Crossing

Module B.4

What does it mean to belong to a group?
What does it mean to NOT belong to a group?

Crossing

- "use of language varieties associated with social or ethnic groups that the speaker does not normally 'belong' to" (Rampton 1995)
- Limited to speech forms of a group to which you do not belong
  - Not code switching
  - Person doesn't want to 'become' member of other group
- "Language crossing involves code alternation by people who are not accepted members of the group associated with the second language that they are using …. This kind of switching involves a distinct sense of movement across social or ethnic boundaries and it raises issues of legitimacy which, in one way or another, participants need to negotiate in the course of their encounter." (Rampton 1995:485)

Use of Creole in London

Hewitt 1986

- British example: Creole use by white adolescents
- Functions
  - Competitive in verbal teasing rituals
  - Culturally, create fictive social identity
- Participants
  - Adolescent males
- Ends
  - Anti-authority (anti-status quo)
- How learned?
  - Mixed peer groups
  - Media

South Midlands, England

- Rampton 1995
- Varieties: speakers of Anglo, Asian, Afro-Caribbean ancestry
  - Creole
  - Stylized Asian English
  - Punjabi
- Audience and Setting
  - Peers, adults
- Ends
  - Resistance to adults
  - Challenging expectations about ethnicity

Theory of Language identity #2

- Le Page, Projection
  - Speech acts as acts of projection
  - "individual creates for himself the patterns of his linguistic behavior so as to resemble those of the group or groups with which from time to time he wishes to be identified, or so as to be unlike those from whom he wishes to be distinguished."
- Identity is with those one wishes to identify with
  - Limitations on behavior
    - One has to have knowledge from access to groups
      - To identify groups
      - To analyze behavior
    - One has to have motivation
    - One has to have the ability to modify behavior

Crossing Participants

- Networks
  - Possibly density: temporary 'permission' in networks with more creole contacts
  - Not always
- Adolescents
  - Hewitt > stopped crossing around 16 yrs old
  - Innovation and experimentation
- Gender (?)
  - Males
  - Less competitive games, less contact (?)
- Role of power
  - Usually 'downward'

Crossing Knowledge

- Networks
  - Mixed ethnic peer groups
  - Explicit and overt, or implicit, or covert learning
- Individuals
  - Friendships and chains of friends (indirect)
  - Cutler 1999: the target of the study had another white friend who passed on information from his contacts
- Media (movies, internet, music)
  - Display appropriate behavior for overt and covert linguistic behavior
  - Spread of reggae (e.g., among Pacific Islanders); hip hop (Hip Hop Nation in Africa and Asia)

Crossing Motivation

- Anti-authoritarianism, rebellion
  - Parallel to argots
  - Use of taboo and socially "inappropriate" language
- Ritualized practices
  - Insults
  - Verbal parrying
- Perception
  - Coolness, toughness
- May be tied to class, age, gender roles, etc.

Crossing Frequency (ability)

- Recall: not the goal to become a member of the group
- Cutler: sounds and words more frequent than syntax; prolonged use because few contacts to police use
- Hewitt
  - Avoided when Afro-Caribbean peers (males) were present
  - Strongest trigger were sounds, not syntax or lexical items
  1. Minimal
     - Most frequent
     - Anglo speakers, Asian speaker
  2. Extensive jocular
     - Frequent, but brief
     - Asian speakers
  3. Extensive serious
     - Less frequent
     - Asian speakers

Cultural appropriation or cultural appreciation?

Module B.4

Crossing Reactions

- Might expect that contact reduces racism

- Some reflection of acceptance
  - Bucholtz: students for getting rid of affirmative action were white nerds, rejecting any use of AAVE
- Some reflection of racism by users
  - Cutler: white male using AAE showed racists tendencies
  - Hewitt: Anglos use creole forms to parody black speech
- Ethnic group being used
  - Often negative reaction; seen as outsiders using important surface pointers (intersection of practice and participation)
  - Different acceptances if not dominant (power) group involved (e.g., Hip hop nation)

Oppositional power

- Oppositional power
  - **White** (dominant superstrate group)
    - Hyper educated standard
    - Translocal
    - Middle class university
  - **AAVE** (dominant substrate group)
    - Hyper working class vernacular
    - Translocal
    - Pan-AAE
- Asymmetrical use of crossing
  - Forms of groups with less power by those with historically more power (appropriation)
    - Inner circle whites
  - Forms of groups with more power by those with less power (assimilation?)