PART **I**

Speech Communities, Contact, and Variation

CHAPTER 1 Speech Community

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1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on how the concept *speech community* has become integral to the interpretation and representation of societies and situations marked by change, diversity, and increasing technology as well as those situations previously treated as conventional. The study of the speech community is central to the understanding of human language and meaning-making because it is the product of prolonged interaction among those who operate within shared belief and value systems regarding their own culture, society, and history as well as their communication with others. These interactions constitute the fundamental nature of human contact and the importance of language, discourse, and verbal styles in the representation and negotiation of the relationships that ensue. Thus the concept of speech community does not simply focus on groups that speak the same language. Rather, the concept takes as fact that language represents, embodies, constructs, and constitutes meaningful participation in a society and culture. It also assumes that a mutually intelligible symbolic and ideological communicative system must be at play among those who share knowledge and practices about how one is meaningful across social contexts.[1] Thus it is within the speech community that identity, ideology, and agency (see Bucholtz and Hall, Kroskrity, and Duranti, this volume) are actualized in society.

While there are many social and political forms a speech community may take – from nation-states to chat rooms dedicated to pet psychology – speech communities are recognized as distinctive in relation to other speech communities. That is, they come into collective consciousness when there is a crisis of some sort, often triggered when hegemonic powers consider them a problem or researchers highlight them and rely on them as a unit of study.[2] Thus, while speech community is a fundamental concept, it is also the object of unremitting critique. In fact, it has been blamed for poor literary skills, epidemics, unemployment, increases in crime, and so on.[3]

Many of the critical arguments surrounding speech communities concern two contrasting perspectives on how to define language and discourse. The first focuses

on the analysis and description of linguistic, semantic, and conversational features that are gathered from a group and are in turn deemed to be stable indicators of that speech community. The second perspective refers to the notion of language and discourse as a way of representing (Hall 1996; Foucault 1972). In this case the focus is on how language is used to construct relationships, identity, and so on. Though these perspectives can be complementary, they are often in contention with each other. The choice of perspective can have far-reaching implications for the speech community in question as well as for the concept in general.

Members of speech communities often recognize that these two perspectives coexist, though the linguistic analysis, absent of speakers' beliefs, politics, and social reality, is often considered to be the ''objective'' and accurate description of speech community from the perspective of the dominant culture. Thus a national language can be proclaimed, even if it is only spoken by an elite few, and one dialect can be declared the prestige variety. At the same time, members of speech communities may also recognize that the cultural hegemony that is sustained, enforced, and reproduced can also be incorporated and acted on discursively and literally to highlight representation of others who reside outside its boundaries (cf. Gramsci 1971; Bourdieu 1991). That is to say, membership in a speech community includes local knowledge of the way language choice, variation, and discourse represents generation, occupation, politics, social relationships, identity, and more.

Throughout the social sciences, there has been a growing awareness of the importance of the nature of discourse in the representation of local knowledge, culture, identity, and politics. This is especially true in the works of cultural anthropologists whose ethnographies are situated within communities whose members are aware of social and cultural differences and where transmigration, social identity, and memory of imagined and experienced notions of *home* are part of the cultural fabric. For example, the power of discourse in the representation of the lives of Asian Americans is found in the work of Dorinne Kondo (1997), who explores how Asian American playwrights' and actors' performance of identity is in part a manifestation of their community norm of mediating multiple language ideologies and heteroglossia (Bahktin 1981).[4] The work of Marta Savigliano (1995) is also provocative as she demonstrates how Argentinians, through dancing and singing tango, use language and symbols associated with African Diasporan speech communities as a mediator and symbol for critiques of modern discourse, politics, and injustice. It is also integral to Kesha Fikes' (2000) work on Cape Verdeans in Cape Verde and Portugal. Fikes explores how transnationals rely on African language usage and referents to frame membership in multiple speech communities that represent both resistance to and inclusion of an African Diasporan speech community, and how they use these same referents to index the Portuguese metropole in contrast to rural Cape Verde as well. In this sense the study of creole languages, more than any other area of linguistics, provides invaluable insight into the nature of diasporic migration, ethnicity, nationalism, identity, and language loyalty (see Garrett, this volume).

As the previous cases suggest, describing speech community is no simple matter. It cannot be defined by static physical location since membership can be experienced as part of a nation-state, neighborhood, village, club, compound, on-line chat room, religious institution, and so on. What's more, adults often experience multiple communities, and one's initial socialization into a speech community may occur

within a culture with communicative values that differ from those of other cultures and communities one encounters later in life. In this chapter, I argue that the concept of speech community often incorporates shifts in attitudes and usage and that the notion of language that binds it is constructed around several major theories regarding language as a social construct. They include: language and representation, language and diversity, attitudes toward language use, and language and power. The speech community is recognizable by the circulation of discourse and repetition of activity and beliefs and values about these topics, which are constantly discussed, evaluated, corroborated, mediated, and reconstituted by its members. One's awareness of these issues is determined by whether and to what degree speech communities are in crisis. For some, awareness is ingrained in the cultural fabric and thus represents unmarked usage that encompasses the community's historicity, politics, ideology, representation, and so on. Though these values are agreed upon, that does not necessarily mean that there is complete consensus about the implementation of these principles. Rather, what is at stake is knowledge of the symbolic, market, and exchange value of varieties and styles within and across speech communities.

2   RECOVERING THE SPEECH COMMUNITY

Linguists have used many strategies to analyze how people throughout cultures and societies of the world build, seek, find, and thrive in their communities – every day. In some cases, the speech community concept itself has come to signify a particular way of looking at peoples and cultures so that it has been viewed as focusing too much on difference and not on the complexities of difference and power.[5] Kathryn Woolard (1985) explores the relationship between difference and power in her analysis of how communities discursively mediate hegemony.[6] Woolard's analysis of language loyalty in Catalan explores how Catalonians overwhelmingly choose the Catalan language over Castilian as a sign of status, even though they know it is stigmatized by the larger society. Woolard suggests that the Gramscian notion of cultural hegemony and Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital not only explain but also anticipate that social actors consider language to be a part of their social action. Both Gramsci (1971) and Bourdieu (1991) analyze dominant culture's ability to impose its interpretation of others, and especially non-elites, on entire populations and speech communities. Those in power present their own perspective as *the way* to understand the world so effectively that those who are subordinated and marginalized also accept this view as ''common sense,'' reasonable and ''natural.'' In spite of this, because discourse is dialogic and representational, speakers have opportunities to interrogate hegemony as well. What is shared among its members is language ideology, beliefs about language, identity, and membership, and attitude toward language use. As Woolard explains, ''The two aspects of linguistic authority or hegemony, then, are knowledge or control of a standard, and acknowledgement or recognition of it: to translate into empirical sociolinguistic terms, behavioral proficiency and attitudes'' (Woolard 1985: 741).

   While it is true that members of speech communities can shape their discursive practices to represent their beliefs and values, it is also true that the current state of technological communication, globalization, and transmigration continues to test its

viability as a useful concept. Yet this represents a challenge to the analyst, who must work in a shrinking and more visible cultural and social world, rather than to the concept itself. This challenge is illustrated in the words and images of the US hiphop artist Guru and the French hiphop artist MC Solaar. In the prelude to their music video ''Le Bien, Le Mal – The Good, The Bad,'' MC Solaar telephones Guru to arrange a meeting. Each man is filmed in separate outdoor locations while talking to the other on their cell phones. MC Solaar is in Paris and speaks to Guru in French using *verlan* – urban French vernacular that incorporates movement of syllables and deletion of consonants.[7] Guru is in New York and uses hiphop terminology and African American English (AAE) as he talks to MC Solaar.

Paris

MC Solaar:	C'est longtemps depuis qu'on a vu Guru Gangstarr.[8]
	(It's been a long time since we've seen Guru from Gangstarr.)
	C'est pas cool, s'il venait a Paris?
	(It will be fly [very cool] if he comes to Paris.)
Friend:	Ouais.
	(Yeah)
MC Solaar:	On essait de l'appler
	(Let's give him a call.)

New York

Guru *(on phone)*:	Hello – Who dis? Solaar! What up Man? Yeah!
	No I'm comin' man. I know I'm late Yo! Hold up for me
	al(r)ight. Baby! I'm on my way now al(r)ight! Peace!

At the end of the conversation, Guru leaves to meet MC Solaar and descends stairs into a New York subway. When he ascends the subway, he is in Paris! Then the two begin their song about the contradictions of life in respective cities and shared speech community.[9]

In ''Le Bien, Le Mal – The Good, The Bad,'' MC Solaar and Guru present a speech community in which they share the same style of speaking, method of grammatical innovation, lexical creativity, and more – but not the same linguistic system. In the case of these hiphop artists, the speech community is not linguistically and physically located but is bound by politics, culture, social condition, and norms, values, and attitudes about language use. The types of speech communities described above – which are partially constructed through transnationalism, technology, music, and politically and socially marginalized youth – were treated as subordinate in earlier descriptions of speech community if they were considered at all. In fact, an analysis of these earlier theories about speech community provides important insight into the nature of some of the issues that still remain today.

2.1   Early definitions of speech community

Reservations and questions regarding the utility of the speech community concept have existed at least since 1933 when Leonard Bloomfield wrote: ''A group of people who use the same set of speech signals is a *speech-community*'' (1933: 29). This

definition reflects a common belief of the time, that monolingualism – one language, one nation-state – is the canonical example of speech community (e.g. Anderson 1983). In this case, a community is considered to be a ''social group of any size who reside in a specific locality, share government, and have a common cultural and historical heritage'' (Random House Dictionary). At this particular time linguistic anthropology was mainly concerned with historical relationships of language families (Lyons 1981; Hudson 1980) and language was viewed as the result of history and politics but not as integral and entangled in it – and therefore not as an aspect of historicity and the context of politics and social life.[10] Within the confines of descriptive and structural linguistics, the speech community reflected the linguist's definition of language described above and thus it was a product and result of what was simply called *contact*.

Of course, discovering the history of and describing the world's languages is a very important business, and in many respects early definitions corresponded to Western arrogance and its responsibility to ''represent the world correctly'' – and with itself as the reference point (Said 1978). From this perspective, it is not surprising that while Bloomfield considered the speech community to be the most important kind of social group, his evaluation of contact situations did not assume that various sectors of society interacted with each other in a complementary way.[11] Instead, communities that arose out of European aggression and cultural hegemony were relegated to supplemental status. Unfortunately, the notion that viable speech communities could not exist under such circumstances suggests that the great cultural and social restructuring and reconstitution accomplished by colonized and conquered people were inconsequential in light of the enormity of the catastrophic events that they endured. This perspective also greatly influenced earlier works of language and contact and pidgin and creole studies, where African languages were thought to have marginal influence and where creoles were often treated as not quite a language at all (see below).

Bloomfield's conception of the homogeneous speech community represented the canon in linguistic anthropology until Noam Chomsky (1965) began to challenge the concept's utility. Chomsky's work critiqued descriptive and structural analyses of language and introduced a theoretical approach that explored the human capacity to produce language rather than language as a social construct. In *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*, Chomsky (1965) introduced the distinction between competence and performance and abandoned the model that incorporated the speech community as the basis of linguistic analysis. The possibility of discovering human linguistic capacity was found in the cognitive, psychological self that develops irrespective of where performance of that knowledge resided – the speech community. Instead of resolving the conflict between whether the speech community constitutes language and discourse or is constituted through linguistic descriptions, Chomsky insistently argued that the essence of language resides in discovering the mechanism and theory behind the human ability to produce language. By regulating people's actual use of language to descriptions of linguistic problems (e.g. false starts, errors, etc.) the speech community suddenly was at risk of becoming the garbage dump for linguistic debris – what remains after theoretical analysis is complete.

As Chomsky's theories began to attack the concept's foundations, new generations of linguistic anthropologists began to offer more evidence of its importance for both

members of speech communities and theorists who sought to develop analyses of language and discourse in groups. However, the most difficult tasks remained. Those were to determine: the role of cultural hegemony; the construction and reconstruction of values, norms, and standards in speech community representation; and why group differences do not destroy speech communities.

2.2   Retrieving the speech community

The work of John Gumperz (1968, 1972a, b) revived the concept of the speech community by considering it a social construct. Instead of focusing on the single language model he defined it as "any human aggregate characterized by regular and frequent interaction by means of a shared body of verbal signs and set off from similar aggregates by significant differences in language usage" (1972b: 219).[12] Gumperz focused on interface communication and determined that the notion of consistent, repetitive, and predictable interactions and contact is necessary for a speech community to exist. He argued that regardless of the linguistic similarities and differences, "the speech varieties employed within a speech community form a system because they are related to a shared set of social norms" (1972b: 220). This formulation could incorporate the sociolinguistic research that was occurring in cities at the time (see below) and reconstituted the notion of speech community to include more than languages and language boundaries, but also values, attitudes, and ideologies about language. Thus, while the concept speech community initially focused on language systems, relationships, and boundaries, it expanded to include the notion of social representation and norms in the form of attitudes, values, beliefs, and practices – and the notion that members of speech communities work their languages as social and cultural products.

Many direct and indirect efforts to reclaim the integrity of speech community that complemented Gumperz's interpretation emerged. In particular, Dell Hymes described the speech community as a "fundamental concept for the relation between language, speech, and social structure" (1964: 385). He considered the question of boundaries essential in order to recognize that communities are not by definition fixed units. In fact, Hymes' model of ethnographies of communication/speaking argued for the importance of communicative competence – the knowledge a speaker must have to function as a member of a social group. Communicative competence is based on language use and socialization within cultures and one becomes knowledgeable of both grammar and appropriateness across speech acts and events that are evaluated and corroborated by others. Hymes' argument that competence was "the interrelationship of language with the other codes of communicative conduct" (1972: 277–8) replaced the notion that a language constitutes a speech community with a code of beliefs and behaviors about language and discourse and knowledge of how to use them.

Yet the discussion of dialect and notions of standards as well as rigid and overlapping borders between communities did not incorporate an analysis of the social and political conditions that these communities reflected, and thus the nature of what contact means in terms of power and representation remained peripheral to analyses of speech community.

2.3   Sociolinguists and social actors

One of the greatest challenges to the reformulated concept of speech community described above actually came from the field of sociolinguisties and creole language studies. This is not surprising since sociolinguistics is the study of language variation and the identification of features that systematically differ from other varieties. Similarly, creole language studies must shift through contact language systems in order to determine whether one is distinct enough from all other languages present to be called a language in and of itself.[13] Thus both areas focus on the differences among and within speech communities that resulted from discrimination in terms of class, gender, race, and colonial conquest. In a field notorious for proclaiming that the difference between a language and a dialect is who controls the army, one could predict that the social, cultural, and political parameters of speech communities would encroach on sociolinguistic methodologies that are often apolitical.

William Labov's (1972) definition of speech community addressed the question of methodological strategies and focused on the relationship of such sociological categories as race, class, and gender to variation in language use. Labov contrasted speech community attitudes toward linguistic variables and corroborated Hymes' depiction when he wrote, "The speech community is not defined by any marked agreement in the use of language elements, so much as by participation in a set of shared norms" (1972: 120–1). Moreover, he found that though these norms were often at odds with prestige standards, it did not mean that speakers within and outside of speech communities did not use them. Instead, it is necessary to consider their value within social contexts. As Gregory Guy explains,

> One reason that shared norms form part of the definition of the speech community is that they are required to account for one of the principal sociolinguistic findings regarding variation by class and style, namely that the same linguistic variables are involved in the differentiation of social classes and speech styles. (1988: 50).

In contrast, Milroy and Milroy (1992), who conducted research in Belfast and Philadelphia, believe that contrasts in attitudes toward varieties within and between speech communities were embedded in social class methodology rather than in social stratification of speech communities themselves. They argued that in Labov's notion of sociolinguistic speech community the shared norms of evaluation were also the very linguistic norms that symbolize the divisions between them. Rather than reflecting a shared belief, they assert that Labov's findings "are more readily interpretable as evidence of conflict and sharp divisions in society than as evidence of consensus" (1992: 3).

But speech communities can indeed have consensus about divisions and use the same symbols to reflect their opinion about divisions and bring about consensus. That is, it is possible to represent views about variable choice through some form of consensus, and variables can have different values depending on the social and cultural context without representing conflict. For example, the African American speech community considers it ludicrous to think that a professional would use vernacular AAE in formal settings unless it was done intentionally to make a point.[14] Moreover, conversations among middle-class members often include

imitations of speakers using AAE in formal settings to signify that listeners outside of the African American speech community are bigoted. Zentella (1997) makes a similar argument for Spanish and English codeswitching in New York: ''Relationships among language, setting and meaning are not fixed. Switching into Spanish in public or into English at home does not necessarily communicate intimacy or distance, respectively'' (1997: 3).

Labov interpreted speech community values that recognize social differentiation within and between communities by contrasting dominant and overt norms with what he calls covert norms (1972: 249). While he described covert norms as a preference for the social dialect irrespective of the role of standard varieties, the question of how these norms function and whether they are, in fact, covert in the same way to members of the speech community still remains.[15] Yet, while members of speech communities value many language varieties, speakers and theorists sometimes have different agendas about how to view these varieties. Theorists are concerned with variation as it relates to norms and linguistic patterns while members of speech communities are concerned with variation as a form of representation that is not fixed but fluid within multiple interactions.[16] As Eckert explains: ''The claim that the social unit that defines one's sociolinguistic sample constitutes a speech community, then, is above all a way of placing the study itself rather than the speakers'' (2000: 33).

For the most part, sociolinguistic training focuses on the identification and analysis of linguistic variation compared to sociological variables such as ethnicity, class, age, and gender. The difficulty is in incorporating attitudes about language and the notion of shared and corroborated beliefs into the analysis of linguistic practices. If speech community members are not aware of these forms, linguists often argue that they are not aware of what constitutes their speech community. But John Rickford (1985) argues that sociolinguistics must also pay attention to what speakers actually believe about how their language practices reflect their social lives. He investigated ethnicity as a sociolinguistic boundary by comparing linguistic variation between a black and a white speaker on the South Carolina Sea Islands. While he found that social differentiation between speakers was marked at the morphosyntactic level, he argued that Sea Islanders were well aware of the function of the norms of their speech community, in spite of the contrasts.[17]

In this case the definition of community and social context creates a dichotomy between the knowledge developed by theorists versus the abstract communicative and linguistic knowledge of speakers involved in everyday interactions. In fact, one of the more persistent challenges in creole language studies and sociolinguistics in general is to determine the extent and ways in which information or linguistic facts gathered from a particular speech community can, in some way, benefit that community (Labov 1980, 1982). In creole language studies, this challenge often comes in the form of questions about power and hegemony when discussing historical linguistics and European colonization. Modern creole language situations have arisen mainly from European conceived and controlled plantation systems that brought together people of different nations, cultures, and languages to serve as either indentured workers or slaves (Garrett, this volume). While the situations from which creole languages have emerged can be described merely as examples of language contact, that denotation is hardly sufficient if one considers the complex ways in which these

communities of speakers currently use language to mediate and substantiate multiple realities that constitute their world. These situations also provide an opportunity to illuminate the sites of contention in which creole language speakers and descendants negotiate and seek power. How linguists address these questions is as important to the speech community under study as the linguistic information that has been assembled.

3   REPRESENTATION AND DISCOURSE ABOUT LANGUAGE SYSTEM

While proficiency in a common language is a significant component of many speech communities, this knowledge need not be in relation to a standard dialect or norm or even a single language (Romaine 2000; Wodak et al. 1999). Irrespective of whether the speech community is based on a common activity and practice, is marginalized, incorporates dominant ideology, or is in resistance to it, its members must have communicative competence in relation to discourse about how language and/or language variety function in specific contexts and constitute the speech community. Consequently, discourse may focus on linguistic practices that are indicative of the variety or language, in contrast to and dialogic with other dialects and languages. Zentella (1997) explores the necessity and expectation that speech community members share knowledge in her description of the New York Puerto Rican (NYPR) speech community where:

> interactions rely on shared linguistic and cultural knowledge of standard and non-standard Puerto Rican Spanish, Puerto Rican English, African American Vernacular English, Hispanized English, and standard NYC English, among other dialects. Speakers understand the overt and covert messages of fellow community members because they can follow varied linguistic moves and fill in the gaps for other speakers or translate for themselves. In the process they ratify each other's membership in the community and contribute to the re-shaping of NYPR identity. (1997:3)

Discourse about which linguistic features represent the speech community may come from linguistic study and from the communities themselves. For example, in Morgan (1994, 2001), I argue that while sociolinguistic descriptions of the African American speech community have yielded tremendous insight into the dialect, these analyses have also prompted educators, social scientists, and some linguists to argue that it is the main cause of educational and economic inequities. In fact, the African American speech community operates according to an elaborate integration of language norms and values associated with the symbolic and practical functions of African American English (AAE) and General English (GE).[18] One outcome is what I have called *reading dialect* (Morgan 2002), a code-shifting practice that occurs "when members of the African American community contrast or otherwise highlight what they consider to be obvious contrasting features of AAE and GE in an unsubtle and unambiguous manner to make a point" (2002: 74). This produces an environment where both varieties symbolize ideologies regarding African American cultural practices. In terms of language choice, GE is the only variety that one can *choose* to

speak since it is often learned in formal settings outside of the home and from those who are not members of the speech community. On the other hand, AAE is a variety that one may choose *not* to speak since it is the language through which one is socialized into the speech community. That is, in the African American speech community, both AAE and GE function as the language of home, community, history, and culture. For families that use both varieties, one is not necessarily valued over the other though one may be considered more contextually appropriate. Within this system AAE is not only what one may hear and speak at home and in the community, but also it is the variety that delivers formal and informal knowledge as well as local knowledge and wisdom. It is the language of both the profound and the profane.

On the other hand GE, rather than AAE, has a context-free exchange value outside of the speech community.[19] Within the dominant cultural system, GE usage represents hegemony, is considered "normal" and indexes intelligence, compliance, and so on. Although speakers may not be aware of all grammatical relationships and systems in their repertoire, by the time they are adults they know that AAE usage may be stigmatized within dominant cultural systems and may be considered deviant and index ignorance. They know the politics of language use and attempt to adjust accordingly. In this way theories about AAE and GE linguistic structure and usage are part of everyday philosophizing in the speech community and these "philosophies of language" regarding social reality are radically different from those of linguists in many ways. [20] Poet Bruce George demonstrates this in an excerpt from his poem "Bone Bristle" (2002).

> While their house is a house
> That Black built
> Brick by brick.
> Their synergistics are antagonistic
> Towards our linguistics.
> But our rhyme has reason
> And our syllogisms are valid enough.
> Enough to make non-sequiturs follow logic
> Without putting a stop to cultural reasoning.
> (Bruce George, 2002: "Bone Bristle Def Poetry Jam")

Through standard usage, George demonstrates educated or "high" knowledge to critique what he perceives as society's antagonism toward a black speech that represents black speakers. He continues:

> We have plenty of gray matter to withstand
> Your mental jousting
> We have plenty of gray matter to overstand
> Your subterfuge

George *reads* the exclusive standard speech community by introducing the word 'overstand' in place of 'understand'.[21] The use of 'overstand' signifies that George, as part of the African American speech community, fully understands the attitudes, injustices, and so on associated with dominant discourse and practices around his speech community.

Though speech communities may take any and all of these forms and more, it is not an infinitely malleable concept, changing shape, form, and meaning according to scholarly need or any new gathering of people. Rather speech communities reflect what people do and know when they interact with one another. It assumes that when people come together through discursive practices, they intend to behave as though they operate within a shared set of norms, local knowledge, beliefs, and values. It means that they are aware of these things and capable of knowing when they are being adhered to and when the values of the community are being ignored.[22]

4   DIVERSITY, INTERACTION, STYLE, AND USAGE

Even when members are aware of the values, attitudes, and norms of discourse of a speech community, their positive standing is not always guaranteed, especially when regular travel and transmigration are the norm. Instead, membership in and across speech communities requires the negotiation of languages, dialects, discourse styles, and symbolic systems as part of normal practice. The following passage from my field notes about an incident which took place in Jamaica portrays a fair sense of the levels of mediation necessary to function successfully across speech communities and – to paraphrase Clifford Geertz – how "extraordinarily 'thick' it is" (1973: 9):[23]

> While walking in the hills of a section of Jamaica populated by members of her extended family, Myrna and I discussed the details of a complicated misunderstanding that had occurred the night before. We were a group of four mutual friends in our mid-thirties enjoying the hospitality of Myrna's mother, Mrs. Hightower. The group included Myrna, who was born in Jamaica and lived in London for 20 years and had returned to Jamaica to live; Krystal, who was born and raised in London; Carol, who spent most of her life in Jamaica and finally me, from Chicago. As we walked up the hill into the countryside – and away from Mrs. Hightower's house – Myrna and I talked about the fine points of the previous night's conversation and what went wrong. We were going over the details of how we had somehow managed to offend Myrna's mother Mrs. Hightower.
> The night before, one of us made a sarcastic comment that Mrs. Hightower thought was intended for her but was actually a response to earlier activities and interactions we had had in town that day. At first, we naively laughed upon realizing that Mrs. Hightower thought we were talking about her. Our laughter was not out of disrespect but because we never considered that she would think we would insult her directly or indirectly. Unfortunately, laughing was one of the worse things we could have done. Mrs. Hightower simply didn't believe us and refused to accept our apology or explanation of how we could not have possibly been referring to her. She then glared at her daughter and mumbled something in Jamaican creole – which prompted Krystal to try to offer a more detailed explanation. I suppose it may have seemed comical as we all panicked and yelled to Krystal to stop talking so that she would not try to convince Mrs. Hightower of our innocence. We knew that further explanation could be interpreted as a sign that we were trying to talk our way out of the offense rather than clarify our intentions. Krystal either didn't understand or couldn't stop explaining and ploughed ahead with her clarification. Mrs. Hightower then said something under her breath and I could only hear the words "renk" and "rass".[24]

It was at that point in our conversation in the mountains that Myrna and I came across the goat.[25] We were immediately alarmed and understood that someone was near who might have heard our conversation about the night's mix-up. Sure enough, things went from bad to worse when a wiry old man suddenly appeared holding a machete. He looked through us with deep, disapproving eyes and a stern facial expression. He was obviously a cousin of Myrna and Mrs. Hightower and though we greeted him, he said nothing in return, and led the goat away.[26] He disappeared as quickly as he had appeared and we rushed back to tell Mrs. Hightower that her cousin may have misunderstood our conversation about her, but it was too late. Somehow she had been informed before we arrived that we had been discussing her, though I'm convinced we beat her cousin down that hill. The entire weekend was then spent making deeper mistakes and trying to make amends.

As our Jamaican vacation began we considered ourselves members of a shared speech community – confident in our ability to recognize the subtleties of Caribbean interactions and mediate any misunderstanding that might arise. Yet, only Carol and Mrs. Hightower were fully socialized as a member of this speech community – as a child, adolescent, young adult, and adult. As our secure world began to unravel, it did so around persistent beliefs – held by each of us – that we knew the rules and were competent. Krystal lived in a heavily Jamaican community in London and I've conducted ethnographies throughout Jamaica. We both knew that one cannot defend oneself with this kind of misunderstanding. Once the defense and apology are stated, one must simply wait out the situation – but that was not what Krystal did that fateful evening. Myrna had spent much of her childhood in Jamaica, and we both were aware that her family lived in the surrounding area and often listened to conversations of those walking in their hills. Yet we behaved as though we had privacy. In fact, anyone could have heard us and reported back to Mrs. Hightower at any time during our "private" walk. Later Carol, the only one to emerge with her social face intact (and the only one to whom we all continued to speak), summed it up this way: "Too much London, too much America, and not enough Jamaica."

While the consequences of my interactions in that Jamaican vacation may be particular to the situation, they are not unique. It demonstrates how integration and knowledge of different norms of communication and the negotiation and mediation of power and identity that accompany this integration are often also a part of everyday discourse in speech communities. In this respect, Mrs. Hightower was well within her right to invoke an exclusive Jamaican interpretation on our interaction. And Krystal was well within hers as she pleaded for a more British interpretation of the situation.[27] This type of negotiation is an aspect of social life in speech communities and not part of a social imaginary – though it may be a product of it. Moreover, this type of interaction is especially common for those from cultures whose secondary socialization may have included voluntary and involuntary changes in education, in class and status, in geographical locations and regions through migration and transmigration, and who may have experienced a change in occupation and even method of contact which in turn introduced a way of speaking and communicating (e.g. the Internet).

5   PRACTICING SPEECH COMMUNITIES

Some speech communities exist in relation to specific practices, activities, and social relationships (Lave and Wenger 1991). These communities are constructed as unique and different from others, often fulfilling a specific need or purpose. Because of this, members are most likely aware of their role and relationship to other speech communities as part of normal functioning. Communities of practice range from total institutions such as prisons and mental institutions (Goffman 1961) to situations with more relaxed rules that range from schools to drama groups. For example, Michael Halliday (1978) reported on identity and the construction of underground speech communities in institutions and urban areas. His research on antilanguages in prisons provided insight into the construction of embedded speech communities that utilized dominant linguistic and discourse styles within a contrasting interpretive framework so that prisoners could effectively talk with agency using discourse associated with acceptance of their incarceration. Thus the speech community can be a symbolic entity that both creates and indexes its existence as a hidden product of society and the institutional structure.

While members of non-dominant speech communities often acknowledge and incorporate the standard, they do not control it or the knowledge associated with it. Perhaps one of the contexts where this is most evident is within the institution of education, especially in the USA. These institutions typically expose the tyranny of the standard, especially as it socializes children to the norms of cultural and communicative hegemony (cf. Briggs 1986). Educational institutions convey not only specific and specialized knowledge, but also the presumption that the prestige variety is more valuable than that acquired in conversations in the homes of those who do not characterize the dominant language (e.g. Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Woolard 1985). In fact, Bourdieu writes: "Integration into a single 'linguistic community', which is a product of the political domination that is endlessly reproduced by institutions capable of imposing universal recognition of the dominant language, is the condition for the establishment of relations of linguistic domination" (1991: 46). Thus antilanguage is more than resistance to hegemony. It is the simultaneous recognition of an oppositional discourse.

The speech community has had a complicated role in education as some educational psychologists and sociolinguists have assumed that only the middle class share the school speech community ideal. In fact, there have been many studies that reveal contrasts between home values toward literacy skills (e.g. Ward 1971; Heath 1983; Baquedano-López, this volume). These studies reveal that black and working-class children have not had practice in school prestige models. Yet the school is aware of the home speech community and its version of cultural capital, and it is designed to replace the home speech community with its own ideology rather than introduce another speech community. The result is that the school language is variously described as representing "the elitist traditions of education" (Adger 1998: 151) where there is only one acceptable variety. In contrast, the home acknowledges and at times incorporates both, and only chooses to abandon dominant discourse at times of civil unrest – or when representation and identity are called into question. Thus the

wider speech community learns the value of both discourses and the value of their representations. Unsurprisingly, there are many possible scenarios reported in the literature of how students might respond to this situation. One is that the school speech community is unsuccessful in convincing students that exchange has equivalent value and students introduce innovations in creating new values for these models. This is the case reported by Woolard regarding Catalan. She writes:

> we cannot read hegemony – saturation of consciousness – directly from the institutional domination of 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. (1985: 741)

In an effort to address poor performance of African American and Spanish-dominant children in the US educational system, some educators and linguists have suggested that there exists a conflict between home language and school language. This is also the case for youth who engage in hiphop culture and who have it in mind to expose the hegemonic ideology represented by the standard by employing African American and bilingual linguistic norms. Yet the conflict is not between the two – they are a part of each other and rely on each other for existence. Rather, conflict occurs with the education system and its attempt to assert hegemony.

6   CONCLUSION: POWER AND IDENTITY

Throughout this chapter I have attempted to demonstrate ways in which speech community represents the location of a group in society and its relationship to power. This relationship is important to understand how social actors move within and between their speech communities. Speech communities may be marginal and contested, some are part of dominant culture and others a part of practice that may encompass all of the above. I have introduced some of the involvedness inherent in each example of speech community to demonstrate that members actively engage these complexities of language and representation. Yet, three questions remain. How do speech communities manage to incorporate hegemonic norms and how do they also produce norms, values, and attitudes that do not incorporate hegemony and are in opposition to the dominant discourse? Finally, what is the role of researchers and theorists in the construction of this crisis?

In her work *Gender Trouble* (1990), Judith Butler discusses the inherent problems in the development of language of representation to reflect feminist theory. She writes: ''The domains of political and linguistic 'representation' set out in advance the criteria by which subjects themselves are formed, with the result that representation is extended only to what can be acknowledged as a subject. In other words, the qualification for being a subject must first be met before representation can be extended'' (1990: 2–3). Butler is concerned that the very language we use to refer to our speech communities and call them into recognition actually reinscribes the symbolic system of dominant culture. Yet, the discourse that introduces cultural difference both highlights the speech community and alters dominant discourse as

well. As Homi Bhabha explains, "It is in the emergence of the interstices – the overlap and displacement of domains of difference – that the intersubjective and collective experiences of *nationness*, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated" (1994: 2).

Perhaps one of the most persuasive examples of this is the development of the hiphop speech community. This community was conceived on the streets of New York's brown and black boroughs and bred according to African American counterlanguage practices (Morgan 2002). The hiphop nation is constructed around an ideology that representations and references (signs and symbols) are indexical and create institutional practices. While its originators hailed from the Caribbean, Latin America, and New York and New Jersey's black communities, they coalesced within African American cultural practices where norms and values are communicated through symbols and specific and often ritualized practices rather than through explicit institutions. These practices are simply referred to as the *WORD* – so that any culture that adopts hiphop must incorporate African American language ideology. This does not mean that youth belong to one world-wide speech community. But it does mean that like Guru and MC Solaar described earlier, their identity is tied to the power derived from a shared discourse and system of representation. With modernity, the accessibility of what were previously national and cultural boundaries has resulted in people from outside these cultures appropriating the language of speech communities with which they have no social or cultural relationship. In fact cultural conflict can arise when those who are familiar with communities where they may not share membership use a language or jargon for emphasis, play, or to align with an "outside" identity within the boundaries of their own communities. In this case the style of speaking may be readily identified as belonging to a particular community, but the value norms and expectations of the source community do not accompany it. What's more, the words and expressions may be used out of context and in ways considered inappropriate and offensive.

Researchers of speech communities have an especially difficult task because their job is often to contrast communities of speakers rather than identify the workings of the speech community. To paraphrase Edward Said, researchers must avoid promoting communities of interpretation as they market themselves as experts at the expense of recognizing the complexities within speech communities that may compromise their particular objectives (1978: 337, 345). This challenge will only increase as communities increase in access to each other and subsequently increase in complexity. It is therefore essential that researchers recognize speech communities on their own terms and be explicit about their methodologies, relationships, and interests to them.

Speech community is not a concept that unravels with conflict, complex situations, and shifts in identity. As Hall (1996) states: "Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language. But it is itself produced by a practice: 'discursive practice' – the practice of producing meaning. Since all social practices entail meaning, all practices have a discursive aspect. So discourse enters into the influences of all social practices" (201–2). Instead of problematizing the notion of speech community, conflicts highlight its efficacy in exploring the relationship between linguistics and identity, politics and society – in producing meaning.

The concept of speech community binds the importance of local knowledge and communicative competence in discursive activities so that members can identify insiders from outsiders, those passing as members, and those living in contact zones and borderlands. In a recent seminar, Homi Bhabha suggested that the main issue of modernity is no longer identity but citizenship. This statement is of particular significance to the study of speech communities because it immediately calls into question both the notion of standard language as representation and "proof" of citizenship as well as the ideological, political, and social forces at work that cause us all to claim or refuse membership. That is, the notion of the isolated and unconnected autonomous speech community can only exist within the most rigid confines of a linguistic science of the past.

The linguistic science of the future is indebted to speakers whose existence ties them to others in ways that validate their social lives at every turn. It is because of this that our explorations into speech communities and our proclamations of their existence must direct attention to the importance of identity, citizenship, and belonging. The concept of speech communities immediately introduces old and new political arguments, theories, and ideologies. This emergence brings changes within the speech community as implicit knowledge becomes engaged in active discourse and the speech community and its subjects are in turn changed by it.

NOTES

1   Of course concepts like mutual intelligibility and meaning are complex in and of themselves. The point here is that speech communities are also political and historical sites where social meaning is intrinsic in talk.

2   See Bucholtz and Hall (this volume) and Mercer (1994) for discussion of identity coming into question when it is in crisis.

3   This is true for the 1997 "Ebonics" case in the USA, as well as arguments among sociologists that participation in the speech community leads to unemployment (e.g. Wilson 1987, 1996; Massey and Denton 1993).

4   In speech communities where there is multiple contact across social class, status, and sometimes national origin, local ideologies of language often reflect heteroglossia (Bakhtin 1981), the shifting of styles or linguistic codes that exist within and often among communities.

5   Rampton (1998) argues that the comparison of speech communities limits the overall analysis of specific communities. Similarly, Irvine and Gal (2000) argue that complexities are missed because power within is not examined.

6   Also see Morgan (2002), Wodak et al. (1999), Zentella (1997), Heller (1995).

7   For example, 'blouson', the French word for jacket, would be 'zomblou'. Verlan is used widely in the suburbs of Paris and also incorporates Arabic slang as well.

8   Of course Solaar not only speaks French slang, but is an innovator.

9   "Le Bien, Le Mal," 1993. Guru with MC Solaar. Jazzmatazz. Chrysalis Records (EMI), New York.

10   This omission comes back to haunt the term since sociolinguists' notion of context began to differ greatly from that of anthropology (see below).

11   Of course I do not mean to suggest that Bloomfield was at fault here. Until as late as the 1960s, many linguists assumed that the contact situation that resulted from the Atlantic slave trade meant there was no mutual intelligibility among captives.

12   This is reprinted from 1968 ''The Speech Community'' ' in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (Macmillan), pp. 381–6.

13   This is to say nothing of the complex arguments necessary to assign pidgin, creole, semi-creole, or dialect designations for languages that arose from plantation contact situations.

14   Comedian Chris Rock's 1996 HBO television special, ''Bring the Pain,'' includes a hilariously angry routine regarding non-African Americans' repeated mention that Colin Powell, a black army general and later attorney general of the USA, spoke clearly.

15   They could also index an ideology that actually devalues dominant language norms.

16   Labov's (1972) first basic principle of social judgments is: ''social attitudes toward language are extremely uniform throughout a speech community'' (p. 248). He includes the footnote: ''In fact it seems plausible to define a speech community as a group of speakers who share a set of social attitudes towards language'' (fn. 40, p. 248). The argument here is that this is probable within the scope of the linguistic study. As I have argued elsewhere (Morgan 1994), varying attitudes may be a norm in some speech communities though a particular methodology may not capture it.

17   Rickford's respondents were a black woman and a white male. He argues that gender differences were not as important as race in this case.

18   The distinction here is similar to Labov's (1998) comparison of African American and General English components. Here, AAE includes usage across social class and other interactions and discourses where speakers use both dialects. GE refers to prestige and not white working-class usage unless otherwise indicated.

19   American advertising uses AAE linguistic and verbal expressions to represent urban sophistication as well as all social classes.

20   Smitherman (1991) provides a very useful discussion of this notion in her article on the significance of the name ''African American.'' Of course Berger and Luckman (1966) in their text on language as a construction of social reality discuss language as representing subjective and intersubjective worlds.

21   Pollard (1983) describes this as a Category II word ''in which words bear the weight of their phonological implications'' (p. 49).

22   Though Grice has explored some of these notions, his theory does not focus on multiple and contradictory interpretations of what is meant as a shared norm.

23   This incident took place as I was conducting fieldwork that included two of the women's families. All names have been changed as well as some details that might identify those involved. Of course, the outcome of this interaction would have an effect on the rest of my field experience.

24   Both terms are rude terms that refer to forms of rudeness.

25   During fieldwork in Jamaica I was warned that I should always assume that any goat I saw was closely watched by someone and belonged to somebody, whether I saw the person or not.

26   People in the hills assumed they were related since they shared the same last name and histories. This was, of course, a common occurrence at the end of plantation slavery where surnames were assigned irrespective of biological kinship.

27   Though in this case, one would normally acquiesce to Mrs. Hightower's interpretation because of her age.

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