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Language Ideology and Linguistic Differentiation

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A language is simply a dialect that has an army and a navy – so goes a well-known saying in linguistics.[1] Although only semiserious, this dictum recognizes an important truth: The significance of linguistic differentiation is embedded in the politics of a region and its observers. Just as having an army presupposes some outside force, some real or putative opposition to be faced, so does identifying a language presuppose a boundary or opposition to other languages with which it contrasts in some larger sociolinguistic field. We focus on the ideological aspects of that linguistic differentiation – the ideas with which participants and observers frame their understanding of linguistic varieties and map those understandings onto people, events, and activities that are significant to them. With Silverstein (1979), Kroskrity, Schieffelin, and Woolard (1992), Woolard and Schieffelin (1994), and others, we call these conceptual schemes *ideologies* because they are suffused with the political and moral issues pervading the particular sociolinguistic field and are subject to the interests of their bearers' social position.

Linguistic ideologies are held not only by the immediate participants in a local sociolinguistic system. They are also held by other observers, such as the linguists and ethnographers who have mapped the boundaries of languages and peoples and provided descriptive accounts of them. Our attention here is therefore just as appropriately directed to those mappings and accounts as to their subject matter. There is no "view from nowhere," no gaze that is not positioned. Of course, it is always easier to detect positioning in the views of others, such as the linguists and ethnographers of an earlier era, than in one's own. Examining the activities of linguists a century or more ago reveals, via the wisdom of hindsight or at least via historical distance, the ideological dimensions of their work in drawing and interpreting linguistic boundaries. This historical inquiry also has a contemporary relevance, to the extent that early representations of sociolinguistic phenomena influenced later representations and even contributed to shaping the sociolinguistic scene itself.

Our discussion is less concerned with history per se, however, than with the dynamics of a sociolinguistic process. In exploring ideologies of linguistic differentiation, we are concerned not only with the ideologies' structure but also,

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and especially, with their consequences. First, we explore how participants' ideologies concerning boundaries and differences may contribute to language change. Second, we ask how the describer's ideology has consequences for scholarship, how it shapes his or her description of language(s). Third, we consider the consequences for politics, how linguistic ideologies are taken to authorize actions on the basis of linguistic relationship or difference.

To address these questions we have examined ethnographic and linguistic cases from several parts of the world, involving different kinds of linguistic differentiation. Since Africa and Europe are the sites of our own research, we have looked most particularly to these regions for examples of relevant ethnography, linguistics, and historical investigation. But whether in these parts of the world or elsewhere, in all the cases we have examined – those described in this paper and many others as well – we find some similarities in the ways ideologies "recognize" (or misrecognize) linguistic differences: how they locate, interpret, and rationalize sociolinguistic complexity, identifying linguistic varieties with "typical" persons and activities and accounting for the differentiations among them. We have identified three important semiotic processes by which this works: iconization, fractal recursivity, and erasure.

Before we offer more specific discussions of what these three processes are, let us note that all of them concern the way people conceive of links between linguistic forms and social phenomena. Those conceptions can best be explicated by a semiotic approach that distinguishes several kinds of sign relationships, including (as Peirce long ago suggested) the iconic, the indexical, and the symbolic.[2] It has become a commonplace in sociolinguistics that linguistic forms, including whole languages, can index social groups. As part of everyday behavior, the use of a linguistic form can become a pointer to (index of) the social identities and the typical activities of speakers. But speakers (and hearers) often notice, rationalize, and justify such linguistic indices, thereby creating linguistic ideologies that purport to explain the source and meaning of the linguistic differences. To put this another way, linguistic features are seen as reflecting and expressing broader cultural images of people and activities. Participants' ideologies about language locate linguistic phenomena as part of, and evidence for, what they believe to be systematic behavioral, aesthetic, affective, and moral contrasts among the social groups indexed. That is, people have, and act in relation to, ideologically constructed representations of linguistic differences. In these ideological constructions, indexical relationships become the ground on which other sign relationships are built.

The three semiotic processes we have identified are thus the means by which people construct ideological representations of linguistic differences. Examples will follow, but first let us describe the processes more particularly:

Iconization involves a transformation of the sign relationship between linguistic features (or varieties) and the social images with which they are linked. Linguistic features that index social groups or activities appear to be iconic representations of them, as if a linguistic feature somehow depicted or displayed a social group's inherent nature or essence. This process entails the attribution of cause and immediate necessity to a connection (between linguistic features and social groups) that may be only historical, contingent, or conventional. The iconicity of the ideological representation reinforces the implication of necessity. By picking out qualities supposedly shared by the social image and the linguistic image, the ideological representation – itself a sign – binds them together in a linkage that appears to be inherent.[3]

Fractal recursivity involves the projection of an opposition, salient at some level of relationship, onto some other level. For example, intragroup oppositions might be projected outward onto intergroup relations, or vice versa. Thus the dichotomizing and partitioning process that was involved in some understood opposition (between groups or linguistic varieties, for example) recurs at other levels, creating either subcategories on each side of a contrast or supercategories that include both sides but oppose them to something else. Reminiscent of fractals in geometry and the structure of segmentary kinship systems – as well as

other phenomena anthropologists have seen as involving segmentation or schismogenesis, such as nationalist ideologies and gender rituals[4] – the myriad oppositions that can create identity may be reproduced repeatedly, either within each side of a dichotomy or outside it. When such oppositions are reproduced within a single person, they do not concern contrasting *identities* so much as oppositions between *activities* or *roles* associated with prototypical social persons. In any case, the oppositions do not define fixed or stable social groups, and the mimesis they suggest cannot be more than partial. Rather, they provide actors with the discursive or cultural resources to claim and thus attempt to create shifting "communities," identities, selves, and roles, at different levels of contrast, within a cultural field.

Erasure is the process in which ideology, in simplifying the sociolinguistic field, renders some persons or activities (or sociolinguistic phenomena) invisible. Facts that are inconsistent with the ideological scheme either go unnoticed or get explained away. So, for example, a social group or a language may be imagined as homogeneous, its internal variation disregarded. Because a linguistic ideology is a totalizing vision, elements that do not fit its interpretive structure – that cannot be seen to fit – must be either ignored or transformed. Erasure in ideological representation does not, however, necessarily mean actual eradication of the awkward element, whose very existence may be unobserved or unattended to. It is probably only when the "problematic" element is seen as fitting some alternative, threatening picture that the semiotic process involved in erasure might translate into some kind of practical action to remove the threat, if circumstances permit.

By focusing on linguistic differences, we intend to draw attention to some semiotic properties of those processes of identity formation that depend on defining the self as against some imagined "Other." This is a familiar kind of process, one by now well known in the literature. Anthropologists, at least, are now well acquainted with the ways in which the Other, or simply the other side of a contrast, is often essentialized and imagined as homogeneous. The imagery involved in this essentializing process includes, we suggest, linguistic images – images in which the linguistic behaviors of others are simplified and seen as if deriving from those persons' essences rather than from historical accident. Such representations may serve to interpret linguistic differences that have arisen through drift or long-term separation. But they may also serve to influence or even generate linguistic differences in those cases where some sociological contrast (in presumed essential attributes of persons or activities) seems to require display.

In the hope that examples will illustrate and clarify these points, we have chosen three cases for discussion. One, from southern Africa, concerns the motivation of language change; the second, from West Africa, concerns linguistic description in grammars and dictionaries; and the third, from southeastern Europe, concerns political contestation.

The Motivation of Linguistic Change: The Nguni Languages' Acquisition of Clicks

Our first case concerns the Nguni languages of southern Africa (especially Zulu and Xhosa) and their acquisition of click consonants. Clicks were not originally part of the consonant repertoire of the Nguni languages – the southernmost branch of the Bantu language family – but were acquired from the Khoi languages, indigenous to southern Africa at the time the Bantu languages arrived there. The question is why this change happened. It is common enough for otherwise unrelated languages in a geographical area, given sufficient time, to come to have certain resemblances to one another, or "areal characteristics." In this case it is possible to see something of how the resemblance came about. (We draw on work by Herbert 1990 and others, including Irvine 1992.)

Because they are conspicuous sounds that are unusual in the phonological repertoires of the world's languages, clicks have drawn the attention of many visitors and newcomers to southern Africa over the centuries. Many early European observers compared them with

animal noises: hens' clucking, ducks' quacking, owls' hooting, magpies' chattering, or "the noise of irritated turkey-cocks" (Kolben 1731: 32). Others thought clicks were more like the sounds of inanimate objects, such as stones hitting one another. To these observers and the European readers of their reports, such iconic comparisons suggested (before our more enlightened days, at least) that the speakers of languages with clicks were in some way subhuman or degraded, to a degree corresponding to the proportion of clicks in their consonant repertoires. Commenting on clicks, the linguist F. Max Müller wrote (1855: lxxix):

> I cannot leave this subject without expressing at least a strong hope that, by the influence of the Missionaries, these brutal sounds will be in time abolished, at least among the Kaffirs [Zulu and Xhosa], though it may be impossible to eradicate them in the degraded Hottentot dialects [i.e., Khoi, which had more of them].

Clicks must also have sounded very foreign to Bantu-language speakers when they first arrived in southern Africa. The very concept of speaking a foreign language seems, unsurprisingly, to have been focused on the Khoisan languages, which were observably full of clicks. Thus the Xhosa term *úkukhumsha* [Zulu *ukuhúmusha*] "speak a foreign language, interpret" borrows its stem from Khoi, as in Nama *khom* "speak" (see Louw 1977: 75, which also includes some other inferences, based on Nguni loans from Khoi, about early Nguni attitudes toward Khoisan-speakers).[5] Yet it was apparently for the very reason of their conspicuous foreignness that the clicks were first adopted into the Nguni languages, providing a means for Nguni-speakers themselves to express social difference and linguistic abnormality. The principal route by which clicks entered the Nguni languages seems to have been via an avoidance register, which required certain lexical items in everyday speech to be avoided or altered out of respect. By adopting clicks, Nguni-speakers could create lexical substitutions that were conspicuously different from their everyday equivalents.

The Nguni avoidance (or respect) regis called *hlonipha*, is reported for all the Ng languages and is evidently of some antiqu among them. It also occurs in Southern Sot another Bantu language in the region and only one outside the Nguni group to includ click consonant. In all these languages, h ever, *hlonipha* is tending to fall out of today. It is still practiced among rural Xh women (see Finlayson 1978, 1982, 1984 examples of recent usage), and perhaps a among some rural Zulu, but it seems to h become rare for Zulu in urban contexts. P lished sources on Zulu *hlonipha*, while prov ing extensive lists of its vocabulary and so information on use, describe the practices decades ago (see, for example, Bryant 19 Doke 1961; Doke and Vilakazi 1958; K 1950), and Herbert (1990: 308) reports t "many urban Zulu postgraduate stude have described their reading of the *hloni* literature as 'like reading about a fore culture'."

The norms of *hlonipha* behavior prescr modesty and a display of respect in the p ence or neighborhood of certain senior affi and, in precolonial times at least, of roya The norms apply to gesture and clothing well as words: to *hlonipha* is to avoid eye c tact, cover one's body, and restrain one's affe ivity. Talk about bodily functions, for exam is to be avoided or, if not avoidable, to mentioned only in conventional euphemis What the descriptions of *hlonipha* focus most, however, is the importance of cover over or avoiding the linguistic expression sound-sequences that would enunci respected persons' names. Included in the p hibition are not just the names themselves any word containing one of the name's c syllables.

The *hlonipha* words are thus lexical alt nants that enable speakers to avoid utter respected persons' names and any other w containing sounds similar to the name's root stem. So, for example, if the name of woman's husband's father happens to sou like *imvubu* 'hippopotamus', that wom must call hippos *incubu* instead. Where nan are composed of meaningful expressions, was traditionally the case, many ordin

words might be affected by the need to avoid name-sounds. As Bryant (1949: 221) notes,

> Thus, if one of the [respected] persons were named *uMutí* (Mr. Tree), not only would this (the ordinary) word for 'a-tree' be disused, and the *Hlonipa* word, *umCakantshi*, substituted for it, but, further, every other word containing within its root the particle, *ti*, would be similarly avoided; thus, for *uku Tíba* would be used *ukuPúnga*; for *umTákatí, umKúnkuli*; for *ukuTí, ukuNki*, and so on.

The respectful substitute term could derive from a descriptive or metaphorical construction, or it could derive from patterned phonological shifts altering a name-word's syllable-initial consonants. Although there were several different patterns, the most common kinds of phonological shifts were for stem-initial consonants to become [+ Coronal], especially the coronal affricates *tš* and *dž* (*j*), or to become clicks.[6] Since – at least in the early phases of the process – the expressions from which names were constructed used ordinary Bantu roots, which did not include clicks and most probably did not include coronal affricates either (Herbert 1990: 305; Finlayson 1982: 49), a convenient way to construct a *hlonipha* word would have been to substitute one of these "foreign" sounds for the offending consonant. The result was a click-laden respect vocabulary, perhaps consisting partly of idiosyncratic, ad hoc formulations but also including words that were widely known as *hlonipha* alternants. The fact that the respect vocabulary shows such a high percentage of click consonants, compared with the everyday vocabulary, is one of the major pieces of evidence for supposing that it was the vehicle for these consonants' entry into Nguni phonological repertoires.[7]

Table 17.1 gives some examples of *hlonipha* words in Zulu. The first group of words illustrates consonant substitutions of various kinds, especially substitutions of a click for a nonclick consonant. These words are presumably name-avoidance forms; so, if a respected person's name sounded like *aluka* "graze, weave," the speaker must refer to grazing as *acuka* instead. The *hlonipha* word *injušo* (for *indaba*, "affair") is a lexical substitution occasioned by avoidance of the name Ndaba, a Zulu royal ancestor.

The second group of words in table 17.1 are forms referring to persons requiring respect because of their social positions. The creation of *hlonipha* alternants may therefore have been occasioned as a respectful way to refer to those positions, and not necessarily because of a need to avoid particular names that might be based upon these stems. Bryant (1949: 220) documents this process, which was not limited to words referring to persons: "For a Zulu woman to call a porcupine by its proper name, iNgungumbane, were but to provoke it to increased depredation in her fields; therefore it must be referred to 'politely' as 'the-little-woman', or umFazazana." The third group of words in table 17.1 illustrates the fact that the substitution of clicks for corresponding nonclick consonants sometimes created homonyms in the *hlonipha* vocabulary.

That the *hlonipha* vocabulary was the vehicle for the entry of clicks into the Nguni consonant inventories is argued in greater detail in Herbert's (1990) paper. As he points out, however, some questions remain. Why would

Table 17.1 Zulu hlonipha (respect) vocabulary examples

	Ordinary	*Hlonipha*
(1)		
graze, weave	*aluka*	*acuka*
be dejected	*jaba*	*gxaba*
affair	*indaba*	*injušo*
hippopotamus	*imvubu*	*incubu*
lion	*imbube*	*injube*
house	*indlu*	*incumba*
our	-ithu	-itšu
thy	-kho	-to
(2)		
my father	*ubaba*	*utšatša*
brother-in-law	*umlamu*	*umcamu*
chief	*inkosi*	*inqobo, inqotšana (dim.)*
(3)		
swing	*lenga*	*cenga*
annoy	*nenga*	*cenga*

Source: Doke & Vilakazi 1958
Note: c, q, x = clicks (gx = voiced click) ɓ = implosive bilabial stop

particular name-avoidance alternants be used, or even known, more widely than within the immediate circle of a respected person's dependents? And why are clicks now found in everyday words as well as in the respect vocabulary?

The first of these questions arises partly because the ethnographic literature tends to focus on a narrow portion of *hlonipha* behavior and so makes the practice appear more limited and idiosyncratic than it actually was. Drawing on participants' statements, observers emphasize the relationship between a married woman and her husband's father as the "explanation" of the *hlonipha* practice. That is, all *hlonipha* speech is supposedly based on the individual woman's respectful avoidance of a particular man's name. Were this the extent of the usage, of course, *hlonipha* alternants would be created idiosyncratically; each woman would have a different set (and men would use none); only a few vocabulary items would be affected for any particular speaker; and a respect alternant would disappear upon the daughter-in-law's death.

The focus on the daughter-in-law/father-in-law relationship seems, however, to be a folk rationalization – a piece of language ideology – that corresponds only in part to the distribution of actual usages. A wider distribution would be entailed even if *hlonipha* were practiced only by married women, since a married woman owes respect to all the senior members of her husband's lineage and household, and the respect terms deriving from these names would affect all women married into the same patrilineal, patrilocal community. But there is abundant documentation also of a much more widespread phenomenon involving male as well as female speakers, court as well as domestic contexts, and various kinds of respected beings. From Krige (1950: 31) we learn, for example, that Zulu *hlonipha* terms were also used by men to avoid uttering the name of the mother-in-law, though the custom was "not so strict" for men as it was for women. Furthermore, "the whole tribe" must *hlonipha* the name of the king or chief, while those resident at the royal court must *hlonipha* the names of the king's father and grandfather as well (Krige 1950: 31, 233). Bryant (1949: 220) adds, "The men, or indeed the whole clan, may Hlonipa the name of a renowned chief or ancestor, as, for instance, the Zulus, a few generations ago, Hlonipa'd the words, iMpande (root) and iNdlela (path), calling them, respectively, iNgxabo and iNyatuko, owing to certain then great personages being named uMpande and uNdlela." Recall, also, Bryant's statement about the porcupine, to which he adds similar comments about cats, red ants, snakes, and lightning.

Among Xhosa, too, *hlonipha* repertoires were relatively large and widespread, as Finlayson's research indicates. A brief transcript of a conversation between two rural women (Finlayson 1984: 139) shows that more than 25 percent of the words used are *hlonipha*. These women had some eight or nine affines in common, whose name-sounds were thus being avoided. But although the women's family members could point to particular persons who were being shown respect in this conversation,[8] it is not always obvious how the avoided words relate to their name-sounds. Indeed, some *hlonipha* words are or have become disconnected from specific name-avoidances, serving instead, as Finlayson (1984: 140) notes, as a "core" respect vocabulary consisting "of words which are generally known and accepted as *hlonipha* words," used as a display of respect regardless of the particulars of individual names.[9]

In short, the daughter-in-law who avoids uttering her father-in-law's name-sounds is the cultural image, in Nguni language ideology, to which the respect register is linked. She provides the Nguni prototype for the respectful modest behavior required of dependents and outsiders (nonmembers of a patrilineage, in her case). *Hlonipha* practice is not confined, however, to that particular in-law relationship. Instead, that relationship merely provides the model for what is actually a more widespread phenomenon, both socially, as regards the range of speakers and settings, and linguistically, as regards the range of words affected by the practice.

If clicks entered these languages via the respect vocabulary, how did they come to be found also in ordinary vocabulary? There are probably two routes by which click-including

words could have entered the everyday lexicon. As Herbert (1990: 308–9) notes, the adoption of clicks in *hlonipha* would have made them more familiar as sounds and therefore more likely to be retained in other lexical borrowings from the Khoi languages (i.e., words borrowed for quite other reasons, such as place names and terms for Khoi specialty activities and goods). The other source for click-bearing everyday words is the *hlonipha* vocabulary itself, because some *hlonipha* words may have gradually lost their "respectful" aura over time and passed over into everyday vocabulary. There, in turn, they would be subject to replacement by new avoidance forms.

This type of process, in which respect alternants behave like currency in inflationary conditions, is known to have occurred in other parts of the world (see Irvine 1992). The process seems to be hastened when speakers strive to mark their behavior as being extraordinarily respectful or conscientious. As Kunene (1958: 162) remarks for Southern Sotho *hlonepha*, some speakers go so far as to replace almost all stems in daily vocabulary "due to an exaggerated loyalty to the custom, or to a competitive spirit, in order to outdo So-and-So, or to a desire to make assurance doubly sure . . . " In such circumstances, respect vocabulary, overused, eventually becomes commonplace and everyday and must be replaced by terms more conspicuously special.

Thus, by means of the conspicuous click consonants, seen as *icons* of "foreignness" in the early years of the process, the contrast between Nguni and Khoi consonant repertoires was mobilized to express social distance and deference within Nguni. To put this another way, a cultural framework for understanding linguistic difference at one level (the difference between Bantu and Khoi languages) was the basis for constructing difference at another level (a difference in registers within a particular Bantu language). This is an example of what we mean by recursivity. It is a process that led to phonological change in the Nguni languages, introducing click consonants into a special register that eventually began to leak, as respect registers will.

Notice that this idea of clicks as emblematically "foreign" and of their utterance as signaling deference ideologically emphasizes the sharpness of a boundary between Nguni and Khoi, and the domination of Nguni-speakers over Khoi-speakers. What the ideology ignores, that is, erases, is the historically attested complexity of Nguni-Khoi relations. Many Khoi were multilingual, living on the margins of Nguni society, moving in and out of it as their fortunes fell or rose. Some Khoi, moreover, served Nguni as traders and ritual specialists; some Nguni men took Khoi wives, and some Khoi men took Nguni wives; and some Nguni entered Khoi society as leaderless refugees, outcast from Nguni chiefdoms as a result of political disputes (Denoon 1992; Giliomee 1989; Harinck 1969; Prins and Lewis 1992). Another kind of erasure occurred when some European observers, writing about *hlonipha* after the power of precolonial kingdoms and chiefdoms had declined, described it as "women's speech" – ignoring its political dimension and its use by men.

This case is interesting for many reasons, among them the fact that its main outlines are precolonial and involve language ideologies other than the European or European-derived. However, it is hardly the only instance of the ideological mediation of language change. More familiar to a sociolinguistic audience is Labov's (1963) classic study of vowel change on Martha's Vineyard. Contrasts among ethnic groups of islanders (Yankees, Portuguese, and Indians) in the 1930s were replaced by a contrast between islanders and mainlanders in the 1960s. Islander phonology diverged ever more sharply from mainland forms after the development of the tourist industry made that contrast more socially significant than local, intra-island differences. Although Labov did not explore the content of the language ideology giving rise to these changes, the case seems to beg for just this kind of analysis and illustrates language change as an ideologically fueled process of increasing divergence. We can call the divergence ideologically mediated because it depended on local images of salient social categories that shifted over time.

Linguistic Descriptions of Senegalese Languages

Our second case concerns the work of nineteenth-century European linguists and ethnographers who described the languages of Senegal, particularly Fula, Wolof, and Sereer. The question we explore is how representations of Senegalese languages and peoples were influenced by the ideologies of European observers interacting with Africans (who had ideologies of their own) in a complex sociolinguistic situation. The ways these languages were identified, delimited, and mapped, the ways their relationships were interpreted, and even the ways they were described in grammars and dictionaries were all heavily influenced by an ideology of racial and national essences. This essentializing move, when applied to Senegalese languages, involved the three semiotic processes we have discussed. Although our main concern is with nineteenth-century accounts, their representations of language have had some long-lasting effects, as we shall suggest.

Most linguists today agree that Fula, Wolof, and Sereer are three distinct but related languages forming a "Senegal group" within the Atlantic branch of the Niger-Congo language family. The languages in this group do not now constitute a dialect chain. Still, their geographical distributions overlap because of multilingualism and intermingling of speakers. Within the present-day country of Senegal, in the region north of the Gambia River (see Figure 17.1), Fula is most concentrated in the northeast and Sereer most concentrated in the south, but the three languages do not sort out into neatly discrete territories. Within this region, too, is a set of small linguistic islands – villages where still other languages are spoken. (These

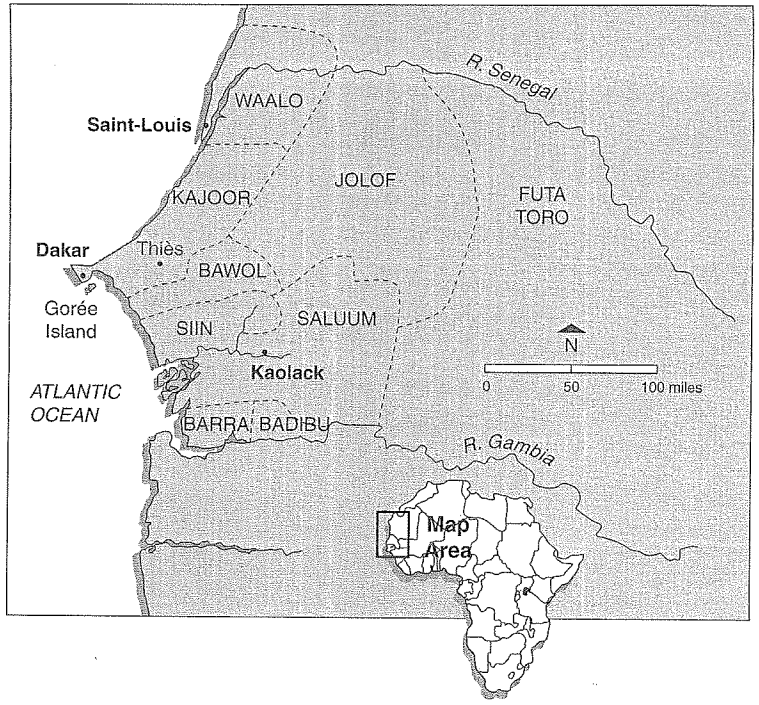

Figure 17.1 *Geographical region of present-day Senegal and The Gambia, showing precolonial Senegalese states circa 1785 (boundaries approximate) and some modern cities.*

villages are located near the city of Thiès. In precolonial times they were enclaves within the territory of the kingdom of Kajoor and subject to its rule. See figure 17.1 for the region's precolonial kingdoms and some major cities.) These other languages, now known to linguists as the Cangin languages, form a group belonging to the Atlantic family, which is very diverse, but not to the "Senegal group," from which most linguists consider them quite different (see Wilson 1989). A century ago, however, Fula, Wolof, and Sereer were mapped as occupying separate territories; most linguists considered Fula unrelated genealogically to Wolof and Sereer; and Sereer itself was thought to include the varieties now termed Cangin.

Why have these representations of the Senegalese linguistic scene changed? Part of the answer lies, of course, in the greater accumulation of linguistic observations, the greater care in their recording, and the more stringent principles of genealogical classification that have characterized twentieth-century linguistics. Moreover, the territorial distributions of these languages have been affected by population movements during the colonial and postcolonial periods. But more is involved than the onward march of linguistic science and changing demographics. There have also been changes in what observers expected to see and how they interpreted what they saw.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the languages of sub- Saharan Africa were scarcely known to outsiders. A comprehensive survery of the world's languages (Hervas y Panduro 1800–5), published in 1805 and occupying six volumes, devoted only one page to African languages other than Arabic. During the next several decades, however, as European interests expanded into the interior of the continent, the task of mapping African languages was so enthusiastically pursued that by 1881 Robert Needham Cust was able to present to that year's Orientalist Congress a schedule of 438 languages and 153 dialectal subdivisions that filled in the entire map of Africa (Cust 1883).

At the most immediate level, the study of African languages involved control over communication with local populations, communication that would otherwise have to rely on African interpreters. Also important, however, were the ethnological, political, and cultural implications that were presumed to follow from the discovery of language boundaries and relationships. If languages were "the pedigree of nations," as Samuel Johnson had said, then identifying languages was the same thing as identifying "nations" and a logical first step in comparing, understanding, and ordering their relations to each other and to Europeans. As Lepsius (1863: 24) wrote (in the introduction to his proposal for a universal orthography),

> From the relations of separate languages, or groups of languages, to one another, we may discover the original and more or less intimate affinity of the nations themselves ... [Thus] will the chaos of the nations in [Africa], Asia, America, and Polynesia, be gradually resolved into order, by the aid of linguistic science.[10]

Actually, for many post-Enlightenment scholars, languages coincided with nations in a cultural or spiritual sense but preceded any political realization of nationhood. As the expression of the spiritual (or even, some thought, biological) essences of particular human collectivities, languages were regarded as natural entities out there to be discovered – natural in the sense that they were consequences of a variable human nature, not the creations of any self-conscious human intervention. But if languages were prior to human political activity, they could then serve as its warrant, identifying populations and territories that could be suitably treated as political unities, whether self-governing nation-states (in the case of the European powers) or units for colonial administration.

By 1883, when Cust's survey of African languages was published, the European imperial powers were fully engaged in the "scramble for Africa" in which they divided the continent among their colonial empires. Concomitantly, Cust and others writing in the last decades of the century no longer normally referred to the speakers of African languages as "nations" but instead as "tribes" or "races," a change that reflects, among other things, Africans' loss of

political autonomy – or at least their right to political autonomy in European eyes. Although some of those "tribes" are best understood as the population subject to a particular precolonial polity, to describe them in terms of language and customs made it possible to imply that indigenous political structures were epiphenomenal and dispensable.

Cust, a retired administrator from British India, likened his task to other imperial administrative projects (1883: 6–7):

> With such a wealth of Materials pouring in upon me from every quarter, and a deepening conviction of the importance of the task, as well as the difficulty, I could only go on, and ... lay down clear and distinct principles upon which this work should be constructed. Possessed of a trained capacity for order and method, a strong will and love for steady work, which is the characteristic of old Indians, I had to grapple with this entangled subject, just as twenty-five years ago I should have grappled with the affairs of a District in India which had got into disorder, or with the Accounts of a Treasury which had fallen into arrears.

Cust acknowledged that his task was difficult, but he never doubted the possibility that languages *could* be definitively identified and mapped, or that they corresponded to separate tribes inhabiting discrete territories. What was needed was to clear away the confusion of alternative and "unnecessary" names (pp. 10–11), to "avoid a lax phraseology," and to "place one foot firmly down upon Geographical facts, and the other upon such a statement of Linguistic facts as seem to my judgment sufficient" (p. 7). These principles being rigorously followed, any linguistic information that could not be made to fit the map was simply to be excluded because (Cust concluded) it did not exist: It was an error or fantasy. "Unless he [Cust's cartographer] can find a place in his Map for the tribe, the Language can find no place in my Schedule" (p. 8). Functional or superposed varieties, multilingualism, polysemous language labels, and contested boundaries were incompatible with this approach.

These assumptions were by no means limited to Cust or to British investigators, who, in any case, relied heavily on an international cadre of missionaries to conduct the basic fieldwork. By the late nineteenth century, European scholars of language, whatever their nationality, their particular opinions about grammatical forms and comparative methods, or their connection with specific colonial policies, generally concurred on many basic points. They had acquired a firm belief in linguistics' scientific basis, the naturalness and distinctness of its objects of study, and the relevance of linguistic classifications for models of evolutionary progress. Assuming, too, that ethnic groups were normally monolingual and that there was some primordial relationship between language and the particular "spirit" of a nation, they thought it obvious that the study of language could serve as a tool for identifying ethnic units, classifying relationships among peoples, and reconstructing their history. Ideas like these, then, informed the efforts of mid- to late-nineteenth-century scholars, administrators, military men, and missionaries who set about describing the languages of Senegal.[11]

The linguistic situation they encountered, insofar as we can reconstruct it today, involved a complex regional system in which linguistic repertoires were – as they still are – bound up with political and religious relationships. Fula had the strongest connection with Islamic orthodoxy because it was associated with the region's first converts to Islam in the eleventh century and with the strongest proponents of the late-eighteenth-century Muslim revival. Sereer, in contrast, was associated with resistance to Islam and with the preservation of pre-Islamic ritual practices. As a French missionary remarked (Lamoise 1873: vii), "The *marabouts* [Muslim clerics] have invented this false adage: whoever speaks Sereer cannot enter heaven." Wolof, meanwhile, was the dominant language in the coastal kingdoms where the French first established outposts, and it served as a language of politics and trade in other parts of the region as well.

Wolof's role in the political life of Senegal apparently dates back to the fifteenth-century heyday of the Jolof Empire, a state then dominating most of the region. In Jolof, whose very

name is connected with the Wolof language, Wolof was the language of a political administration sufficiently centralized to keep the language fairly uniform geographically. (Arabic, not Wolof, was the official language of religion, however, although many of the Muslim clerics in the days of the Jolof Empire were probably of Fula-speaking origin.) This sociolinguistic pattern extended beyond the territories Jolof governed directly and persisted for centuries after the empire's breakup in the mid-sixteenth century. So even in the nineteenth century, in the kingdoms of Siin and Saluum (see fig. 17.1) – client states to Jolof's south which may never have been administered by it directly but were within its international sphere – Wolof lexicon was used for political offices and Wolof language for the conduct of high-level political relations, even though much of the population probably spoke Sereer as a language of the home.[12] In consequence many Sereer-speakers in the south were (and are) bilingual in Wolof, while Wolof-speakers further north resist acquiring Sereer, which many of them associate with low-ranking, heathen peasants.

European observers in the mid- to late nineteenth century interpreted this regional situation in terms of a supposed history of race relations, migrations, and conquests. Assuming that a language ought to have a distinct territory and nation (or ethnic group or race) associated with it, scholars interpreted other kinds of language distributions as "mixtures," departures from some original linguistic and territorial purity. Assuming further that black Africans were essentially primitive and simple-minded people who knew no social organization more complex than the family group, these scholars explained African social hierarchy, multilingualism, and conversions to Islam in terms of conquering races from the north who supposedly brought Islam, the state, and some admixture of Caucasian blood and language to the region by force of arms and intellectual superiority. Fula-speakers, some of whom are lighter-skinned than their Wolof neighbors, were deemed "higher" in race and intelligence. Accorded an origin in Upper Egypt, they were thought to have brought their "superior" religion, hierarchical social organization, and language to bear upon the Wolof, who in turn (perhaps along with the Manding, a people to the southeast) influenced the "simple" Sereer.[13]

Informed by these notions, the language-mapping project was thus an effort not only to discover what languages were spoken where but also to disentangle the supposed history of conquests and represent legitimate territorial claims. In regions where the language of state or of an aristocracy differed from the domestic speech of the state's subjects, as was the case in some areas of Senegal, only one of these languages could be put on the map. In many such cases (Siin and Saluum, for example) it was the political language that was omitted from the map – removed just as the African state apparatus was to be.

Of particular interest with regard to language mapping are the military expeditions led in 1861 and 1864–5 by Colonel Pinet-Laprade, the French commander at Gorée Island, and General Faidherbe, military governor of the French colony at Saint-Louis. Part of the effort to extend French military domination to the east and south, these expeditions carried out research and cartography along with their military objectives. Expedition reports, published in the official journal *Annuaire du Sénégal*, were accompanied by linguistic analyses, ethnographic notices, and a detailed map. The map (Faidherbe 1865), which shows towns and villages, lakes and rivers, and the frontiers between the French colony and the existing African states, also shows neatly drawn "lines of separation" between supposedly distinct Wolof and Sereer populations. Similar lines were drawn between each of these and the Manding, further south and east. The map does not extend as far as the main areas where Fula might be spoken in a village context, but it does show an area of "Peuls" – Fula-speakers – set off in a similar manner. These populations, identified by language, are thus accorded distinct territories in the map's representation of the supposed relationship between language, population, and territory.

To produce this representation, the cartographers had to ignore the multilingualism that characterized indigenous political life in the southern regions. But doing away with indigenous political institutions was the ultimate

purpose anyway. Since the French colonizers' conception of regional history was that the Sereer had been enslaved and tyrannized by Wolof and/ or Manding aristocrats and Muslim clerics, France would be justified in overthrowing these oppressors and substituting French rule. Until this was accomplished, and the French *mission civilisatrice* could get properly underway, wrote Pinet-Laprade (1865: 147), the populations of "countries like Siin and Saluum ... could not attempt any progress, because of the state of stupefaction *[abrutissement]* in which they were held under the regime of the Gelwaar [aristocratic lineages]." As for "Sereer" further north (i.e., Cangin), who, Pinet-Laprade suggested, were less thoroughly dominated by the Wolof state of Kajoor in which they formed an enclave, they were a simple, childlike people who would be easily led (by France) once the threat of Kajoor was removed:

> [The enclave populations] are, like all peoples in infancy, very little advanced along the way of social organization [*association*]: they are generally grouped by families, in the vicinity of their fields. This state of affairs will facilitate the action we are called upon to take on them, because we will not have to overturn established authorities, sever close ties, or combat blind fanaticism. (Pinet-Laprade 1865: 155)

Notice that the mapping project involves our three semiotic processes. The language map depicted the relationship ideologically supposed to obtain between language, population, and territory (*iconization*), but it could only do so by tidying up the linguistic situation, removing multilingualism and variation from the picture (*erasure*). The multilingualism was supposed to have been introduced, along with religious and political complexity, through a history of conquest and conversion that paralleled the European conquest and the hierarchical relationships thought to obtain between Europeans and Africans – relationships of white to black, complex to simple, and dominant to subordinate. That is, relationships between Europeans and Africans were the implicit model for a history of relationship within Africa itself (*recursivity*).

This putative hierarchy of racial essence and conquests supposedly explained not onl multilingualism but also the specific characte istics and relationships of the three Africa languages. Most linguists of the time, and ir deed for generations afterward, refused to se Fula as genetically related to Wolof and Seree at all, seeking its kin among Semitic language instead. And Fula's linguistic characteristic such as its syllable structure and its noun cla sification system, were taken by scholars suc as Guiraudon (1894) and Tautain (1885), a well as Faidherbe (1882), as emblems of it speakers' "delicacy" and "intelligence" as com pared to speakers of Wolof. The Wolof lar guage, these scholars claimed, was "les supple, less handy" than Fula and signale less intelligent minds.[14] Meanwhile, Seree was considered the language of primitiv simplicity.

To represent Sereer, with its complex morpl ology, as "simple" compared to Wolof – a Father Lamoise, the author of the first substar tial grammar of Sereer (Lamoise 1873 claimed it was – seems to us something of a uphill battle. It required paying selective atter tion, regularizing grammatical structures, an interpreting complexities and variations a "interference." Accordingly, Lamoise sug gested that if Sereer now deviated from it original purity and simplicity – the languag God had placed among these simple people the deviations were due to "errors and vices (1873: 329): either the errors of fetishism int which Sereers had fallen, or the vicious influ ence of Islam and its Wolof perpetrators. Th missionary's task in describing Sereer was t retrieve as much of the pure language as pos sible and, Lamoise implied, to purge it of erro The task was difficult, for, as he commente darkly (in a section of his grammar discussin figures of speech), "everywhere, as one ca see, the infernal serpent is to be found (1873: 284).

One way to retrieve Sereer's original purit was to select the variety that seemed to hav the fewest traces of interference from Wolof c Islam. Lamoise selected the regional variety c Sereer spoken in Siin as the most "pure," yet

was still flawed and inadequate. Apparently rejecting or downplaying words and expressions he thought came from Wolof, he also seems to have avoided registers or texts that might incorporate a relatively large number of Wolof loans, such as aristocrats' political discourse relating to the state.[15] Since linguistic purity was, in his view, primarily a matter of returning to a divinely inspired condition, the purest Sereer of all was exemplified in the religious discourse he and his assistants could produce when translating Catholic prayers and religious writings. Actual prayers by Sereers themselves would not do, "since the rare aspirations that emerge from the mouths of the Sereers ... are far too incomplete and inadequate" (1873: 333).

Even while presenting Sereer as a language that contrasted with Wolof, however, Lamoise organized his description from a Wolof starting point, emphasizing Sereer's departures from a Wolof grammatical norm. His grammar of Sereer was modeled upon a grammar of Wolof recently published by his religious superior, the Bishop of Dakar (Kobès 1869). These descriptions of the two languages, though organized in parallel, highlight – perhaps even maximize – their differences by erasing variation and overlap. Just as Lamoise's description of Sereer and his text citations removed (among other things) most of the lexicon and discourse types associated with Wolof, so too the descriptions of Wolof tended to purge those registers connected with non-Islamic ritual (such as the language of non-Islamic portions of circumcision ceremonies) in which some vocabulary and expressions might be identified as "Sereer."

Each language, in short, was represented in an impoverished way to differentiate it from the other and to accord with an ideology about its essence. At the same time, regional varieties that seemed to overlap were ignored. An example would be the variety of Sereer spoken in Baol, which has been reported as a mix. Pinet-Laprade (1865: 135) called it a language "derived from Sérère-Sine ... and from Wolof"; a more recent linguist (de Tressan 1953) called it "Sinsin [i.e., the Siin variety of Sereer], penetrated lexically by Wolof." Unsurprisingly, this variety has never been studied in its own right.

The same notions of language purity that led nineteenth-century linguists to ignore "mixed" varieties, multilingualism, and expressions they could attribute to linguistic borrowing also discouraged research on African regional dialectology. Once a variety had been declared to belong to the "same" language as another, already-described variety, there was no reason to investigate it, unless its speakers stubbornly refused to speak anything else. So the languages today called Cangin – spoken by "Sereers" living northwest of Siin, in enclaves within the kingdom of Kajoor – were but little documented until the 1950s and 1960s. Since their speakers obligingly used Wolof in dealings with Europeans and other outsiders and had little contact with Sereer-speakers farther south, there was no pressing need for missionaries or administrators to worry about the fact that these ways of speaking failed to resemble the Sereer of Siin.

The real question is why these Cangin varieties were ever called Sereer at all. The difference was conspicuous enough to have been noticed early on by Faidherbe, whose 1865 report on Sereer includes some notes on one of the Cangin languages. But he and other European writers treated this diversity as dialect, rather than language, differentiation. A particularly important reason Faidherbe and others assigned the Cangin group to Sereer, despite linguistic differences, was that these people were called "Sereer" by their Wolof neighbors, who apply that label in a fairly sweeping way to non-Muslim peasant populations in the region regardless of linguistic niceties. Since French colonists had intensive contacts with Wolof well before penetrating any of the areas of "Sereer" occupation, Wolof identifications of other populations seem to have been accepted and imposed on language identifications even when the linguistic facts pointed in very different directions.[16]

Also supporting the "Sereer" label was the fact that the Cangin-speakers' social life fit relatively well with European notions of Sereer "primitive simplicity" – better, at least, than did the social arrangements of Siin. The Cangin-speakers' small egalitarian village communities, their resistance to Islam, their agricultural economy, and their relative lack of interest in military matters were characteristics thought to be typical of black Africans in general when uninfluenced by waves of conquest from outside, and of Sereers in particular. Since a language reflected the cultural or spiritual essence of a collectivity of speakers, the Cangin languages must be Sereer, for their speakers seemed to fit the ethnic label on other grounds. The reasoning was similar to that which rejected Fula's linguistic resemblance to Wolof or Sereer on grounds of supposed cultural and racial difference.

In sum, the Europeans who described these Senegalese languages in the nineteenth century saw their differentiation as reflecting differences in mentality, history, and social organization among their speakers. Working from an ideology that linked language with national and racial essences, European linguists represented the particular characteristics of Senegalese languages as emblematic of these supposed essential differences, which could be diagrammed in charts of genealogical relationship and located on a territorial map. Thus our first semiotic process, *iconization*, emerges in several aspects of these linguistic descriptions and analyses: in map drawing, in family trees and schedules of relationship, and in discourse describing the (emblematic) linguistic particulars, such as their "delicacy" or their "simplicity." The second process, *fractal recursivity*, is evidenced when, as we mentioned earlier, European representations of linguistic relationships within the Senegal group modeled these relationships upon contrasts supposed to obtain between Europeans and Africans. Recursivity is also involved when the differences among varieties of Sereer were ideologically interpreted as replicating the larger relationship between Sereer and Wolof; that is, less versus more thoroughly penetrated by Islam. Finally, those linguistic features and varieties that could not be made to fit an essentializing scheme were ignored or attributed to "outside" influence. They were assumed to be borrowings, forms that could be omitted from a grammar or dictionary. Those omissions are *erasures* whether they pertain only to representations, as when a linguistic description ignores some vocabulary or some registers, or whether they pertain also to some active policy of eradication, as when the French overthrew the "Wolofized" political administration of Siin and Saluum. As a result, descriptions of each language were impoverished, and, on a more practical level, the languages became indices primarily of ethnicity rather than rank, political status, or religious setting.

In sum, our discussion of this case has concerned the influence of language ideology on linguistic descriptions made during the period of initial colonization of Senegal. Nineteenth-century European ideologies of race relations, ethnic separateness, and African "simplicity" led to maps, schedules, grammars, and dictionaries that purged registers, ignored variation, and rewrote complex sociolinguistic relationships as ethnic relationships. Even though many linguists and anthropologists today no longer share our predecessors' essentializing assumptions – and so can see those assumptions as ideological more easily than our own – the influence of these earlier representations has been long-lasting. Not until the work of Greenberg in the 1950s and 1960s (if even then) were race-based arguments about Fula's linguistic relationships put to rest, and the Cangin languages were listed as "Sereer" until Pichl's study of them in the 1960s (Pichl 1966).[17] Meanwhile, many works by nonlinguists continue to assign Sereer ethnicity to Cangin-speakers without further discussion.

Indeed, the alignment of language with ethnicity – understood as subnationalism and reinforced by colonial policy – is a particularly important dimension of the representational process, though one that is hard to disentangle. Today it is difficult to reconstruct precisely what Africans a century and a half ago took labels such as "Wolof" and "Sereer" to mean – under exactly what conditions they applied such terms to linguistic phenomena, sociological phenomena, or connections they saw between these. Linguistically, for example, one cannot now be completely sure whether expressions that nineteenth-century linguists treated as borrowings were or were not considered so by Africans at the time. This is a hugely complicated matter. But despite uncertainties and complexities, what we would like to emphasize here is the role of ideological representations – European, African, or

both – in "tidying up" a complex sociolinguistic situation through register stripping and boundary drawing. It is not just that language came to be taken as an index of ethnic group membership (thus delimiting an ethnic boundary), but also that the contents of a language – materials assigned to it, rather than to some other language from which it "borrowed" them – seem to have been rearranged to match.

Language Ideologies in Political Contestation: Conflicts over Macedonian

For our final case we turn to southeastern Europe and consider attempts to identify and standardize speech varieties in Macedonia. Macedonia was never the colony of any European state. Nevertheless, as in the Senegalese colonial situation discussed above, nineteenth-century descriptions of the languages and peoples of Macedonia were crucially affected by the ways in which the linguistic ideologies of Western European observers interacted with the ideologies and communicative practices of speakers in Macedonia.[18] However, although we start with a discussion of this clash of ideologies, our further aim here is to focus on the political contestation surrounding contrasting scholarly claims. In Macedonia, linguistic relationships came to be used as authorization for political and military action that changed sociolinguistic practices, thereby bringing into existence patterns of language use that more closely matched the ideology of Western Europe. This ideology (often linked with Herder; see Bauman and Briggs 2000) imagined inherent, natural links between a unitary mother tongue, a territory, and an ethnonational identity. It relied for its persuasiveness on the three semiotic processes we have proposed.

The Republic of Macedonia declared its independence from Yugoslavia in November 1991 and was accepted as a member of the United Nations in December 1993. The new country inherited over a century of acrimonious debate about its boundaries, its name, and its language, a debate that, in the rhetoric of nationhood, ultimately questions its right to exist. Each of Macedonia's current neighbors – Bulgaria, what remains of Yugoslavia (i.e., Serbia and Montenegro), Albania, and Greece – has made serious claims to parts of the same territory in the past century, always at least partly on linguistic grounds. Despite the official codification, recognition, and widespread use of the Macedonian literary language, Bulgarian and Greek scholars have continued to deny its existence and independent standing. By concentrating on the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century antecedents to these conflicts, we aim to explore the semiotic processes through which they have worked. We consider first how popular Western European opinion viewed Macedonia at the turn of the century. Then we turn to the linguistic arguments and actions of the competing nationalisms within the region.

The political economy of nineteenth-century Europe is the crucial context for the clashes of ideology we examine below. Eastern and southeastern Europe had for four centuries been the site of violent competition in empire building among the Austria-based Habsburgs, the Russia-based Romanovs, and the Ottomans of Turkey. In the course of the nineteenth century, however, Turkey became increasingly weak, losing control of large parts of its European territories to nationalist movements in Greece, Serbia, Romania, and Bulgaria. During the same period, Serbian and Bulgarian Orthodox churches were successfully reestablished and gained considerable leverage in challenging the hegemony of the Greek Orthodox church within the Ottoman Empire. Finally, Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Montenegro united to drive Turkey out of Europe in 1912, only to fight each other for control of the newly liberated territory of geographic Macedonia. The subsequent peace treaty divided geographic Macedonia between them, with borders that have since remained relatively stable though always contested (see figure 17.2).[19]

Throughout this period, distant European powers, most especially Britain, France, Russia, and Germany, were intent on establishing or maintaining their presence and influence in the region to defend substantial economic interests as well as supply routes and military commitments to their colonial outposts in

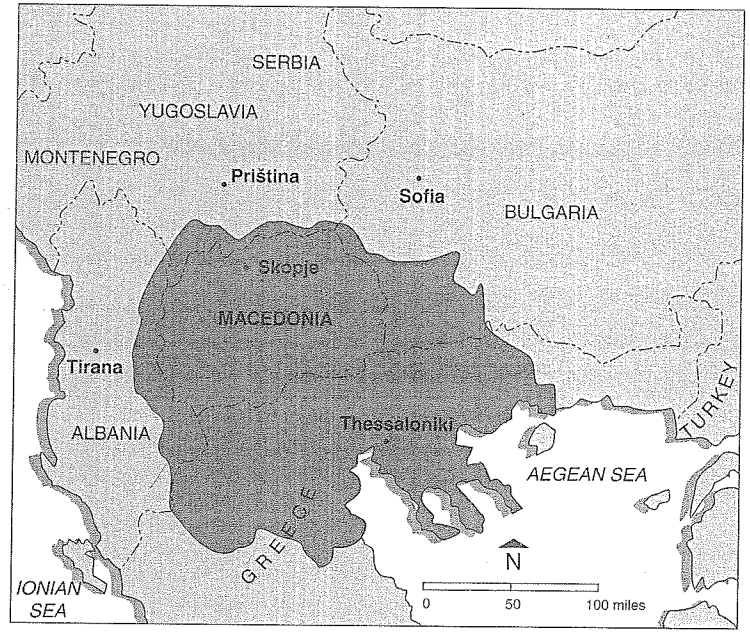

Figure 17.2 *Republic of Macedonia (1995). Approximate extent of regions that have variously been considered geographic Macedonia.*

Asia. The strategic involvement of the Great Powers produced among Western Europeans a widespread popular interest in the region. Instigated by news of revolutions, wars, and exotic customs, this interest was further fueled, in the second half of the century, by a burgeoning literature of journalism, ethnography, philology, and travel.

Representations of Europe in popular and scholarly writing had been considerably altered during the eighteenth century. Scientific cartography had earlier established the boundaries of the continent, while in more philosophical approaches there remained the Renaissance trope of a civilized South endangered by the depredations of Northern barbarians. But by the start of the nineteenth century this axis of contrast had shifted significantly. The earlier North/South imagery had been transformed into a spatial opposition between a newly invented, backward, barbaric "East" and a civilized "West" (see Wolff 1994). Western European observers came to see the southeast of the continent through the lens of a dichotomizing orientalism that, as we shall argue, was also recursive.

In some respects the Balkan region was considered quintessentially European, indeed home of the heroic Christian defenders of the continent against the incursions of Asia and Islam during Ottoman campaigns of earlier centuries.[20] But this distinction between Europe and Asia, between East and West, could be deployed again and projected onto Europe itself, thereby producing a backward orient within Europe. Throughout the nineteenth century, the southeast of the continent was known as the "Near East" or "*l'Orient européen*," or even part of the "Levant." Precisely because it was conquered for centuries by the Ottomans, this region came to be seen as itself oriental, thus distinguished from enlightened Western civilization by its primitive lack of order: it was the least European part of Europe. It is

telling that by the early twentieth century the term "Balkan," originally a euphemism for Turkey-in-Europe, had become a general pejorative meaning backward and, especially, subject to political disorder and disintegration. Finally, through this recursive logic, now applied to the southeastern region itself, Macedonia – one of the last provinces to be freed from Turkish rule (1913) – was seen as the Balkan of the Balkans. Accordingly, Macedonia was imagined in fiction as well as travel writing as a place of chaos and confusion, a veritable fruit salad – inspiring the French culinary term *macédoine* – of peoples, religions, and languages. It was alleged to lack the positive traits metropolitan Europe assigned itself. These traits included not only technological progress, economic development, and civilization, but most especially the prerequisite for all of these: the ideal political order of one nation, speaking one language, ruled by one state, within one bounded territory. (In fact, metropolitan Europe had by no means achieved this ideal itself.)[21]

This symbolic geography and its variants have received considerable scholarly attention recently (e.g., Bakić-Hayden and Hayden 1992; Brown 1995; Todorova 1994). What has not been noticed, however, is the role of linguistic ideologies in its formation. For example, Max Müller (1855: 65) understood many of the characteristics of the "Slavonic" languages through their location "on the threshold between barbarism and civilization." More specifically, local Macedonian language practices and the metropolitan European linguistic ideology through which they were seen by travelers, scholars, and government officials were crucial to the construction of such images. Western European elites had come to think of language as the least socially malleable and therefore the most authentic indicator of a speaker's sociopolitical identity. As early as 1808 Fichte (1845–6: 453) had declared, "Wherever a separate language can be found, there is also a separate nation which has the right to manage its affairs and rule itself." And a hundred years later, the noted linguist Antoine Meillet was calling language the principal factor determining national sentiment in Europe (cited in Wilkinson 1951: 276).

In this context, Macedonia appeared doubly anomalous. First there was its astonishing linguistic and ethnographic diversity.[22] At the turn of the century, the Englishman Brailsford likened the Macedonian marketplace to "Babel," where a traveler might hear as many as "six distinct languages and four allied dialects ... one may distinguish in the Babel two Slav and two Albanian dialects, Vlach, Greek, Turkish, Hebrew-Spanish, and Romany" (Brailsford 1906: 85). The Frenchman Lamouche (1899: 1) equated this heterogeneity with disorder and an uncivilized past: "This region still presents itself to us with the variation and ethnographic confusion that reigned as the result of the barbarian invasions." Later British accounts called Macedonia "primitive," "barbaric," and "hybrid" (see Goff and Fawcett 1921).

Second, and perhaps more disturbing for Western observers, Macedonian linguistic diversity failed to correspond to social and ethnic boundaries in the ways that Western ideologies led them to expect. Describing a trip to Turkey-in-Europe, Lucy Garnett (1904: 234–5) registered a widespread exasperation. In Macedonia, she noted,

> A Greek-speaking community may prove to be Wallachian, Albanian or even Bulgarian, and the inhabitants of a Slav-speaking village may claim to be of Greek origin ... All these various ethnical elements are, in many country districts of Macedonia, as well as in the towns, so hopelessly fused and intermingled.

Garnett's comment was echoed in more scholarly – and more racialized – tones by a German geographer, Karl von Östreich (1905: 270): "Instead of racially pure Turks and Albanians we find people who are racially mixed ... and whose multilingualism misleads us about their real origins, so that they can be counted sometimes as Greeks, sometimes as Bulgarians, sometimes as Wallachians."

Other authors were "puzzled" at the "peculiar phenomenon" that members of "Bulgarian" families in Macedonia could be persuaded to become "Greek" or "Serbian" (Moore 1906: 147). Brailsford (1906: 102) reported with consternation that families often sent each son to a different school – Bulgarian, Greek, Rumanian, Serbian – whose language and nationality the child would then adopt. Western observers failed to perceive this practice as an attempt to extend social networks in uncertain times. Rather, the ethnic profusion and confusion predicated of the region as a whole, and implicitly contrasted with "European" order, were seen to be reproduced within families. In the recurrence and persistence of such anecdotes we note again the workings of *fractal recursivity*. A somewhat later observer, writing about his journey "across the new Balkans" and the "Levant" (which for him began in Prague), demonstrated that this dichotomy of East and West was even projected onto individuals: "The Levantine type in the areas between the Balkans and the Mediterranean is, psychologically and socially, truly a 'wavering form,' a composite of Easterner and Westerner, multilingual ... superficial, unreliable" (Ehrenpreis 1928: 12).

The importance of this "composite" image for our purposes lies not only in its evidence of further recursivity but also in the way it shows that ethnolinguistic heterogeneity had consequences for the moral reputation of Macedonians. Ehrenpreis's comment explicitly links supposedly labile allegiances to linguistic practice. Multiple languages were assumed to indicate multiple loyalties and thus a temperamental flaw, a lack of trustworthiness. It was because linguistic practices and character were seen by Westerners as *iconically* linked that shifting language use could be used as evidence for equally shiftable, hence dubious and shallow, allegiances. Indeed, a French consul in Macedonia is reported to have declared that with a fund of a million francs for bribes, he could make all Macedonians French (cited in Brailsford 1906: 103).

If recursivity and iconization are apparent in these turn-of-the-century accounts, the third semiotic process, *erasure*, is also evident. Because the relationship between linguistic practices and social categories in Macedonia diverged so fundamentally from the expectations of Western Europeans, the region appeared chaotic to them. These observers therefore missed – and their representations erased – the local logic by which the inhabitants of Macedonia understood categories of language and identity such as "Greek," "Turkish," "Bulgarian," and "Macedonian" during the long Ottoman period and before the rise of Balkan nationalisms.

One major constraint on local practices was the Ottoman *millet* system (often mistranslated as "nationality"), which categorized and administered populations according to religious affiliation irrespective of territorial location, ethnic provenance, or language. Moslems counted as "Turks," while Orthodox Christians, including people who spoke various forms of Slavic, Romance, Albanian, and Greek, were counted as "Greeks." During most of the nineteenth century, "Greeks" were officially ruled by the Greek Orthodox Church in European Turkey. But "Greek" and "Turk" were not merely imperial administrative categories; they affected local understandings as well. A Christian peasant in mid-nineteenth-century Macedonia would identify his "nationality" (*millet*) as Greek, regardless of the language he spoke. Similarly, Moslem peasants, even those speaking Albanian, identified themselves as Turkish well into the twentieth century (see, for example, Friedman 1975; Lunt 1984).

Yet Greek was not only a religious and administrative category but also a marker of stratification. As Stoianovich (1960: 311) notes, "The Hellenization of the upper social strata of the non-Greek Balkan Orthodox peoples made possible the emergence of a single, relatively united, inter-Balkan merchant class which was of Greek, Vlach, Macedo-Slav and Bulgarian ethnic origin, but called itself and was known to others as 'Greek.' " When contrasted with "Greek," the designation "Bulgarian" was also, in part, a category of social stratification, particularly in the early part of the century. In Macedonia it could be equivalent to *raya*, that is, a rural, usually Christian, lower-class subject of Ottoman rule. It was not necessarily linked to the use of the Bulgarian literary language that was being developed actively during the nineteenth century. Moreover, a rural-urban contrast was also salient. Greek-speaking merchants and intellectuals, whatever their ethnic origins,

tended to live in cities and towns; Slavic- and Albanian-speakers, whatever their religion, were more likely to be rural.

Clearly, multilingualism was widespread. "Greek" merchants of various backgrounds continued to speak diverse home languages, while using Greek for trade and intellectual activity. Ottoman Turkish was employed for administration and often for market activities by many speakers of other languages; *katharevousa* Greek and Church Slavonic were languages of liturgy and church administration in Greek Orthodox and (later) in Bulgarian and Serbian Orthodox churches, respectively. But these languages were not always strictly compartmentalized by function. Many a mid-nineteenth-century merchant wrote his accounts not in Greek, as might be expected, but in Bulgarian with Greek letters and Turkish numbers (Todorova 1990: 439). The occurrence of codeswitching in mid-nineteenth-century folktales suggests that multilingualism was not limited to those persons directly involved in trade, administration, and religious institutions. Even many rural speakers or recent migrants to small cities could switch to Turkish and Greek or use other vernaculars – dialects of Slavic, Albanian, Rumanian, Greek, Romany – for everyday communication. Indeed, at least in urban areas, rates of multilingualism apparently increased as one moved down the socioeconomic ladder (Friedman 1995; see also Brailsford 1906: 85–6).

These patterns of usage suggest that while there were regularities that systematically and predictably linked a range of linguistic practices to social uses and to categories of identity, there were no "total" categories in mid-nineteenth-century Macedonia that encompassed and subordinated all other categories while being also indissolubly linked to linguistic forms understood as single languages. In short, in the understanding of identity, the criteria of religion, region, occupation, social stratum, and language group had not been aligned, hierarchized, or regimented on the model of the Western, nationalist imagination.[23]

By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the reign of just such national ideas was well under way in the Balkan states that had gained independence from Ottoman rule. Hence, the multilingual situation we have described proved fertile ground for nationalist movements originating outside geographic Macedonia. Each "imagined" the territory and inhabitants of Macedonia as part of its own emerging "community." Well before the final expulsion of Ottoman rule from geographic Macedonia, neighboring elites were funding political agitation there and establishing schools run in each of their national literary languages. Local elites within geographic Macedonia were inciting action for independence. Relying on the very equation of nation, language, and territory that outside observers had earlier found lacking in Macedonia, advocates of Serbian, Bulgarian, and Greek expansion, as well as those calling for Macedonian autonomy, appealed to linguistic descriptions to prove the existence of *social* boundaries that would authorize their claims to popular loyalty.

At the same time, competing elites were also producing census figures, ethnographic and linguistic maps, and historical treatises written in national terms familiar to the West. They were all designed to convince Great Power audiences that one set of claims to Macedonian territory was more justified than others. These works appeared both before and after partition. They were written in Western languages and published in Paris, London, Vienna, Berlin, Zürich, and New York. As Wilkinson's (1951) compilation of ethnographic and linguistic maps of the period illustrates, this body of scholarship was often politically partisan, contradictory, and sometimes simply mendacious. We examine it here for what it reveals about the broader ideological assumptions concerning language and identity. By analyzing the arguments of Greek, Serbian, Bulgarian, and distinctively Macedonian positions, along with some of the policies they inspired, we can trace once again how the three semiotic processes work, this time in the fierce contestation among local linguistic nationalisms.[24]

To understand these controversies, it is helpful to start with aspects of Slavic dialectology about which there is general scholarly agreement. A dialect continuum in South Slavic runs from Serbian to Bulgarian through Macedonia

(see figure 17.2).[25] Dialects located in Macedonia share many lexical and phonological features with dialects in Serbia, but in morphology they bear a stronger resemblance to varieties in Bulgaria. For instance, West South Slavic dialects (Serbia) retain much of the complex declensional system of Common Slavic, but East South Slavic dialects, including those in what is now Bulgaria and the Republic of Macedonia, have lost inflections, replacing case marking with prepositions and syntactic features. Similarly, East South Slavic dialects share a postposed definite article as well as analytical rather than morphological forms of the infinitive and comparative (see Friedman 1975; Lunt 1984).[26]

In this context, we can see how the battles between Serbian, Bulgarian, and Greek claims to Macedonia provide examples of argument through *iconization*. "Deep" linguistic relationship was the key, identified by selecting some linguistic features and ignoring (or explaining away) others. Thus Bulgarian linguists emphasized the Macedonian dialects' relatively analytic morphology, which resembled literary Bulgarian, to argue for the languages' deep kinship; they explained phonological differences as superficial "new developments." Social relations of "closeness" and "distance" were projected iconically from presumed or claimed "closeness" of linguistic relations and were used to justify political unity. Indeed, the Bulgarian position simply asserts that Macedonian dialects are forms of Bulgarian, thereby erasing Macedonian altogether (see, for example, Brancoff 1905; Sís 1918).[27] Serbian linguists, on the other hand, picked only certain phonological features to emphasize, claiming they revealed the ancient kinship of dialects in Macedonia with those in Serbia (see, for example, Belić 1919; Cvijić 1907). Finally, Greek scholars argued that, because the Slavic forms spoken in Greek Macedonia were so heavily reliant on Greek lexicon, they were actually a dialect of Greek. A speculative history was iconically projected to explain this surprising hypothesis through historically "deep" social relations: it was argued that Greek-speakers in antiquity must have assimilated to later Slavic immigrants and, having gone through a period of bilingualism, retained the lexicon (though not the grammar) of their original language (see Andriotes 1957: 15–16).

Iconization operated in other ways as well. Between the two world wars, in the section of geographic Macedonia that had become part of Yugoslavia, Macedonian was treated as a dialect of Serbo-Croatian. In Macedonian-Serbian conversations a largely similar lexical stock assured that mutual intelligibility could be achieved, but at the price of a subjective impression "that the other was using an irritating kind of pidgin" (Lunt 1959: 21). It was the Serbs who, on hearing the relatively simpler nominal morphology of Macedonian, took this as an icon of simple thought and so assumed Macedonians to be uncultivated country bumpkins. Through such iconization, the perception that Macedonian "had no grammar" apparently contributed to legitimating far-reaching political tactics. Serbs, who dominated the interwar Yugoslav government, "quickly became annoyed at the linguistic ineptitude of the mass of Macedonians and found [in this] a righteous justification for accusing them of stupidity and ingratitude and hence for treating the region almost as a colony" (Lunt 1959: 22). Ironically, such characterizations of Macedonian as "simple" could only be sustained by focusing on the language's relatively few nominal inflections and ignoring, thus erasing, the complexities of its verbal system.

But processes of *erasure* in the arguments we are considering were often much more drastic than this. In linguistic maps of Macedonia from the turn of the century, evidence of the widespread multilingualism characteristic of the region disappeared altogether. The maps displayed neatly bounded regions, each in a different color to indicate the presence of speakers of a single, named language (see Wilkinson 1951). Maps drawn by Serbian and Bulgarian advocates each claimed all Slavic forms as dialects of their own standard languages. Furthermore, they showed virtually no one speaking Greek, despite the fact that some Slavic-speakers, especially in the south, continued to use it in commerce, writing, and intellectual life.

Greek maps, in contrast, showed great areas of Greek-speakers in Macedonia by counting

only the use of "commercial language" rather than "mother tongue." Clearly driven by political motives, and vastly overstating the numbers, Greek arguments such as those of Nicolaïdes (1899) nevertheless allow us to see "mother tongue" itself as a deeply ideological construct that disallows claims of identity based on other linguistic considerations. After all, as we have seen, at least some urban, educated inhabitants of nineteenth-century Macedonia might well have agreed with Nicolaïdes's categorization of them as "Greek," despite the other languages they also spoke. Later Greek erasures were less benign, however. Between the world wars, the existence of Slavic-speakers and Slavic forms was denied altogether in Greek Macedonia. Official policy prohibited their mention, census questions asked only whether individuals spoke Greek, village and family names were forcibly changed, and Slavic speakers were jailed. In the 1950s Slavic-speaking villagers were coerced to take "language oaths" promising never to speak Slavic again (see Karakasidou 1993).

In the debates among competing nationalisms, processes of *recursivity* were also evident, operating in tandem with erasures and iconization. As we have noted, within the logic of linguistic nationalism, the equation of a language with a delimited territory and population required the elision of multilingualism in maps and other representations. This elision ultimately led as well to the attempted elimination, through schooling and legal means, of repertoires in which different languages were used for different social functions. But the new conceptual opposition of "our own national language" versus "foreign language" that motivated such erasure was also recursively applied within the literary languages of the region as these were successively codified. The choices of language planners were often made at least in part to avoid or downplay similarities with competing languages nearby that were conceptualized as foreign because they "belonged" to other nations. For example, in the official codification of Macedonian in 1944, the preference for the Western dialects as the basis of the literary language was supported by historical precedent, since they were already evident in literary productions dating from the mid-nineteenth century. Another major motivation for this choice, however, was that it produced maximal differentiation from both Bulgarian and Serbo-Croatian standards (Friedman 1989: 31).

Most significantly, heated debates about linguistic purity have involved the recursive application of this native/foreign distinction to the lexical stock of the region's languages. Ottoman rule had resulted in the heavy lexical influence of Greek and Turkish on all Balkan languages. As early as the 1840s Bulgarian language reformers engaged in what we have called "register-stripping": the attempt to purge Turkish elements from the literary Bulgarian then being created because such elements were now seen as "alien" despite their pervasiveness in colloquial speech. For familiar Turkish words the reformers provided unfamiliar Slavic glosses, often borrowed from Russian or revived from Church Slavonic (Pinto 1980: 46). These latter languages were analyzed as historically related to Bulgarian and doubtless perceived to be, by iconic logic, less "foreign."

Equally interesting is the case of Macedonian, in which Turkish influence has included productive derivational morphology as well as the usual individual lexical items and calques of idiomatic phrases. What is significant is not the actual source of such elements but speakers' continuing perception of many of them as Turkisms. In Macedonian debates some planners in the 1940s argued for the replacement of Turkisms with Slavic forms in the literary language. Turkisms perceived as such suffered a stylistic lowering after the Ottoman's defeat, so that they came to connote archaism, local color, pejoration, or irony. Planners feared that their retention in the Macedonian literary language (especially after they had been purged from neighboring languages) would threaten to make all of Macedonian sound "lower" and less refined (Koneski, quoted in Friedman 1996). Thus, by an application of recursive logic, Turkisms (as both alien and low) were systematically stripped from the literary language. Simultaneously, registers perceived as native were newly "stretched" through neologisms or revival of dialect and archaic forms to cover broader functions (see Friedman 1989; Koneski 1980).

In sum, the complex Macedonian linguistic scene, and nationalist arguments within it, reveal all three semiotic processes we have discussed and show them to operate in a number of different ways. The continuing intensity of contestation over the representation of Macedonian speech forms is hardly surprising, given the consequences envisaged and authorized by the reigning language ideology and occasionally enacted under its auspices. It is an ideology in which claims of linguistic affiliation are crucial and exclusivist because they are also claims to territory and sovereignty.

Implications

The analysis we have presented here has implications relating to at least three intellectual arenas in social science research. The first is the study of historical fields of contact among peoples. European colonialism provides a major set of examples. In particular, part of our analysis contributes to the study of "colonial discourses," illuminating some of their semiotic properties. The second group of problems and issues we seek to address concerns ethnicity and its relation to communicative practices. The concept of "speech community," prominent in linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics since the 1960s, is among the ideas we seek to reconceptualize. Finally, the third arena is that concerned with conceptions of language itself. Although these intellectual arenas have obvious overlaps, we now take them up in turn, adumbrating some of the implications our analysis has for each.

The semiotic processes we have identified, though not limited to any particular historical period, nevertheless always occur in history and operate in relation to contingent facts. The study of colonialism offers an important opportunity to study ideologies – linguistic and otherwise – because of colonialism's obvious consequentiality, the clash of interests at stake, and the evident differences in points of view. As scholars are increasingly recognizing, however, the colonial period is more than just an interesting topic for historical research. Ideas that were forged in that context have remained deeply embedded in our analytical frameworks.

A considerable body of recent research by historians and anthropologists has focused on the dichotomizing discourses of orientalism through which, in the nineteenth century and earlier, Europe created itself in opposition to a broadly defined "East" that often included not only Asia but also Africa. That "East" also found parallels elsewhere in the world, even within Europe itself, where a similar axis of opposition distinguished metropolitan centers of "higher" civilization from their "lower," especially their eastern, peripheries. As Mudimbe (1988), Olender (1992), Said (1978), and others have pointed out, scholars of language and ideas about linguistic differences played a significant part in the development of such categories of identity (see also Bauman and Briggs, this volume). Arguments about language were central in producing and buttressing European claims to difference from the rest of the world, as well as claims to the superiority of the metropolitan bourgeoisie over "backward" or "primitive" Others, whether they were residents of other continents, other provinces, or other social classes.

Language could be central to these arguments because by the mid-nineteenth century it had become common in the scholarly world to see language as crucially unaffected by human will or individual intent (see Formigari 1985; Taylor 1990b). For many scholars of the time, linguistic differences appeared to be the "natural" consequences of spiritual or even biological differences between collectivities of speakers, rather than the consequence of social action. August Schleicher (1869: 20–1), for example, promoting a Darwinian model of linguistic evolution and differentiation, argued that "languages are organisms of nature; they have never been directed by the will of man ... The science of language is consequently a natural science." In a more religious vein but with a similar implication, F. Max Müller (1861) proposed that a "science of language" should be theistic and historical, yet it should employ the methods of geology, botany, and anatomy, for the very reason that such a science – comparative philology – would deal with the works of God, not of man. Although later approaches differed sharply in many ways, the argument for a "science of language" that would be

divorced from the everyday speech and social life of its speakers remained, Saussure's formulation being today the most familiar.[28]

Despite increasing awareness in recent years of these European ideologies of language and their historical contexts, anthropologists and linguists have not sufficiently explored their implications. Our disciplines' conceptual tools for understanding linguistic differences and relationships still derive from this massive scholarly attempt to create the differentiation of Europe from the rest of the world. We have sought to redirect this intellectual project. In this paper we have argued that linguistic differentiation crucially involves ideologically embedded and socially constructed processes. Moreover, the scholarly enterprise of describing linguistic differentiation is itself ideologically and socially engaged (see also Gal and Irvine 1995).

For instance, the Senegal case discussed above provides an opportunity to show how the study of language participated in colonial discourses. Such discourses reveal the complex interaction of ideologies, both the colonizers' and those of the colonized. Since then there have been many changes in the methods of linguistic analysis and the genres of linguistic description; nevertheless, those early discourses of language form the beginnings of a "culture of linguistics" of the region, a tradition to which scholars today fall heir. Contemporary understandings of language differentiation in Senegal thus have a complex history, with European and African language ideologies contributing to interpretations of local sociolinguistic phenomena.

In a parallel way, the case of Macedonia demonstrates the specific ways in which linguistic analyses have contributed to shaping "orientalist discourses." The perception of linguistic chaos in Macedonia emerged from an interaction of local and Western European language ideologies. And metropolitan Europe constructed its own self-image in opposition to just such representations of the sociolinguistic scene in the "East." As soon as Balkan elites appealed to Western powers in Western terms, moreover, linguistic scholarship became the ground on which political economic contests were fought. In such contests today, too, current linguistic scholarship in the region remains significant.

Recent scholarly reflections on colonialism and orientalism have focused on nineteenth-century Europe's discursive construction of boundaries and the projection of ideas and images across them. Thinking about boundaries and their construction has an older genealogy in anthropology, however. It is now many years since the publication of Fredrik Barth's *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (1969), a work that transformed anthropological thinking about ethnicity. Barth argued that ethnic groups represent a way people organize themselves within a larger social field – a way people identify themselves in contrast with others. Relationships *across* a boundary, Barth suggested, are thus more crucial to the existence and persistence of the boundary than are any group-internal attributes an anthropological observer might identify.

Barth's essay coincided with the appearance of sociolinguistic works (such as Gumperz and Hymes 1964, 1972; Hymes 1968; Weinreich, Labov, and Herzog 1968) that similarly emphasized the social organization of diversity and attacked the idea that any particular type of community, ethnic or otherwise, is the necessary outcome of homogeneous language. From those intellectual antecedents we derive our emphasis on functional relationships among linguistic varieties, relationships that lend systematicity to regional patterns of diversity. We also derive from the ethnography of speaking our concern with participants' ideas about the meanings attaching to the deployment of codes in a repertoire. Thus some of the themes we emphasize in this paper have been present in sociolinguistics and the ethnography of speaking from the beginnings of those fields' existence.

We believe, however, that the full potential of these sociolinguistic insights has yet to be felt. In sociolinguistics and the ethnography of communication, a concept of "speech community," though useful for understanding the organization of local repertoires, nevertheless neglected larger boundary relationships, cultural oppositions, borders, and conflict (see Gal 1987, 1989; Irvine 1987). Classic sociolinguistic research sought first of all to demonstrate that linguistic diversity did not necessarily produce or imply social disorder. This endeavor was not inconsistent with the sociological theories dominant at the time, theories that assumed consensus as the basis of social formations. So, while recognizing the importance and organization of social and linguistic diversity, this foundational research only rarely examined the ways in which identity is produced by ideas of opposition between culturally defined groups, and by practices that promote exclusion, divergence, and differentiation.[29] Later, an attempted switch in analytic unit from speech communities to social networks – though valuable in many ways, including its exploration of the nature of communicative ties – still did not give much attention to problematizing the boundaries of networks but instead treated them, in this respect, much like communities. The analytical focus centered on the social control and peer pressures that produce linguistic uniformity "within" them (Gal 1979; Milroy 1980).

In many branches of anthropology and other social sciences, meanwhile, the assumption persists that the communities anthropologists study will normally be linguistically homogeneous. Even so influential a student of ethnicity and nationalism as Benedict Anderson (1983:38) laments what he assumes to be the "fatality" of monolingualism: "Then [in the sixteenth century] as now, the bulk of mankind is monoglot." For Anderson it is this (supposedly) inevitable monolingualism that provides the fertile ground for linguistic nationalism, the indispensable context in which "capitalism and print created monoglot mass reading publics" (p. 43). He thereby ignores the variety of culturally and often politically significant linguistic differentiation – the registers, dialects, and languages – present in the linguistic repertoires of speakers before print capitalism and within contemporary states that are only legally or nominally "monolingual." Missing from Anderson's perspective, we suggest, is the insight that homogeneous language is as much imagined as is community. That is, Anderson naturalizes the process of linguistic standardization, as if linguistic homogeneity were a real-world precondition rather than a construction concurrent with, or consequent to, print capitalism (for discussion, see Silverstein 2000). An assumption of normative monolingualism tends to persist, as well, in schools of linguistics where dominant models of language are cognitively and not socially based. These models often include the supposition that dialects arise automatically out of communicative isolation and for no other reason.

We propose that what is needed is to shift attention to linguistic differentiation rather than community. But it is crucial to recognize that the differentiation is ideologically mediated, both by its participants and by its observers. It has now often been noted (by, among others, Cameron 1990; Ferguson 1994; and Irvine 1985) that linguistic differentiation is not a simple reflection of social differentiation or vice versa, because linguistic and social oppositions are not separate orders of phenomena. As Ferguson (1994: 19) writes, "Language phenomena are themselves sociocultural phenomena and are in part constitutive of the very social groups recognized by the participants or identified by analysts." It is that mediating *recognition* and *identification*, together with ideological frameworks and pressures, whose relationship with processes of linguistic differentiation we seek to explore.[30]

A final implication of a shift of attention from linguistic communities to linguistic boundaries is to open the door to reflections on some fundamental questions about language itself. One set of such questions involves the mechanisms of linguistic change. In their study of language contact and language change, Thomason and Kaufman (1988) have shown that, contrary to what linguists have supposed for many decades, there are no strictly linguistic motivations of change that operate in lawlike fashion no matter what the social circumstances. Even such linguistic constraints as pattern pressure and markedness considerations are easily overridden by social factors. But Thomason and Kaufman's argument is primarily a negative one, showing that linguistic explanations alone are inadequate rather than supplying a substantial indication of what the social factors are or how they might operate. In this work we have tried to suggest how one might begin to supply that

missing dimension. Our materials suggest that the direction and motivation of linguistic change can be illuminated if we attend to the ideologizing of a sociolinguistic field and the consequent reconfiguring of its varieties through processes of iconization, recursive projection, and erasure.

Another set of questions whose importance is signaled by our analysis concerns register phenomena. Our examples show various ways in which registers serve as sites for borrowing and for the negotiation of social relationships via recursive projections and/or claims about linguistic and social connectedness or distance. But we have also seen that an ideology of societal monolingualism and linguistic homogeneity renders functional varieties anomalous. That ideology, moreover, often imagines languages as corresponding with essentialized representations of social groups. Essentialized linguistic and social categories are made to seem isomorphic when ideologies omit inconvenient linguistic facts (such as "borrowed" lexicon, registers, or functionally specialized languages), or when they lead people to create linguistic facts (such as neologisms or new registers) to match the representation. We contend that scholarly analyses are improved when registers are systematically included in discussions of relationships among languages and dialects and in discussions of what competence in "a language" includes, rather than being omitted or inserted under those ideological pressures. To be sure, the concept of register is itself problematic and also subject to ideological pressures besides the ones we have discussed here (see Silverstein 1992).

Finally, we note that our analysis of semiotic processes in linguistic differentiation has implications for our understanding of sign relationships in language itself, such as the notion of the linguistic sign's quintessential arbitrariness. In our view, the notion of arbitrariness is more problematic than has generally been supposed. Saussure's assertion of the "arbitrariness of the sign" is often celebrated as the originary moment of modern linguistics. But publicly voiced claims about the inherent properties of particular languages, or of standards as opposed to dialects, have not abated in contemporary life. We suggest that a useful way to unpack this term and its dilemmas is to distinguish among the possible social positions from which the judgment of "arbitrariness" is made.

First, from the perspective of ordinary speakers, linguistic differences are understood through folk theories (ideologies) that often posit their inherent hierarchical, moral, aesthetic, or other properties within broader cultural systems that are themselves often contested and rarely univocal. The second perspective is that of contemporary linguistics. In constituting itself as an academic discipline, linguistics rejected precisely this culturally embedded speaker's perspective. It insisted instead on de-culturing linguistic phenomena and establishing the theoretical and thus disciplinary autonomy of language. Linguistics has its own set of relevances driven by changing theoretical considerations that differ from those of native speakers. Thus, from the perspective of many kinds of post-Saussurean linguistics, signs are indeed "arbitrary" because the cultural systems that make them iconic are stringently and systematically excluded from consideration, for the sake of science. This suggests a third, metatheoretical, perspective: as we recognize that ordinary speakers' theories about the non-arbitrariness of signs make a difference in the production, interpretation, and reporting of linguistic differentiation, we must add that the equally ideological theories of linguists do so as well.

The very real facts of linguistic variation constrain what linguists and native speakers can persuasively say and imagine about them. Linguistic facts have a certain recalcitrance in the face of ideological construction. But, as we remarked at the outset, there is no "view from nowhere" in representing linguistic differences. Moreover, acts of speaking and acts of describing both depend on and contribute to the "work of representation." Those representations, in turn, influence the phenomena they purport to represent.

In sum, we have identified three semiotic processes at work in language ideologies as these apply to the question of linguistic boundaries and differentiation. The three are *iconization*, *fractal recursivity*, and *erasure*. We have argued that these processes operate worldwide; that they are not dependent on the historical contexts of European colonialism (although they do appear conspicuously there, they also appear elsewhere); and that they are deeply involved in both the shaping of linguistic differentiation and the creating of linguistic description.

NOTES

1 The source for this saying, long a part of linguistics' oral tradition, is difficult to identify. Many linguists attribute it to Max Weinreich.

2 See, for example, the compendium of relevant statements by Peirce (1955) assembled by Justus Buchler under the title "Logic as semiotic: The theory of signs."

3 For further discussion and illustration in a contemporary ethnographic example, see Irvine (1989, 1990).

4 Well-known analyses of such processes from an earlier generation of anthropologists include Bateson (1936) and Evans-Pritchard (1940); more recent discussions include Abbott (1990), Gal (1991), Herzfeld (1987), and Wagner (1991), although the thrust of Wagner's argument about "fractals" is somewhat different from ours.

5 Notice, also, that entries in the Doke and Vilakazi (1958) Zulu dictionary seem to link click sounds, Khoisan languages, and chatter. Thus *nxapha*, a verb meaning "to utter click sounds" (especially in annoyance or vexation), is exemplified in *Ulimi lwaɓaThwa luyanxaphanxapha*, "The Bushman tongue is full of clicks"; the same verb also means "misfire (of a gun)." Another word, *qheɓeqheɓe*, refers to "clicking (as of latch or catch)", "liveliness", and a "lively, talkative person, a gossiper". These links are suggestive, although we do not consider dictionary entries of this kind to be actual evidence that speakers draw a conceptual link between a word's different senses.

6 We have identified these patterns mainly by examining the citations for *hlonipha* words given in Doke and Vilakazi's 1958 Zulu dictionary. Although there are some problems in the dictionary's treatment of these words (for instance, the seemingly haphazard collection of *hlonipha* lists from many regions, assembled for a pan-Zulu set of dictionary entries), the various phonological patterns observable in the dictionary are not contradicted by *hlonipha* data from other sources. See also Herbert (1990) for more discussion of *hlonipha* word formation.

7 See Herbert 1990 for discussion, and refutation, of some alternative views.

8 It is interesting that this conversation is a quarrel. Evidently, the speakers were showing respect not to one another but to third parties.

9 Herbert (1990: 307) attributes the existence of this core vocabulary to urbanization and the decline of *hlonipha*. That it does not conform to the normative pattern of name-avoidance does not necessarily mean, however, that it is very recent or only urban. Finlayson (1984: 140, 143) states, in fact, that she found the core vocabulary throughout the Xhosa-speaking area where *hlonipha* has been investigated. The change among some urban Xhosa is apparently not the emergence of a common *hlonipha* vocabulary but the loss of specific name-avoidances. The urban speakers display respect for tradition but do not orient their respect to the names of particular persons.

10 In the full text of this passage, Lepsius discussed the classification of African languages before continuing, "In like manner will the chaos of the nations in Asia ..."

11 For a related discussion, see Irvine 1993.

12 For a historical discussion of Sereer-speakers' participation in a largely Wolof international system, see Klein (1968, especially pp. 7–8) and Diagne (1967). There is good documentation that kings and officials in Siin and Saluum dealt with nineteenth-century European visitors in Wolof, just as they did other outsiders; see, for example, the visit of the Kobès and other missionaries to the court of Saluum (Abiven n.d.).

13 Although most authors agreed on the main outlines of this picture, details varied. There was some disagreement between French administrators and missionaries – and among missionaries themselves – as to whether Islam, compared with animism, was a sign of higher civilization or of greater corruption. Another complication arose because of the sociological diversity of Fula-speakers. Some scholars claimed that it was only the pastoralist populations who came close to a "pure" Fula racial type and that sedentary populations were the product of racial *métissage* (the supposed cause of social hierarchy in sedentary communities).

14 The role of supposed racial and cultural characteristics in analyses of Fula and, especially, in its placement in language families is relatively well known since Greenberg's critiques (see Greenberg 1963; note also Sapir 1913). For this reason we devote more of our discussion to Sereer, a less familiar case.

15 Space does not permit a detailed discussion supporting our characterization of Lamoise's work. We will just note that he does supply more examples of texts and discourse than is common in grammars of the period (or today), but some of them appear to have been composed by himself or his assistants, and none of them records aristocrats' political discourse. Other important evidence would come, for example, from his treatment of key pairs of words such as *Yalla/rôg* ("God"), each of which occurs in both Wolof and Sereer grammatical structures but in different situational contexts, which Lamoise and others seem to interpret as ethnic contexts.

16 Although Faidherbe accepted the identification of the Kajoor enclave populations (i.e., Cangin-speakers) as "Sereer," he did recognize its source (1865: 175): "The populations *which the Wolof designate by the name of Sereers* speak two distinct languages: one called Kéguem and the other None ... The populations who speak the None dialects do not understand Kéguem at all, and reciprocally" (emphasis added). So firmly was the label "Sereer" attached to these languages, however, that Faidherbe used it in all his later works, while other authors, including Cust and Lamoise, merely list "None" and other Cangin varieties along with other regional varieties of Sereer. (Note that Faidherbe's "Kéguem" was apparently a mistaken name for the same Siin variety of Sereer described by Lamoise [1873] and, more recently, Crétois [1972].)

17 Pichl's research was almost the first to be published on this language group since Faidherbe's brief notice in 1865. In a 1953 linguistic survey, however, de Tressan looked at these enclave languages and called them "faux-Sérère."

18 Many thanks to Victor Friedman for indispensable discussion and advice on Macedonian matters. There is considerably more agreement on the outlines of a geographic region called Macedonia than on the matter of which states have political rights to it. Historically, the following regions have been considered geographical Macedonia: the current Republic of Macedonia, the southwestern corner of Bulgaria, a northern province of Greece, and small parts of eastern Albania. Figure 17.2 illustrates this distinction. For parallel discussions of this by several generations of scholars, see Wilkinson (1951); Friedman (1985); and Poulton (1995).

19 McNeill (1964) provides the classic account of interimperial competition. Some important milestones in the gradual dissolution of Ottoman rule in Europe – through a series of revolts, wars, and treaties – include Serbia's relative autonomy, secured in 1817; the independence of Greece, proclaimed after 1830; the establishment of Bulgarian schools in 1835 and the Bulgarian Church (exarchate) in 1870; and the final independence of Serbia and Romania, and the autonomy of Bulgaria, gained at the Treaty of Berlin in 1878. The Balkan Wars of 1912–13 reduced Turkish rule in Europe to its present boundary and produced the partition of Macedonia (for a useful summary, see Okey 1982).

20 The nationalist movements of nineteenth-century eastern Europe often claimed the distinction of having defended Europe, especially in literature targeted at Western audiences. Western views often recognized this claim, based on the earlier Christian/Moslem opposition, while also applying the contrast emphasizing civilization and barbarism (see Wolff 1994, chap. 1). For the Frenchman Lamouche, along with many other Westerners, the Greek struggle for independence was self-evidently a replay of "European civilization against Asiatic barbarism" (1899: 134); Longfellow's poem about Skenderbeg, the early Albanian hero defending Christendom from the Turks, enjoyed considerable popularity in the late-nineteenth-century US; and as late as 1918 Lloyd George, as British prime minister, declared the Serbs to be "Guardians of the Gate" of Europe (Laffan 1918).

21 See, for example, Eugen Weber's (1976) discussion of the lack of cultural, linguistic, and political unity in the most centralized of European powers, France.

22 The views discussed here were very widespread despite the fact that, as Brown (1995) and Todorova (1994), among others, have noted, Western European observers varied widely in their class backgrounds, political commitments (e.g., socialist vs. conservative), national loyalties, and visions of what would be the best political solution for the Balkans.

23 For further complex examples and discussion see Brown's (1995) persuasive work on the 1903 Ilinden rising in Macedonia, showing how these cross-cutting categories were transformed and regimented into the familiar images of Western European national ideology.

24 For further discussion of different kinds of contestation among linguistic ideologies, see Gal 1993.

25 The classic view of South Slavic dialectology adds a degree of regional organization to this picture. It maintains that in one part of this Balkan region, corresponding roughly to what is today the political border between Serbia and Bulgaria, a bundle of significant isoglosses permits Serbian and Bulgarian to emerge as linguistically distinct from one another. Farther south, however, isoglosses fan out. So while the dialectological transition from Serbian to Bulgarian in the north is relatively rapid, that from Serbian to Bulgarian through Macedonia (in the south) is very gradual. These claims about relative distinctness have recently been challenged, however (V. Friedman, personal communication 1998).

26 An early work describing these features is Lamouche (1899). Sandfeld's (1930) classic study on Balkan linguistics provides more detail. More recent and sophisticated descriptions include the cited works by Lunt and Friedman.

27 These arguments from the early years of the century continue unabated in attempts by Bulgarian linguists to deny the existence and historical depth of Macedonian. Macedonian linguists and historians, in turn, counter by producing evidence of early moves toward national autonomy in Macedonia, early literary production, and programmatic plans for a literary language; see Dimitrovski, Koneski, and Stamatoski (1978) and Lunt (1984) for summaries.

28 As Bauman and Briggs (2000) show, important aspects have earlier roots in the work of Locke.

29 Noteworthy exceptions include Labov's (1963) research on Martha's Vineyard, Gumperz's (1958) study of linguistic organization in a North Indian village, and Fischer's (1958) discussion of social factors that influence phonological variation. A later example of a work focusing on linguistic aspects of culturally imagined opposition between groups is Basso's (1979) *Portraits of "the Whiteman"*.

30 Note our debt here to Silverstein's (1979) argument that language ideologies, in their dialectical relationship with the distribution of linguistic forms, introduce dynamics of change into sociolinguistic systems.

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STUDY QUESTIONS

1 What do Irvine and Gal mean when they write that "There is no 'view from nowhere,' no gaze that is not positioned" when we are examining the use of language by speakers and its representation by linguists?
2 What do the authors mean by "ideologies of language differentiation"? Can you use their discussion to enlighten your own understanding of linguistic differences as they appear to you in your daily life?
3 Describe and discuss the three semiotic processes of iconization, fractal recursivity, and erasure. How are all three processes illustrated by the study of the development of "clicks" in the Nguni languages of southern Africa, the classification of Senegalese languages by Europeans, and the debates over Macedonian?
4 Describe the practice of *hlonipha* (the use of respect terms) among Nguni speakers and illustrate why it is used as an example of ideological representations of linguistic differences.
5 How does this chapter build upon, expand, and in some respects revise the notion of speech community assumed by other authors in this book?

18

The "Father Knows Best" Dynamic in Dinnertime Narratives

Elinor Ochs and Carolyn Taylor

Historical and sociological studies of gender have pursued the plethora of ways in which cultural concepts of gender impact social life, especially institutions such as the family, the church, the workplace, and the state. Of critical importance to all gender research is the idea that gender ideologies are closely linked to the management of social asymmetries. As Marie Withers Osmond and Barrie Thorne (1993: 593) concisely put it, "Gender relations are basically power relations." Notions of patriarchy, male authority, male domination, and gender hierarchy have gained considerable intellectual vitality within feminist argumentation. The import of gender pervades all levels of analysis, from historical and ethnographic studies of gender ideologies, structures, and customs to interactional studies of gendered activities and actions. From a poststructuralist perspective, we need both macro- and micro-analyses to illuminate continuity and change in the rights, expectations, and obligations vis-à-vis the conduct, knowledge, understandings, and feelings that constitute the lived experience of being female or male in society.

The present chapter addresses gender asymmetry in middle-class European American families through an examination of a single social activity: narrating a story or a report over family dinner. While recognizing that family interaction is socially and historically enmeshed in the prevailing interests of economic and political institutions (e.g., Hartmann 1981; Stack 1974), we offer a window into how family hierarchies are constituted in day-to-day family life. Our position is that family exchanges do not simply exemplify gender relations otherwise shaped by forces outside the family but, rather, are the primordial means for negotiating, maintaining, transforming, and socializing gender identities. Certainly from the point of view of a child, routine moments of family communication are the earliest and perhaps the most profound medium for constructing gender understandings (Cole and Cole 1989; Dunn 1984; Freud [1921] 1949; Goodwin 1990; Kohlberg 1966; Maccoby and Jacklin 1974; Schieffelin 1990). Awakenings to gender asymmetry may occur from infancy on, for example, in two-parent families, through such

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