contrast was also marked linguistically, with particular phonological variables that are involved in an ongoing change in the Detroit area (the Northern Cities Vowel Shift) being appropriated differentially to mark either jock or burnout identity. Eckert found that in both the jock and the burnout groups, young women were more advanced than young men in their use of the innovative variants marking group membership. This cannot be explained as status consciousness in the sense earlier sociolinguists used the concept, for the vowel shift is a case of change from below and the innovative variants are vernacular rather than standard. The kind of status sought by the young women is not the prestige associated with correct pronunciation; rather, they assert their status as 'good jocks' or 'good burnouts' by carrying their use of variants that function as group identity markers to a greater extreme than their male counterparts do. Eckert observes that *nonlinguistic* markers of status within the group—for instance, athletic prowess and fighting skills—are not available to women on the same terms as to men. Even if they possess the same skills, women are not rewarded for them in the same way. Their capital as jocks and burnouts is largely symbolic, and so they work harder to assert in-group status through symbolic details like the styling of their jeans and the pronunciation of their vowels.

Similar considerations may be invoked to account for women's role in changes from above. The labor market both exploits and reproduces female dependence on symbolic capital, channeling women into jobs that place emphasis on interpersonal communication (e.g., nursing, social work, customer service) and/or require a high level of standard language competence (e.g., school teaching, secretarial work). As Gordon (1997) has observed, too, an important form of symbolic capital for girls and women across classes and ethnic groups is sexual reputation. In a subjective reaction study carried out in New Zealand, Gordon found attributions of "looseness" to female speakers to be associated with nonstandard speech. She proposes this as a potentially powerful motivation for women's behavior in relation to Principles I and Ia above, i.e., women avoid stigmatized linguistic variants in an effort to avoid a kind of social stigma that is specific to their gender.

Labov's principles have provided a starting point for many more recent empirical variationist studies, and while some of these have offered further support for his generalizations, it has also been noted that specific local conditions may

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190503000266 Published online by Cambridge University Press

produce divergence from the expected patterns. Dubois and Horvath (2000), for instance, report on a study involving three generations of Cajun English speakers in Louisiana. The generations represent different phases of a historical process whereby originally monolingual French speakers became first bilingual and ultimately monolingual in English. The oldest speakers' English is strongly marked by the phonological influence of L1 French, whereas the middle generation, whose upbringing and education made them conscious of the stigma attached to French-influenced pronunciation, uses a less markedly Cajun English. Among the youngest speakers, however, for whom English monolingualism is the norm, Cajun variants have made a dramatic comeback—particularly among young men. This "recycling" of French-influenced variants is a way of asserting Cajun identity via English (the only language available for the purpose, since the younger speakers have no command of French itself); but since it is a case of change from below, the question arises why men rather than women are leading it. Dubois and Horvath explain this by noting that the revival of Cajun variants accompanies a resurgence of ethnic pride (the Cajun Renaissance) whose most important public symbols are traditionally masculine activities such as boating, hunting, fishing and performing Cajun music. At the same time, language shift has eliminated the important role traditionally played by women in passing on the community's ancestral language to children. In the particular sociohistorical conditions of this community, then, it is young men who have the greater motivation to acquire and display symbolic capital as Cajuns.

Gender as an Influence on Language Shift

Dubois and Horvath's study demonstrates that language shift may have consequences for the subsequent sociolinguistic positioning of women and men (in the Louisiana case, men have become torchbearers for Cajun language and culture). The reverse is also true: gender relations in bilingual communities may be consequential for the process of language shift. This emerges clearly from Susan Gal's classic study of the Austrian town of Oberwart (Gal, 1978; 1979). Here Hungarian-German bilingualism was in the process of yielding to German monolingualism, and young women were most advanced in their preference for German. Hungarian had come to be associated with a "peasant" identity, while speaking German only was associated with a "worker" identity; the linguistic choices of young women reflected their calculations regarding which category of man it would be preferable to marry. Many or most viewed the role of peasant's wife as less desirable than that of worker's wife, and planned to marry German-speaking workers from outside the community. This also implied that young bilingual men would have to seek marriage partners outside their own community, making German the de facto choice for the dominant language of their own future households.

In Oberwart, the symbolic association of Hungarian with peasant status and German with worker status caused the languages to be evaluated differently by women and men because of the greater unattractiveness of peasant life to women. But in some cases, gender may be part of what a language actually symbolizes, and this may affect the way it is evaluated by the whole community. One such instance is discussed by Don Kulick (1992; 1998), who studied language shift in a small and

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190503000266 Published online by Cambridge University Press

remote village, Gapun, in Papua New Guinea. Gapuners were until recently bilingual in the local vernacular Taiap and the creole language that serves as a lingua franca across the country, Tok Pisin. At the time of Kulick's original fieldwork in 1986–87, however, Tok Pisin was in the process of superseding Taiap, and when he returned a few years later he found that no villager younger than 14 had an active command of Taiap. Kulick analyzes the underlying reasons for shift in ideological and symbolic terms, noting that the contrast between Taiap and Tok Pisin has come to symbolize a series of other contrasts. For instance, Taiap is associated with the ancestral past whereas Tok Pisin is associated with modernization, development, and Christianization. The contrast between the languages has also come to symbolize an important local contrast between *hed* (willfulness, which may lead to unthinking or unguarded expression of one's thoughts and feelings) and *save* (knowledge, which implies the ability to control and manage the expression of potentially dangerous ideas and emotions). Gapuners associate the control that is central to *save* with men and the dangerous emotional excess that is part of *hed* with women. Oratories in the men's house, which are delivered in a highly indirect language and have the production of consensus and avoidance of conflict as primary goals, are predominantly in Tok Pisin. Taiap predominates, however, in the angry, obscene, and abusive monologues known as *kroses*, which are virtually always delivered by women. The association of Taiap with *hed* and Tok Pisin with *save* both underwrites and reinforces their symbolic gendering, i.e., Taiap is associated with women and Tok Pisin with men, even though both sexes use both languages. Kulick argues that the intertwined negative symbolic associations of Taiap—with women, *hed*, anger and the past—are at the root of the actual language practices that propel the shift towards Tok Pisin.

Gal and Kulick studied language shift in communities which had not, or at least not recently, been displaced from their ancestral locations and ways of life. In contemporary global conditions, however, language shift is also often observed and studied in migrant and diasporic communities. In such communities the question is less about what motivates shift than it is about the course the process takes in particular circumstances: i.e., how quickly and extensively an additional language is adopted, and how far migrants and their descendants seek, or are able, to maintain heritage languages over time. A related question is whether patterns of shift and retention vary among different groups within the community. Research has shown that gender may be one source of variation, since opportunities for contact with the majority community (e.g., through participation in the labor market, or through intermarriage) may be markedly different for women and men. Once again, though, the effect is mediated by the particular form gender relations take in a given community; researchers pay attention to the local particularities of gender rather than treating it as a *global* category whose influence will be the same in every context.

In an analysis of Australian census data, Clyne and Kipp (1997) observe that different minority communities show different gendered patterns of shift to English. In the more established communities (e.g., Greek Australians), first generation migrant women have higher rates of L1 retention than men; but there are also cases (e.g., migrants from the Philippines speaking Tagalog, Ilokano, and Cebuano) where

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190503000266 Published online by Cambridge University Press

women are ahead of men in shifting to English. The most obvious explanation concerns exogamy rates. Women are a relatively large majority (65%) of Australians born in the Philippines, and a high proportion of them are married to Australian-born or European immigrant men. Clyne and Kipp report, however, that among the children of migrants in Australia (the second generation), gender differences are greatly reduced or eliminated for most groups.

Joanne Winter and Anne Pauwels (2000) note that the interpretation of patterns based on large-scale survey or census data often relies on generalizations about gender that recent scholarship has called into question. The finding that, in many communities, first generation migrant women have higher L1 retention rates is typically explained as a consequence of *deficit* (women have restricted access to instruction in L2 and so experience a "linguistic lag" relative to men (see Ehrlich, 1997) and/or *difference* (women are cast within their communities as the primary guardians of ethnic and linguistic heritage). Investigating language maintenance among German, Greek, and Vietnamese speakers in Melbourne, Winter and Pauwels observed patterns similar to those reported by Clyne and Kipp, but they argue for a more nuanced approach to explanation, which takes account of the complexities of women's and men's experience within bilingual communities. They suggest that for second generation speakers particularly, the analysis of survey or census data needs to be complemented by in-depth interviewing and ethnographic research in order to gain a better understanding of how women and men themselves perceive the connection between gender identity and the retention or loss of a minority language.

Along somewhat similar lines, Aneta Pavlenko (2001a, b; 2002) has used language-learning memoirs to illuminate the experience of migrant and minority women in the United States, while Suzanne Sinke (1999) consulted literary and autobiographical works, immigrant letters, community newspapers and the records of religious and philanthropic organizations for her account of gendered patterns of language shift among Dutch Americans at the turn of the (nineteenth to twentieth) century. The use of these sources enables Pavlenko and Sinke to probe the complex, often conflictual relationship between gender and ethnicity that is part of the hidden history of language shift in migrant communities. Sinke presents evidence that women in the communities she studied were at the extremes of both maintenance and shift, thus underlining the need for methods that can shed light on differences within gender groups as well as the differences between them.

Gender Influences on Pidgin and Creole Development

Pidgins are auxiliary languages used in contexts where there is a need for a lingua franca to facilitate commerce or cooperative working between people with no other common language. The activities that have been most associated with the formation and use of pidgins historically include trade, plantation labor, and military or police service—all of which are predominantly associated with men (McWhorter, 1996). In some communities, it appears that men sought actively to prevent women from learning a pidgin, possibly because the use of pidgin among women was associated with prostitutes and so was not considered respectable (this should remind

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190503000266 Published online by Cambridge University Press

us that not all forms of commerce have been male monopolies).[2] As with language shift, though, the role played by women and girls in the language socialization of children in many societies may be a significant factor in the ongoing development of pidgins and creoles: creolization, like shift, is an intergenerational process (also see McWhorter, this volume). Thus when women do begin to use pidgin languages, this has potentially far-reaching consequences for subsequent linguistic change. In Gapun, for instance, Kulick (1992) notes that Tok Pisin was originally introduced to the village by men who had spent periods away working on plantations, and it remained for some time a male language, which boys picked up from older men. Only later did it come to be used regularly by women, but since this meant that younger children in the process of acquiring language were exposed to Tok Pisin as well as Taiap input, it was a crucial factor in the development of a fully bilingual speech community, which in turn paved the way for the now far-advanced shift to Tok Pisin.

Gender Ideologies as an Influence on Language Change

The last 30 years have seen major changes in the social position of women; while the impact has undoubtedly been greater in some places than in others, sociologists have noted that ideals of gender egalitarianism now have global currency (e.g., Giddens, 2000). Changing ideologies of gender have affected language and language-use just as they have affected many other social institutions and practices, and their linguistic reflexes have been studied by a number of researchers.

One focus of interest is linguistic reform, enacted by state and other institutions (e.g., educational, commercial, religious) in the context of policy initiatives promoting equal opportunities. For example, legislation prohibiting sex discrimination in the workplace creates a need for gender-inclusive or gender-neutral occupational terms (e.g., chairperson, firefighter) in job advertisements, job descriptions, employment contracts, and employment laws. Concern about the effects of sexism in educational and other materials which play a role in the socialization of children has led to the adoption of inclusive or nonsexist language by many producers and publishers (for a recent discussion of inclusiveness in EFL teaching materials, see Gray, 2002).

Whereas many early texts dealing with feminist linguistic reform were oriented to practice and activism (cf. Miller & Swift, 1980), some recent scholarship has taken a more theoretical and critical approach. Anne Pauwels's *Women Changing Language* (1998), for instance, not only provides comparative descriptive material on reform efforts across a range of languages and societies (including some non-Indo-European examples), it also advances the theoretical discussion by placing feminist linguistic reform in the conceptual framework of language planning. Pauwels notes that feminist reformers confront the same kinds of problems and choices as other language planners: she examines the issues they must deal with systematically, and in some cases criticizes their solutions as linguistically uninformed or overly narrow in focus. One limitation she identifies is the focus on replacing single items (words or morphemes), as if the goal were simply to substitute

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190503000266 Published online by Cambridge University Press

one *form* for another, and not to alter the repertoire of meanings. A number of researchers (e.g., Ehrlich & King, 1992; Kitzinger & Thomas, 1995) have examined the discursive "afterlife" of planned changes, noting that it is in discourse—language in use—that meanings are negotiated and contested. Consequently, substituted or newly coined terms may acquire meanings that were not intended by their instigators. Examples in English include the reinterpretation of *Ms.* so that it functions not as the intended parallel to *Mr.* but as a third term alongside *Miss* and *Mrs.*, applied to anomalous women such as lesbians and divorcées; and the use of *–person* suffixes with female referents only, while *–man* continues to be used for male referents.

Discourse patterns have been a long-standing concern of language and gender researchers, with interest typically centering on gender differences in preferred discourse strategies and styles, and the often negative consequences of those differences for women (Lakoff, 1975; Tannen, 1990). Recently, however, researchers have noted a new idealization of the cooperative, emotionally expressive discourse styles popularly (if not always accurately) associated with women. Cameron (2000) observes that feminine speech styles are being commodified in the new globalized service sector, where they are frequently prescribed to workers regardless of gender. Montgomery (1999) analyzes the reception of tributes to Princess Diana following her death in 1997, arguing that in contemporary mass-mediated public arenas, old-style (and symbolically masculine) oratory is now devalued by comparison with a (symbolically feminine) speech-style foregrounding sincerity and emotional openness. It appears then that language ideologies relating to gender may be shifting, prompting a certain feminization of public discourse, and a tendency to view masculine communication styles as problematic or dysfunctional (see Cameron, 2003, for examples). In the view of both Cameron and Montgomery, these developments have been prompted less by feminist critiques of patriarchal values than by new management practices and the demands of media performance in an age of global communication. But if, for whatever reason, feminine speech patterns are gaining prestige, that may have implications for the direction of future linguistic changes.

Conclusion: Recent Advances and Future Trends

Modern sociolinguistics is based on an understanding of language change as something other than random drift or functional adaptation: it is the product of choices made (not always consciously) by social actors using linguistic variation as a symbolic resource. In recent years, researchers working on various aspects of gender and language change have been challenged to engage with the argument that gender, too, is a form of social and symbolic practice. While responses to this challenge have varied, few researchers or research paradigms have remained untouched by it.

Yet this is not to say that a consensus has emerged on every subject. There is, for instance, ongoing discussion of appropriate research methods. While no one disputes the utility of quantification per se—the use of census data to map language shift/retention, or the statistical analysis which is central to variationist studies of sound change in progress—there have been calls for these techniques to be combined

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190503000266 Published online by Cambridge University Press

with ethnography and/or other qualitative methods to provide a more nuanced understanding of gender relations in specific communities and so illuminate the *why* as well as the *what* of gendered behavior.

Another issue that is likely to be the focus of continuing debate is the status of *generalization* in research carried out within a social constructionist framework. For some researchers, "looking locally" means that generalization is no longer an important goal, and may even be suspect. Others appear willing in principle to move from detailed observations of gender in particular communities of practice to more abstract and general statements, such as the proposal that women are in general more dependent than men on symbolic capital. This does not depend on presupposing some essential characteristic shared by all women in all times and places, but it does imply there may be some virtue in attending to larger structural factors shaping gender relations across communities. It is my own view that generalization remains a legitimate goal for social science, and is not necessarily incompatible with contemporary feminist views of gender as social construct and social practice. However, future attempts to generalize about gender and language change must be judged not only on their theoretical and political merits, but also on their ability to accommodate the complexity that recent empirical research has revealed.

Notes

1. Gordon and Heath (1998) believe that the tendency for women to favor certain kinds of vowel shifts (those that lead to an overall dispersion of vowels in phonetic space) while men tend to favor others (centralizing changes that concentrate vowels in a more restricted space), may be rooted in a "natural" sound symbolism which is ultimately linked to physiological sex differences. Labov (2001, p. 291) treats this proposal sceptically but seriously, noting empirical counterexamples but suggesting we should not be too quick to dismiss the general line of argument.

2. I owe this point to Miriam Meyerhoff (personal communication, December, 2001), who observed the persistence of the association firsthand in field research among Bislama speakers in Vanuatu. I am also much indebted to her for more general guidance on the literature on pidgins and creoles. I should note however that this is very far from being a comprehensive survey of recent research on gender and language change in pidgin and creole speaking communities. Such research raises interesting and complex questions about, for instance, the applicability of Labov's 1990 principles to the kind of fluid multilingual situation in which pidgins and creoles typically arise (what, in such a situation, does one count as the prestige norm, or as change from above?) Limitations of space prevent me from doing justice to these issues, however, and they will not be considered further here.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190503000266 Published online by Cambridge University Press

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Eckert, P., & McConnell-Ginet, S. (1999). New generalizations and explanations in language and gender research. *Language in Society, 28*, 185–201.

This article is an important recent theoretical statement, summarizing and explicating the now influential approach to language and gender research that makes use of the concept of the 'Community of Practice' (CoP). Focusing mainly though not exclusively on the application of this concept to variationist studies of language change, the article contains a usefully explicit discussion of the tension between recognizing local specificity/complexity and not losing sight of more general patterns. It also touches on arguments for using ethnography alongside quantification. It appeared in a special issue of *Language in Society* devoted to the CoP approach in language and gender studies, the other contributions to which are also informative.

Labov, W. (2001). *Principles of linguistic change, Vol II: Social factors.* Oxford: Blackwell. (See especially Chs. 8–11.)

At the time of writing, this is Labov's most recent examination of the relationship of gender to sound change, continuing the discussion of his influential 1990 principles, and offering a useful (if densely written) summary of relevant variationist research evidence as well as some indication of the range of explanations scholars have proposed for empirically observed patterns of gender differentiation.

Pauwels, A. (1998). *Women changing language.* London: Longman.

This full length book is the most comprehensive recent study of the phenomenon of feminist/anti-sexist linguistic reform, which is treated here as an instance of language planning. Pauwels provides valuable comparative information on feminist reform efforts across a range of languages and societies.

Pavlenko, A., Blackledge, A., Piller, I., & Teutsch-Dwyer, M. (Eds.). (2001). *Multilingualism, second language learning, and gender.* Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

This is a wide-ranging collection whose primary focus is not gender and language change but gender and second language learning. However, several contributions focus on the meaning of bilingualism and language shift for women and men, particularly in contexts of migration; this is a theme that is increasingly emphasized in other research on gender and language change.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190503000266 Published online by Cambridge University Press

OTHER REFERENCES

Bergvall, V., Bing, J., & Freed, A. (Eds.). (1997). *Rethinking language and gender research*. London: Longman.

Bing, J., & Bergvall, V. (1997). The question of questions: Beyond binary thinking. In V. Bergvall, J. Bing, & A. Freed (Eds.), *Rethinking language and gender research: Theory and practice* (pp. 1–30). London: Longman.

Cameron, D. (1995). *Verbal hygiene*. London: Routledge.

Cameron, D. (2000). Styling the worker: Gender and the commodification of language in the globalized service economy. *Journal of Sociolinguistics, 4*, 323–347.

Cameron, D. (2003) Gender and language ideologies. In J. Holmes & M. Meyerhoff (Eds.), *The handbook of language and gender* (pp. 447–467). Oxford: Blackwell.

Chambers, J. K. (1992). Linguistic correlates of gender and sex. *English Worldwide, 13*, 173–218.

Chambers, J. K. (1995). *Sociolinguistic theory*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Clyne, M., & Kipp, S. (1997). Trends and changes in home language use and shift in Australia, 1986–1996. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 18,* 451–473.

Dubois, S., & Horvath, B. (2000). When the music changes, you change too: Gender and language change in Cajun English. *Language Variation and Change*, *11*, 287–313.

Dunbar, R. (1996). *Grooming, gossip and the evolution of language*. London: Faber.

Eckert, P. (1990). The whole woman: Sex and gender differences in variation. *Language Variation and Change*, *1*, 245–268.

Eckert, P. (1998). Gender and sociolinguistic variation. In J. Coates (Ed.), *Language and gender: A reader* (pp. 64–75). Oxford: Blackwell.

Eckert, P., & McConnell-Ginet, S. (1992) Think practically and look locally: Language and gender as community-based practice. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, *12*, 461–490.

Ehrlich, S. (1997). Gender as social practice: Implications for second language acquisition. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 19*, 421–446.

Ehrlich, S., & King, R. (1992). Gender-based language reform and the social construction of meaning. *Discourse & Society, 3*, 516–566.

Finegan, E. (this volume). Linguistic prescription: Familiar practices and new perspectives.

Gal, S. (1978). Peasant men can't get wives: Language and sex roles in a bilingual community. *Language in Society, 7*, 1–17.

Gal, S. (1979). *Language shift: Social determinants of linguistic change in bilingual Austria*. New York: Academic Press.

Giddens, A. (2000). *Runaway world: How globalization is reshaping our lives.* London: Routledge.

Gordon, E. (1997). Sex, speech and stereotypes: Why women use prestige speech forms more than men. *Language in Society, 26,* 1–14.

Gordon, M., & Heath, J. (1998). Sex, sound symbolism and sociolinguistics. *Current Anthropology, 39,* 421–449.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190503000266 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Gray, J. (2002). The global coursebook in ELT. In D. Block & D. Cameron (Eds.), *Globalization and language teaching* (pp. 151–167). London: Routledge.

Hall, K., & Bucholtz, M. (Eds.). (1995). *Gender articulated: Language and the socially constructed self*. London: Routledge.

Hyde, J. S., & Linn, M. (1988). Gender differences in verbal ability: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, *104*, 53–69.

Jespersen, O. (1998 [1922]). The woman. In D. Cameron (Ed.), *The feminist critique of language* (2nd ed.) (pp. 225–241). London: Routledge.

Kitzinger, C., & Thomas, A. (1995). Sexual harassment: A discursive approach. In S. Wilkinson & C. Kitzinger (Eds.), *Feminism and discourse* (pp. 32–48). London: Sage.

Kulick, D. (1992). *Language shift and cultural reproduction: Self, syncretism and society in a Papua New Guinea Village.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kulick, D. (1998). Anger, gender, language shift and the politics of revelation in a Papua New Guinean village. In B. Schieffelin, K. Woolard, & P. Kroskrity (Eds.), *Language ideologies: Practice and theory* (pp. 87–102). New York: Oxford University Press.

Labov, W. (1990). The intersection of sex and social class in the course of linguistic change. *Language Variation and Change, 2,* 205–254.

Lakoff, R. (1975). *Language and woman's place*. New York: Harper and Row.

Livia, A., & Hall, K. (Eds.). (1997). *Queerly phrased: Language, gender and sexuality.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Maclagan, M. A., Gordon, E., & Lewis, G. (1999). Women and sound change: Conservative and innovative behavior by the same speakers. *Language Variation and Change, 11*, 19–41.

McWhorter, J. (1996). Bringing gender into creole studies. In N. Warner, J. Ahlers, L. Bilmes, M. Oliver, S. Wertheim, & M. Chen (Eds.), *Gender and belief systems: Proceedings of the Fourth Berkeley Women and Language Conference,* (pp. 501–508). Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Women and Language Group.

McWhorter, J. (this volume). Pidgins and creoles as models of language change: The state of the art.

Miller, C., & Swift, K. (1980). *The handbook of nonsexist language*. London: Women's Press.

Montgomery, M. (1999). Speaking sincerely: Public reactions to the death of Diana. *Language and Literature, 8,* 5–33.

Orton, H. (1962). *Introduction to the Survey of English Dialects*. Leeds: Arnold.

Pavlenko, A. (2001a). Language learning memoirs as a gendered genre. *Applied Linguistics, 9,* 3–19.

Pavlenko, A. (2001b). "How am I to become a woman in an American vein?": Transformations of gender performance in second language learning. In A. Pavlenko, A. Blackledge, I. Piller, & M. Teutsch-Dwyer (Eds.), *Multilingualism, second language learning and gender* (pp. 133–174). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Pavlenko, A. (2002). Narrative study: Whose story is it, anyway? *TESOL Quarterly*, *36*(2), 213–218.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190503000266 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Sinke, S. (1999, Winter). Gender in language and life: A Dutch American example. *Gender Issues*, 26–51.

Tannen, D. (1990). *You just don't understand: Men and women in conversation.* New York: Morrow.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Winter, J., & Pauwels, A. (2000). Gender and language contact research in the Australian context. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 21,* 508–522.

Wolfram, W., & Schilling-Estes, N. (1998). *American English.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Woolard, K. (1998). Language ideology as a field of inquiry. In B. Schieffelin, K. Woolard, & P. Kroskrity (Eds.), *Language ideologies: Practice and theory* (pp. 3–47). New York: Oxford University Press.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190503000266 Published online by Cambridge University Press