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Language Variation and Cultural Hegemony: Toward an Integration of Sociolinguistic and Social Theory

Author(s): Kathryn A. Woolard

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# language variation and cultural hegemony: toward an integration of sociolinguistic and social theory

KATHRYN A. WOOLARD—*University of Pennsylvania*

The simplest and yet most important contribution of sociolinguistics to social scientific knowledge is its insistence on recognizing the considerable variation in speech that exists within even the most homogeneous of societies.<sup>1</sup> The second important contribution is the insistence that this variation is neither trivial nor a pale reflection of “real” language, but that it is systematic and that the systematicity of linguistic variation is an imperative object of study in itself. Having recognized that different people talk differently, and that the same people talk differently at different times, a central problem of sociolinguistics is—or ought to be—to understand why people talk the way they do. It then becomes clear that the research questions of sociolinguistics are preeminently social questions.

In developing descriptions of and explanations for variation in speech, sociolinguists have often borrowed sociological concepts in an ad hoc and unreflecting fashion, not usually considering critically the implicit theoretical frameworks that are imported wholesale along with such convenient constructs as three-, four-, or nine-sector scalings of socioeconomic status. In other cases those of us interested in sociolinguistic variation have invented or at least elaborated our own favorite explanatory concepts, developing through these what amount to partial social theories to account for our immediate empirical data. In either case, the enterprise often amounts to a reliance on implicit rather than explicit social theory, with little consideration given to how sociolinguistic findings might be modified by the adoption of a different theoretical frame of investigation, or in turn might validate or modify grander theories of how society works. The implicit social theory reflected in the cumulative results of data-driven rather than explicitly theory-driven sociolinguistic research is undoubtedly in need of examination and critique.

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*Although the social theory behind sociolinguistics is in need of explicit formulation and critique, basic insights from the field can be of considerable value in addressing current debates concerning social reproduction. Using sociolinguistic concepts of status and solidarity and empirical evidence from Catalonia and other community studies, this paper argues that the emphasis by reproduction theorists on formal institutions such as the school is misplaced, and that the structuralist representation of dominant, hegemonic ideologies as impenetrable does not capture the reality of working-class and minority community practices. Attention to sociolinguistic evidence by social theorists could advance the understanding of hegemonic and oppositional cultural practices in the maintenance of social inequality. [Spain, language variation, sociolinguistic theory, cultural hegemony, social reproduction]*

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However, to say that our underlying social theories are in need of examination, elaboration, or reconsideration is not to say that the work sociolinguists have done or the concepts we have employed are without merit. At the same time as a greater social-theoretical sophistication on the part of sociolinguistics is desirable, both the data with which we deal and our approaches to these data are of considerable potential utility in addressing unresolved problems in social theory.

A particularly promising bridge between sociolinguistics and social theory is the work that has been done on the functions of "status and solidarity" in language choice. Sociolinguistics has developed a special attachment to this notion of two competing social values, a tension between orthogonal axes of evaluation that organize the social uses of speech. In Brown and Gilman's (1960) influential study of alternation between T-V forms of the second person pronoun (for example, *tu* and *vous* in French), these two determinate dimensions were labeled "power" and "solidarity." Since then, similar notions have been invoked not only to interpret such selected forms, but to understand the choices made between larger linguistic systems, be they social or regional dialects (for example, Blom and Gumperz 1972; Labov 1972a, 1972b; Milroy 1980; Trudgill 1972), more and less "direct" and polite syntactic structures within a language (Brown and Levinson 1978), or separate languages in bilingual situations (for example, Carranza and Ryan 1975; Gal 1979; Hill and Hill 1980; Woolard 1982, in press).

The vocabulary we have used has fluctuated between power, prestige, dominance, negative face, and status on the one hand, and covert prestige, positive face, and solidarity on the other. But the notion of two competing social dimensions of language use has grown more fixed and has gained wide acceptance. (I will refer to this conceptual set as "status and solidarity" since those are the terms that seem to predominate in the most recent literature, and because in the discussion that follows it is necessary to distinguish the symbolic authority of "status" from the coercive domination of "power.") The contrastive status/solidarity concepts amount not simply to a theory of the social use of language, but to a guiding theory of social relations, certainly not original to, but nonetheless most extensively elaborated by sociolinguists.<sup>2</sup>

Posited as social values articulated through and buttressed by linguistic choices, "status and solidarity" fall within the problem of ideology and consciousness, a persistent and predominant problem in Marxist theory. The evidence organized by these concepts may be of some use in addressing issues in the ongoing discussion of the Gramscian notion of cultural "hegemony," which has come to be taken as a problem of consciousness.

As Perry Anderson's (1977) painstaking exegesis of Gramsci's writing demonstrates, the Italian Marxist's concept of "hegemony" was by no means straightforward or simple, much less as simplistic as Raymond Williams feared it was becoming by 1973, and as its currency in many fields today implies. In Gramsci's own work, Anderson finds at least three formulations of hegemony, all of which Anderson believes fail to come to grips with the question of the relative roles of state and civil society, and of coercion and consent, in the perpetuation of the bourgeois capitalist state. Sociolinguistic empiricism certainly cannot resolve all of the difficulties Gramsci may have encountered, but it can be made to address more than it has to date.

In raising the issue of hegemony, I refer to the Gramscian notion of cultural hegemony, rather than to the older sense of political hegemony which Anderson traces to earlier Marxist writings stressed by theorists such as Poulantzas (1974). Hegemony here refers to the legitimation of the cultural authority of the dominant group, an authority that plays a significant role in social reproduction, according to a number of recent commentators. By hegemony I mean the "deep saturation of the consciousness of a society" to which Raymond William refers (1973:8). Whether we locate the hegemonic process in the state apparatus or civil society, I take the problem of hegemony to be the problem of authority and collaboration or consent, in contrast to domination and coercion, in the maintenance of a particular social formation.

In his work on the "linguistic market," Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1982) offers an important av-

enue for reinterpreting linguistic theory and sociolinguistic findings within a neo-Marxist framework, to place the study of language within a grander social theory, and to use evidence of linguistic variation to address the problem of consciousness and authority. Although Bourdieu does not use the term “hegemony,” I believe I do him no injustice if I translate his position into that vocabulary.

I take as equivalent to hegemony Bourdieu’s concept of “symbolic domination” as neither a passive submission to constraint nor the free adhesion to dominant values, but a cultural authority “inscribed in the practical states in which dispositions are unconsciously inculcated” (1982:36; all 1982 translations my own).

Bourdieu sees the underpinning of linguistic hegemony as an integrated linguistic market, one integrated under the sponsorship of the state. Two issues arise in this formulation, neither of which I find to be satisfactorily resolved in his work. Because these unresolved issues echo throughout the literature on consciousness, reproduction, and resistance, a critique of Bourdieu’s rendering of sociolinguistic principles provides a convenient framework for discussion, and I will use it to structure the rest of this essay.

First, to the extent that a linguistic market can be said to be integrated, there are serious questions about the role of “cultural” institutions (whether we consider them as state, civil, or state masquerading as civil) such as the school, the communications media, and the family in the genesis, maintenance, and autonomous reproduction of the hegemony of the legitimate language over other co-existing varieties. If we address this question about the matter of language variation, the answers must be taken into consideration in the current debate over the effect of these institutions on other aspects of consciousness and the reproduction of inequality.

The second question is in some senses the more basic: To what extent shall we say that the linguistic market in any society is fully integrated—that is, to what extent is hegemony fully established—and to what extent is it possible to speak of markets in which alternative or opposing linguistic forms are generated and maintained? Exploration of the possibility of alternative or oppositional linguistic forms again can point to the possibility and role of resistance and oppositional cultural practices in other spheres.

## **formal institutions and cultural hegemony**

The first question takes for granted that linguistic hegemony can be established, and asks what role is played by formal cultural institutions in its establishment. A “reproduction” theorist considering linguistic and other forms of cultural capital, Bourdieu is known for his emphasis on the importance of the interaction of two institutions, the family and the school, to produce a situation whereby a uniform acknowledgment or recognition of the legitimacy of a standard exists throughout the different sectors of a society at the same time as there is an unequal distribution of the knowledge or command of that legitimated resource (cf. Bourdieu and Passeron 1977).<sup>3</sup>

Bourdieu acknowledges briefly that education and family are not the *primary* determinants of linguistic value, but that this value is based on the labor market. To the extent that the educational system controls access to the labor market, then and only then it becomes an important determinant and purveyor of this value (1982:33–34). However, this acknowledgment is displaced in the model Bourdieu elaborates. In his analysis, the processes that inculcate recognition of linguistic authority work through the school, the school master, the grammarians, and the literary producers. “The sociology of language is logically incapable of dissociation from the sociology of education” (1982:53). The family initially endows children with linguistic and cultural capital, but the school establishes the authority and legitimacy of the scarcest, and therefore most highly valued, linguistic and cultural forms and secures universal recognition of

this legitimacy. "In the process that leads to the elaboration, legitimation and imposition of an official language, the school system plays a determining role" (1982:32).

The two aspects of linguistic authority or hegemony, then, are knowledge or control of a standard, and acknowledgment or recognition of it; to translate into empirical sociolinguistic terms, behavioral proficiency and attitudes. Since recognition of the standard and its control are expected to be differentially distributed in this model, we cannot assess the hegemony of a particular variety simply from its use in the population. That is, a variety may be said to be hegemonic even if a large part of the population does not control that variety; that would, in fact, constitute the typical situation. The test of legitimacy is the extent to which the population that does not control that variety acknowledges and endorses its authority, its correctness, its power to convince, and its right to be obeyed, that is, the extent to which authority is ceded to those who do control that variety.

Similarly, I argue that we cannot read hegemony—saturation of consciousness—directly from the institutional domination of a language variety. Just as nonstandard practices may accompany standard consciousness, so it is logically possible that standard linguistic practices may accompany or conceal resistant consciousness, as a form of accommodation to coercion rather than the complicity essential to the notion of cultural hegemony. The distinction is important, because accommodative behavior may be more easily dislodged and does not present the same problem for social change as does collaborative consciousness. This is, of course, precisely the practical issue that the concept of cultural hegemony is meant to address.

Bourdieu cites as evidence of linguistic hegemony Labov's finding that the prestige value of pronouncing one's "r's" is recognized by all classes in New York, even those who do not regularly pronounce them (Labov 1972a:148–150). This finding comes not from data on language use, but from what are called "subjective reaction" tests. This is a form of empirical evidence on the social evaluation of language use, as important as evidence on language use itself. There are a variety of ways of measuring such subjective reactions, but one of the most widely used is the "matched guise" technique developed by Wallace Lambert and associates for use in French Canada (Lambert et al. 1960). The results of one such subjective reaction test that I conducted in Barcelona can illuminate the question of the role of formal institutions in the establishment of linguistic hegemony.

In 1980, at the time of the study, Spain was in political transition from its nearly 40 years under the Franco regime as an "exceptional state" (Poulantzas 1974). While the preliminary steps of restoring a constitutional, parliamentary democracy had been taken, linguistic, cultural, and educational policies were still largely those inherited from the Franco years. In the bilingual region of Catalonia, as in all of Spain, the Castilian language continued to enjoy almost exclusive institutional domination. The regional language, Catalan, had won only marginal representation in school instruction, mass media, and public administration. Our question is whether those 40 years of coercive institutional domination, which saturated public and high culture with the Castilian language and left virtually no monolingual Catalan speakers, created authentic linguistic hegemony in the collective consciousness.

The matched guise test asks listeners to evaluate personal qualities of tape-recorded speakers using the language varieties in question, here Catalan and Castilian. The personality dimensions were preselected to reflect both the authoritative, "status-stressing" dimension and a "solidarity" dimension, and their clustering along two such axes was confirmed statistically.

In Barcelona, in spite of the institutional dominance of Castilian, the use of Catalan evoked significantly more positive evaluations along the axis I have called status, from both Catalan and Castilian listeners. The very same speakers were judged to sound more intelligent, cultured, leaderlike, self-confident, and hardworking when speaking the marginated language, Catalan, than when speaking the official state language, Castilian.<sup>4</sup>

This result is at odds with the expectations created by Bourdieu's formulation (as well as the

common assumptions of many sociolinguists). There are two possible ways to account for this unusual finding. Both arise from Spain's recent history as an exceptional capitalist state rather than a typical Western parliamentary democracy, but both have important implications for the localization of the hegemonic function in any capitalist state.

In the first explanation, it may be that the authority is not established for the state language precisely because of the failure to establish the authority of the state, a dictatorship that rested patently on coercion. This would support Anderson's assertion that the possibility of cultural hegemony in the bourgeois state rests precisely on the political form of that state, that is, on representative democracy, which creates the illusion that there is no ruling class (1977:30). Cultural legitimacy fails because political legitimacy is not achieved; linguistic as well as political practices can then be seen as mere conscious accommodation to coercion rather than conviction. This may have much to do with the linguistic situation in Catalonia. However, this explanation cannot alone account for the empirical finding of a consensual evaluation favoring the Catalan language. Illegitimacy of the official form could be expected to lead to a diffusion of hegemonic force, but not to the establishment of an alternative consensus.

There is a second explanation to consider, one that I find more powerful. While the Francoist government did succeed in imposing the domination of a centralized (and increasingly multinational) finance capitalism over the Spanish economy, it stymied but did not obliterate the regional economic dominance of the Catalan bourgeoisie. Catalans continue to dominate the internal economic structure of Catalonia (which contributes significantly to that of Spain). Although the Castilian language was successfully imposed by state institutions as the means of access to functionary positions, Catalans continue to be predominant in ownership and management of the private sector, which is still characterized by small and mid-sized industries.

It is this economic basis, I have argued elsewhere, that gives Catalan its authority in the ears of the populace (Woolard 1982, in press). This would imply that such authority is established and inculcated not most importantly through schools and other formal institutions, but in primary relations, face-to-face encounters, and the invidious distinctions of informal, everyday life: in the workplace, where Catalans are more often found in managerial positions and Castilian-speaking immigrants in manual labor; in residential neighborhoods, where Catalans tend to occupy prime locations and Castilian immigrants the high-rises of the periphery; in private shops and services, where Catalans are more often owners, particularly in the more desirable areas, and Castilian speakers more often clients.

In offering this explanation of the unusual status of the Catalan language, I am not suggesting that these social processes in Catalonia are unusual. Rather, I suggest that even in the Western bourgeois state, cultural hegemony is not established primarily through the schools and other formal institutions, even though the bourgeoisie has captured these and is more directly and apparently involved in them than in the exceptional state. The processes by which such hegemony is actually consolidated may simply be obscured, particularly to the backward gaze, by the coincidence of political, civil, and economic dominance.

As Williams points out, it has been difficult for Marxist cultural analysis to trace historical (as opposed to epochal) developments within bourgeois society, but we can only understand an effective dominant culture if we understand the real social processes of incorporation on which it depends (1973:8–9). He goes on to assess educational institutions (by which in this instance I believe he means formal schooling), as the main agencies of this incorporation. It would be foolish to argue that schools do not have an important role to play. However, this look at sociolinguistic process in what might be termed an *ineffective* dominant culture suggests that in the recent search for explanations of social reproduction formal institutions have been over-emphasized. Our attention is—or I argue, should be—forced back to the effects of primary economic relations on arrangements for everyday living, and on the informal structures of experience in daily life. This is not to return to the sterile notion of the relation between base and

superstructure against which Williams argues so lucidly, but rather to assert that consciousness, the work of making meanings in social life, responds to far more than just the messages of the formal media and institutions of communication in society. Authority and hegemony cannot be mechanically read out from institutional dominance.

An important question arises about the relationship between such consciousness that does not conform to dominant institutional arrangements and the possibility of overt political action. As a partial response to this complicated question, it can be noted that Catalan nationalists, symbolizing their cause with the Catalan language, succeeded quite well in establishing political hegemony over the allied "fractions" in the opposition to the central state (stressing here the older sense of the term "hegemony"). In the final years of the Franco dictatorship, Catalan cultural symbols and language were used not only by nationalists but also by the Catalan left in protests against the central government. In the transition period, almost all leftist parties in Catalonia felt compelled to incorporate some Catalan nationalist demands in their programs, but not all Catalan nationalist parties endorsed a class analysis. There are many reasons why a nationalist program may have been the most pragmatic tactic in this period, not the least of them the perceived legitimacy of Catalan cultural authority. In 1980 a conservative Catalan nationalist party gained political control of the newly established Catalan government, and it continues to consolidate this control.

### **alternative markets and the possibility of opposition**

Having used sociolinguistic and social psychological evidence to call into question the "re-productionist" position on institutional domination and cultural hegemony, I will turn to the second issue: that of variation in the linguistic market, and whether there is room to discover alternative or oppositional forms. Bourdieu argues that all classes are virtually always subject to judgment according to the standard of the legitimate language. On the other hand, he acknowledges that no linguistic market is ever so integrated that there are not private markets where the vernacular can be used, and where standards are relaxed. However, in these markets the rule of the legitimate language is merely suspended, not transgressed, and Bourdieu concludes that there are never any really counterlegitimate languages (1982:67).

Along with the metaphor of the market, Bourdieu develops a metaphor of price formation to describe the process of linguistic domination. In official and formal markets, the price of linguistic performances is said to be high; the standards are high, and the tension to produce the correct linguistic form is correspondingly high. But Bourdieu's notions of price formation are somewhat difficult to understand as they apply to the private markets. "As the degree to which an exchange is dominated by authorized speakers decreases, the law of price formation tends to become less unfavorable to the products of dominated language habits" (1982:66). Throughout his discussion of vernacular linguistic practices, Bourdieu writes of relaxation, of reduction of tension, of lessening of value. In fact, he characterizes the private markets as arenas where the vernaculars may be used because they are free from the comparative logic of distinction and valuation (1982:66). Vernacular or nonauthorized performances result from the absence of constraint.

The metaphor of price formation works well for understanding the pressures that lead speakers to become taciturn in formal situations if they do not adequately control the standard language. However, it fails to capture the sociolinguistic reality of nonstandard vernacular communities discovered by researchers, including Labov (1972b), Basso (1979), Gal (1979), Gumperz (1982), Milroy (1980), or by my own work in Catalonia. It does not even accord well with Bourdieu's own discussion (1982:90–91) of Labov's finding that there is a "covert prestige" in male values that may keep working-class males from emulating the legitimate language.

All these findings show that it is as important to produce the correct vernacular forms in the private, local arenas of the working-class neighborhoods or peasant communities as it is to produce the official form in formal domains. That there are significant social pressures toward the vernacular has been evidenced in three types of data: actual language behavior, spontaneous overt community censorship, and subjective reactions. All the researchers cited above have found vernacular linguistic norms that differ from standard norms. Moreover, productive use of these forms increases with the degree of membership in core community peer groups, with the density and multiplexity of social networks, and with the importance of dependency and reciprocity.<sup>5</sup>

Such linguistic behavior could conceivably be accounted for by the restriction of access to standard forms and by the “relaxation of tension” that Bourdieu posits. However, other evidence demonstrates that this is incorrect. Data on overt, conscious evaluation and censorship testify to the presence of a competing community pressure rather than the mere absence of official pressure. For example, Gal (1979:106) reports on a woman ridiculed by fellow villagers for using standard rather than local Hungarian forms in speaking to the researcher, and Milroy reports a similar instance of a boy ridiculed by friends for shifting his speech style toward the standard in a recorded interview (Milroy 1980:60–61). Adolescents in Barcelona similarly reported to me that Castilian speakers ridicule their peers who attempt to speak Catalan. Just as there is strong pressure to use only the right language or to keep silent in formal situations, so effective negative sanctions are in force in these nonstandard domains. In these dominated markets, it is equally important to use only the right language; there is nothing “relaxed” about them.

The existence of pressure toward a solidary community linguistic norm is further demonstrated by subjective reaction tests. In Barcelona, for example, while both the Catalan and Castilian groups recognized the authority of Catalan, they differed notably in their reactions to the two languages on the traits of likability, attractiveness, sense of humor, openness, trustworthiness, and generosity—a dimension that I and others have labeled, perhaps problematically, “solidarity.”<sup>6</sup>

Although integrated for authority, this market is not integrated in affective standards. Catalans prefer to hear Catalans speaking Catalan, and they devalue the affective dimension drastically when they hear Catalans speaking Castilian. Castilians do the same, applying even stronger affective sanctions to Castilians who use Catalan, even as they upgrade them on the status dimension.

The sociolinguists’ distinction between status and solidarity reveals a significant fissure in the monolith of linguistic hegemony and contradictory forces in the apparently integrated linguistic market. Even where there is recognition of the authority of the legitimate language, there can be repudiation of its value on an important contrasting dimension. Competing sets of values exist, creating strong pressures in favor of the “illegitimate” languages in the vernacular markets, and not just an absence of pressure against them.

It is less clear what to make of these vernacular markets and their strong pressures toward “illegitimate” usage. Are they best thought of as encompassed within and tolerated by the “corporate” culture, or do they represent oppositional or merely alternative cultural forms, using Raymond Williams’s (1973) distinction?

Certainly the linguistic forms that the vernacular community celebrates can be seen, when judged by the dominant standard, to confirm members’ low status in the larger society, furnishing convenient evidence that they are not equipped for more authoritative functions. But such corporate convenience is only seen as causal in the most structuralist of analyses, to which Bourdieu does not subscribe. Bourdieu views these vernacular forms only as alternative forms, permitted in areas of experience that bourgeois society is willing to dispense with, to use Williams’s phrasing (1973:11).



Williams makes a "simple theoretical distinction" between the alternative and the oppositional: the alternative wants to be left alone with a different way of life, while the oppositional seeks to change society in its light (1973). By this criterion, nonstandard linguistic forms might be seen as alternative, not oppositional. But as Williams notes, there is a very narrow line in the real world between the alternative and the oppositional. If community members monitor and seek to shape the linguistic and social behavior of others in light of the vernacular model, does this not present a challenge to the dominant form?

One way to think about the oppositional or collaborative nature of these alternative forms is to follow Williams's suggestion that we look at cultural forms as practice and process, not just as product. Although this would seem to be the program of Bourdieu and other reproduction theorists, it is not, in fact, fully so, for they do not look adequately at the social relations within vernacular communities that give rise to the production of "illegitimate" forms of speech. Bourdieu tends to consider only the human practices and human intentions encompassed by the dominant culture, "but, there are always sources of real human practice which it neglects or excludes . . . for example, alternative perceptions of others in immediate personal relationships" (Williams 1973:13).

It is these alternative practices and perceptions in immediate human relationships that sociolinguists have been able to document, encoded and enacted in the solidary linguistic behavior and linguistic evaluation of working-class and minority communities.

Distinguishing product and practice, we can begin to understand the nature of these solidary values and the linguistic practices that embody them. They can be said to be "partial penetrations," to use Willis's (1977) term. As in the case of the school counterculture he documents, the elaboration and maintenance of vernacular linguistic norms is an instance of the "radical genesis of conservative outcomes" (Willis 1977:174). An oppositional process that sees through and repudiates the legitimate language ("yes, it is the language of authority, but that is not the authority of my life"), the inversion of the dominant value hierarchy produces what is at best an alternative and at worst a collaborative product—an adherence to a "substandard" form of speech.

It is important that linguistically this is true not just of a small section of the working class, as in the parallel case of resistant or rebellious counter-school cultures, but is characteristic of large segments of adult working-class and ethnic minority communities. In the solidarity/status polarities of linguistic evaluation, the difference between individual and group logics is evidenced even more than is the case of counter-school activities (Willis 1977:128). As Willis has said for his rowdy "lads" of the British counter-school culture, these are the "elements of a profound critique of the dominant ideology of individualism in our society" (1977:128).

But they are only the elements, and in no way constitute the critique itself, much less the outline of a revolutionary program of action. One does not want to romanticize these linguistic practices (a fault Bourdieu finds with Labov's characterization of Black English). Just as Willis warns of his lads' racist and sexist ideology of manual labor, these vernacular linguistic practices are no less the product of the capitalist era despite their potentially subversive forms (Willis 1977:132). Nor does the covert, partial recognition of contradiction lead directly or inevitably to action and systematic, overt opposition (cf. Cirese's discussion [1982] of Gramsci's position on the progressive potential of folklore). It is nonetheless critical to understand that these vernacular practices are productive, not merely reproductive, that they arise not from a mere bending to the weight of authority, but are paradoxically a creative response to that authority, mediated by the oppositional value of solidarity.

Structural theories of reproduction, including that of Bourdieu, present the dominant ideology as impenetrable (Willis 1977:175). In the sociology of education, many "resistance" theorists now argue against this overly deterministic and monolithic model (cf. Giroux 1983a, 1983b). But without recourse to empirical evidence, it has been difficult to resolve the repro-

duction/resistance debate, which all too often degenerates into a matter of preference for and palatability of models that emphasize structural determination or human agency. Linguistic practices are uniquely amenable to exploration of both behavioral and attitudinal dimensions, and a sociologically informed reading of sociolinguistic data can help take us beyond this impasse.

## notes

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<sup>1</sup>I will use the terms "sociolinguistics" and "sociolinguists" very loosely, to include all research on the social causes, concomitants, and consequences of variability in actual linguistic and communicative structures at the levels of phonology, morphology, syntax, and/or discourse organization. This brings into a (perhaps unwilling) coalition some who may prefer to be called ethnographers of speaking, sociologists of language, or social psychologists. They may often seem to have little in common, but I believe they share basic assumptions and knowledge about sociolinguistic complexity that are still not adequately appreciated by the wider scholarly community concerned with social theory.

<sup>2</sup>White (1980) has attempted to make explicit this theory, positing dominance and solidarity as conceptual universals in interpersonal language because they are conceptual universals in interpersonal relations.

<sup>3</sup>While the following sections of this paper call into question only the predominance Bourdieu attributes to schools, there is also reason to doubt his formulation of the role of the family in the reproduction of inequality. Although little dialect research has been done on young children, evidence on the linguistic habits of school-age children and adolescents shows that they do not necessarily speak like their teachers, their televisions, or their parents. In cases of migration, where children are raised in a different dialect environment from that of their parents, children rarely reproduce their parents' linguistic repertoire, and often the parental dialect is not even within the child's productive range; Romaine (1984:183–194) provides a summary of the evidence on this issue. This refers only to strictly linguistic phenomena, phonology in particular. However, most anthropologists and radical sociologists propose that the form of what is said is learned in conjunction with what can be said and when it is to be said. Unless we propose that these are detachable in the acquisition process—and we have labored to demonstrate that they are not—then reproduction theory focusing on the family and schools is confronted with a difficulty. In general, children and adolescents in Western society talk like their peers rather than their parents; only socially isolated "lames" (Labov 1972b) are more likely to emulate adult forms. This points toward the pressures of the "solidarity" values, which will be discussed in a later section.

<sup>4</sup>The test reported here was carried out with approximately 240 students from four high schools (both technical and academic) and one teacher-training college in the Barcelona area. These represented quite well the range from working-class to upper-middle-class origins, but the children of the truly elite were excluded. Gary McDonogh, who has studied the Catalan haute bourgeoisie (in press), informs me in personal communication that it is unlikely that such results would be obtained among his informants, for whom he believes Castilian dominates both in practice and in consciousness. This raises extremely interesting questions about contradictions in cultural hegemony as experienced by different classes and class fractions, a theme we hope to pursue.

<sup>5</sup>Readers should not lose sight of the fact that I am discussing here only pressures toward an alternative norm, and varying susceptibility to these pressures on the part of individuals. A reified, homogeneous "vernacular community" is no more desirable an outcome of this analysis than is the image of a static, homogeneous hegemonic culture. Good correctives to oversimplification here are Blom and Gumperz (1972), who show the infiltration of the legitimate language into local markets, even against the conscious will of members, and Hill (1985), who draws the detailed picture of contradictory processes that the broad strokes of this essay cannot capture.

<sup>6</sup>An original goal behind this essay was to examine critically the theoretical underpinnings of sociolinguistic uses, and particularly my own, of the term "solidarity." We have intuitively linked "liking" to "likeness," a link that has been empirically confirmed, but also "liking" to social solidarity—a leap that may be unwarranted, or an inappropriate use of the concept. This note does not substitute for a full examination of the social theory implicit in this usage, but simply recognizes the fuzzy and problematic nature of the concept, which I nonetheless believe can be useful.

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