SOCIOLINGUISTICAL PROBLEMS OF GENERATIONS

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Abstract:

One of the most significant languages in the world is English. It is spoken by millions of people worldwide and is the language of international business. However, learning English can be among the more challenging languages. English is difficult to master because there are many rules and exceptions to the norms. But millions have shown that it is possible. Participants and external observers alike have a strong propensity to view language change as a process that occurs across immobile generational grids. Nevertheless, age must be viewed as a component of identity that is just as complex and constructed as gender, race, or class—not merely as an independent variable. This holds particularly true in situations where there is a shift in language. In this essay, I critically examine how linguists and linguistic anthropologists have used the concepts of youth identity and intergenerational relations, and I provide some recommendations for future research on the linguistic aspects of generational identity.

Key words: cultural category, changes in language and the generational issue, concepts of youth, the influence of grandparents

Introduction:

It has been researching what happens to groups of people when new perspectives about their youngest members become prevalent for the past ten years, and how this development has influenced local efforts to uphold and advance local customs, values, and languages. I have been working closely with bilingual indigenous youth because I am particularly interested in the role language plays in this process. I have approached my research by concentrating on youth as a cultural category that is embedded in a larger local system of age classification in every instance. A following queries become paramount when viewed from an anthropological perspective: how are age groups determined and perpetuated? To what extent does language use contribute to these processes? How do some speech patterns become associated with youth culture? When does acting immature in front of others become problematic? The majority of my studies have been on the speech of young Mixe speakers and speakers of the language Mixe (Ayo¨ o¨k). About 100,000 people in Mexico and the US speak one of the four main varieties of Mixe. Ayo¨o¨k Jayu, the Mixe people, are from a mountainous enclave east of Oaxaca City and are known for their fierce independence, conservative cultural views, and suspicion of outsiders. As in the case of the Chickasaw, who identify themselves in official publications as "the unconquered and unconquerable," the Mixe people identify as "la gente jama¬s conquistada" (the people who were never conquered). Given this, it should come as no surprise that Mixe elders see their grandchildren's fascination with alien fashions and hobbies as evidence of a fresh kind of invasion. In the following, I want to critically examine how the concepts of generations and age categories—especially the category of youth—have been used in linguistics and linguistic anthropology. I use my research with Mixe youths and several published case studies to accomplish this. According to a number of academics, age should be

considered more than just an independent variable. Rather, they emphasize how important it is to see age as a dimension of identity that is just as complex and constructed as gender, race, and class.

For example, Lamb (2000, p. 9) claims that social relations are gendered and 'aged' at the same time. Aging processes, in whatever form they take, affect every aspect of our bodies and lives andare fundamental to the way we create gender identities, power dynamics, and the larger material and social environments we live in; in other words, what it means to be a human.

Changes in language and the generational issue

The dwindling use of a language is usually explained in the literature on language shift and linguistic obsolescence as a process that occurs over several generations of speakers. The relationship between generational groups and language loss is illustrated in Annette Schmidt's (1990, p. 117) discussion of the fate of Aboriginal Australian languages.

In Figure 1, the black bands that connect the white squares in the generational groups represent the decreasing amount of money.

Concepts of youth are changing

Studies of adolescents have tended to focus on their construction and negotiation of social identities as well as the formation of identity-based social groupings in which gender, class, ethnicity, and other salient social groupings are constituted and indexed through both discursive and nondiscursive practices, according to Garrett and Baquedano-López (2002, p. 349) in a recent review article on language socialization. I believe Garrett and Baquedano-López mean this as a commendation.

The influence of grandparents

Hill (1998, p. 179) has aptly named this sociolinguistic phenomenon "the grandparent effect," which is evoked by the fictional Chickasaw example I used in my introduction as well as the real-life domestic scenes that served as its inspiration. This is the tendency for the most proficient young speakers of endangered languages to be those who lived with their grandparents for a sizable portion of their early years, either entirely or closely. One way to interpret this sociolinguistic pattern would be as an intriguing statistic and…

A twofold bind

It's simple to overlook young people's agency when concentrating on the efforts of elderly community members to influence the perspectives and behaviors of their offspring and grandkids (see Bucholtz, 2002). For instance, a significant portion of young Mixe people have a strong interest in their native tongue and culture. The generation that has grown up in the last few years holds a special place in the ongoing language trend toward bilingualism between Spanish and Mixe. Its constituents were raised during a….

In summary

In this essay, I have argued that seeing language socialization and language change over time as processes that take place along fixed, unchanging age- or life-stage-based grids is insufficient. I have concentrated in particular on vulnerable local language communities that are being affected by significant regional and global changes. Age classification systems in these communities are also dynamic, resulting from language use as much as the background context in which they are used.

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