Once interconnected under the broad term philology, literary and linguistic scholarship became divorced for much of the twentieth century, with departments of language and literature tending to emphasize literary culture at the expense of the equally important study of language. Yet the more recent focus on theories in the humanities—together with the analysis and redefinition of the literary canon, the development of women's studies and gender studies, specialization on pedagogy and the role of the computer, and an interdisciplinary interest in writing process and product—has led to a reintegration of linguistics into the curriculum as an essential discipline offering insight into basic questions of orality and literacy, the cultural significance of language, and human social behavior in general. Linguistics, too, has changed during recent years, moving outward from phonological and syntactic theory and a concentration on idealized forms of language to a broader concern with language acquisition, second-language teaching, and the study of language in its social setting (see, for example, the essays by Finegan and Kramsch, in this volume).

Along with bipedal locomotion and the opposable thumb, the phenomenon we call language is often cited as a defining characteristic of the human species. So strong is this identification of language with human nature that anthropologists study hominid fossils looking for evolutionary clues to the origins of speech. Some humans, however, seem reluctant to share language with other species: great and still unresolved controversies have arisen over the past two decades as experimenters began claiming success in teaching primates to communicate symbolically. There is a tendency to treat language as the personal property not only of the species but of the individual as well. To commonplace now is the notion that language functions as an expressive psychology. As an unanalyzable voice of one's own, as a means of communicating with a friend, as a way of making one's presence known to the world, the stylized finger offering of an accomplished novice—that we may easily forget that language is above all a social phenomenon.

Language change and the development of language standards are features not only of time passing but of conscious innovation and social conditioning as well. It is the larger culture that determines language attitudes and validates linguistic norms; that ignores variation, condemns it as an error, or celebrates it as a creative insight; and that selects the users of language into the average or the chosen or the damned. Convinced that language both reflects and influences culture and society, humanists and their colleagues in anthropology, education, law, philosophy, psychology, public policy, and sociology have begun to examine the social context of language use, producing studies that range from global theories of orality and literacy, to national language policy and planning, to local annotated descriptions of turn-taking in conversation. Perhaps the most interesting of these developments for studies of language and literature is the exploration between major and minority language rights that is often agitated in the selection of an official language, the roles of standard and nonstandard dialects in school and the workplace, the problem of literacy in both developing and technologically advanced societies, and the vexed question of language and gender. We must consider as well the ongoing controversy over the ethical position of the linguist as an agent affecting language attitudes, language planning, and language change. There are, of course, many important, even central, areas that any essay such as this, which is necessarily limited in scope, must regrettably ignore in order to present a coherent introduction to the general topic.

Language and Nation

Language use carries not only the idiosyncratic stamp of the individual but the mark of the nation as well. Consequently, language becomes both a primary vehicle for the transmission of group culture and a medium of national identification. Perhaps the most commonly cited example of the relation between language and culture is the number and variety of words for snow in the Eskimo, or, more properly, the Inuit, language. Inuit has words for falling snow, snow on the ground, encrusted snow, and some perhaps, while English speakers, for whom snow has less central a cultural position, have a rather more limited set of terms. We must avoid the common assumption, however, that language inevitably limits perception. Inuit is no better adapted than English for expressing snow terms, nor is English more civilized than Inuit, or somehow better suited to the abstractions and vagaries of literary theory. Both languages express what their speakers with as need to express, and an English speaker can refer to powder, crusty snow, packing snow for snowballs or for building forts, and snow covered snow piled up by plows at street corners as readily as an Inuit can describe the supposed coex opta of Robert Flaherty's documentary Nanook of the North (1922).

Languages carve up the color spectrum differently—the English shades of
they do acknowledge a weaker version of the theory assuming language influences perception (see Kelemen et al., this volume). Continuing experiments have, predictably, shown that it is easier to understand and remember phenomena for which linguistic patterns already exist than it is to discover new concepts or concepts for which there are no words. But as literary writers have long understood, the creation of the unknown may be a temporary phenomenon: the human imagination quickly discards new data to old language patterns or invents ways to deal with new situations. It language is a prison house, occasionally preventing us from noticing the reality outside us, it is also a vital means by which we harness that reality, making it our own. Our European explorers in the Western Hemisphere transformed Old World names for the flora, fauna, and geography they encountered (corn, red, creek), or they borrowed native terms (peyote, shank, wood-suck) or words from other colonial languages (haukau, krab, pach). They innovated (bléwetl, bléw, fric. oyster), just as today's physicians must translate their complex equations and predictions into quarks, quarks, and black holes. Jobs Keats may have been studying when in "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer" he depicted " incest Cortex" rather than Balboa discovering the Pacific Ocean, but the explorers also made mistakes, naming the turkey berry such because they thought it came from the East (similarly, the French called it d'Inde, the bird "from India," which arrives in the modern French term for the great fowl, dindon). And we mistakenly name the natives of the Americas because the last explorers thought they had found a western passage to India.

In addition to its more basic functions of communication and expression, language takes on symbolic value as the embodiment of a nation. It has to be common to all the people of a state or nation to represent the most potent symbol of group identity and local or national pride. It is also a prime element in cultural myth and group cohesion, whether the group is narrowly defined (the jargon of computer programmers, the jargon of criminals) or broadly (the presumed democratic character of classical Greek; the self-proclaimed rationality of French; the sacred nature of Hebrew, Arabic, and Sanskrit). With language perceived to represent the spirit of a group or a nation, it functions as a political as well as a social medium. It has always come to epitomize the values of society—even when it is critical of those values—and the language in which it is written takes on a sacred status as well as a secular character, so that tampering with the literary language may be viewed as an attack on the institution or the social order, to cite a few examples.
usage conventions, opposition to linguistic innovation and variation is never always rhetorical. In the early 1920s, students and faculty members at the University of Athens protested publicly in order to stop a performance of Aeschylus's Oresteia in modern, demotic Greek, and violent demonstrations at the university protesting a modernized translation of the New Testament led to several deaths.

Language and ethnicity, which remain strongly connected in the popular mind, have often been the objects of political manipulation. Despite the myth of the Tower of Babel, which postulates a single, Eridanic language and longs for its return, multilingualism is likely and probably has always been the basic human condition. There are virtually no monolingual states in the world today. Nonetheless, multilingualism is an ideal toward which many societies have gravitated, for a combination of ideological and practical reasons. And in some cases, multilingualism has been imposed—with varying degrees of success—on a linguistically diverse polity (see Calvert; Grillo; Wardhaugh, Languages).

The concept of a nation, one language arose in the West at European nation-states developed out of the remains of the Roman Empire and concomitant languages started to replace Latin as the vehicles of government, education, and literature in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. In the 17th century, the French government began to extend the French language to the surrounding local languages and dialects in order to unify and rationalize the republic under one language, a slow process that was not "completed" until after World War I, though pockets of resistance remain today (Webster). As such, the effort was to create the French people and nation by giving them the French language, resulting in the commonplace notion that to be French is to speak French. Similarly, the complexity of the qatamne akkna lingua, an ongoing debate in Italy from the time of Dante to the present, rests on the assumption that defining the language is a necessary precursor to establishing the nation. Such assumptions oversimplify linguistic reality: identity persists between northern and southern varieties of Italian, and the degree of variation in modern French prompts a thriving business for usage guides in that language.

THE OFFICIAL-LANGUAGE QUESTION

No modern law makes French the official language of France. Nonetheless, France has paved (though it later relaxed) laws to control the use of minority languages, and current legislation prohibits the borrowing of foreign words into French. Other nations have considered purifying their languages of what they conceive to be foreign contamination, though usually without much success, at least so far as the informal, spoken language is concerned. In the nineteenth century, and again during the Nazi era, Germany sought to nationalize its language through the creation or revival of native terms to replace foreign borrowings. Reaching outward rather than turning inward, in the late 1920s Kemal Attaturk romanized the Turkish alphabet as part of his plan to westernize and modernize Turkey.

The establishment of a unifying national language in states whose boundaries encompass several linguistic groups is frequently accompanied by formal or informal restrictions on the use of minority languages (and, occasionally, majorities) in the same ethnic group "Mountain Turks" in a futile attempt to render them successful in actively suppressing Irish, Scots, and Welsh for several centuries at while at the same time spreading English as the language of education and administration in its Asian and African colonies. After independence, the Republic of Ireland sought to reverse the decline of Gaelic, giving it official status, use the language at home. These efforts have not succeeded in reviving the language.

The Soviet Union alternated between policies of Russification and support for local languages, unrest among Soviet nationalities frequently manifested itself in demands for local language rights. After its break, official policy of promoting Russian and banning languages have been reversed and French language rights have been restored, such as Ukrainian or Yiddish, are not similarly protected, a situation that aggravates linguistic tensions in the country. In New Zealand, too, some local languages are treated better than others. The indigenous Maori language is now being taught in English-language schools as part of a reawakened appreciation of the national heritage, though Auckland, which has the largest Polynesian-speaking community in the world, pays no special attention to the linguistic needs of this largely impoverished immigrant group.

In former European colonies, the question of choosing an official language Canada (as well as similar linguistic strife that developed when two distinct nineteenth century and when multilingual India gained independence from the British in 1947) is frequently cited as a warning by supporters of official English in the United States, though observers point out that linguistic violence generally occurs when language rights are suppressed, not when they are guaranteed. Furthermore, despite the presence of large numbers of minority-language speakers throughout its history, the United States without official-language legislation has managed to create what other countries with official-language policies have failed to establish, a society in which upward of ninety-six percent of the population speaks the unofficial national language, English, according to a 1980 census American English) the official language of the United States since the nation's founding.

Supporters of official English in the United States have argued from both ideolog-
always assumed the priority of English in all areas of government, education, and commerce. In addition, as the sociologist Jordan Fulham and his colleagues have shown (Rice and Fulham), language legislation has generally remained the province of the states, the federal government intervening only when the rights of minority-language speakers have been seriously compromised. For example, a number of states curtailed foreign language instruction below the ninth grade in the period directly and immediately after World War 1. In the ideological argument goes (bolstered critics such as Meyer v. Nebraska (1923) and Farfan v. Tokay High School, 1927), involving the Fourteenth and Fifth amendments, respectively, the United States Supreme Court ruled with legislation unconstitututional. The federal Voting Rights Act of 1965 stumps discriminatory English-literacy tests and protected the rights of non-English-speaking citizens to vote in their native language. In the case of Lawrence v. Niles (1974), the Supreme Court instead had long been the common practice of schools to ignore the non-English-speaking students in their classrooms. Ordering no remedy, the Court instructed school districts to come up with plans to assure non-English-speaking children an education equivalent to that provided their Anglophone peers. The ruling has resulted in controversial programs of bilingual education.

It is possible that the official-language question in the United States will come to a head in the 1990s. In the few past years, more than two-thirds of the states have considered some form of official-language legislation, and a number of states have adopted official English laws, though their effect remains unclear. Nor is it entirely certain what might happen to government language policy should an English Language Amendment (ELA) to the federal Constitution be adopted. Legal practice assumes that in the case of a conflict, more recent legislation has precedence over earlier statutes and legal decisions. It is possible that an ELA would be purely symbolic, producing little or no visible change in the way the American government interacts with its citizens. At the other extreme, the amendment could neutralize existing minority-language protections based on the Fifth and Fourteenth amendments or on other federal legislation, thereby restricting the use of languages other than English in the United States. If it is certain, in any case, that an ELA, if passed, would be subjected to numerous court tests before its effects became clear.

Minority-language rights will become a highly visible problem in the European Community moves toward unification and as Eastern Europe moves out of the Soviet sphere of influence, as it seems to be doing. The United Nations Charter and a number of subsequent international agreements such as the Helsinki Accords have strengthened the importance of minority-language rights. Nation-states are encouraged to learn English while maintaining their native language. At the same time, English speakers, who remain a clear majority of the population, are encouraged to acquire a second language. Such a policy, known as English Plus, has been proposed for the United States as well. Though minority-language retention and foreign-language education have typically been unsuccessful in this country on a large scale.

Language policy in the United States, while not formally defined, has
Debate over an official language raises another complex issue: Whose variety of English (or French, or Spanish, or Hindi) is to be official? Language changes over time, but it also varies over geographical and social space. Linguists have long studied geographical variation through an examination of written texts and, where possible, through the administration of oral questionnaires and the recording of the spoken language in its natural context. Such research frequently concentrates on the speech of older people in rural areas in order to record forms of a language that may be in danger of dying out. More recently, linguists have come to study social variation as well, looking for usage attributable to class, race, and gender. The sociolinguist William Labov demonstrated the linguistic insecurity of the American lower middle class (Social Stratification). In their anxiety to climb the social ladder, members of this class consider correct English a badge of success. Consequently, in their speech they often employ forms that they perceive as prestigious but that are in reality nonprestige forms, errors, or hypercorrectons. According to Labov, those at the top—the upper-middle-class speakers whom others try to emulate—exhibit a low degree of language anxiety, as do those at the bottom of the social scale, who have little hope of breaking out of the trap of poverty.

In Language in the Inner City Labov also contributed greatly to the study of Black English, demonstrating that what had frequently been dismissed as error-laden nonstandard was actually a logical, rule-governed, and effective form of communication. More recently, the study of minority dialects of English has focused on their origins and their variety, together with the difficulties speakers of nonstandard varieties of English may encounter when faced with the academic English of the American school system (see, e.g., Smithson, Ungh). Initially it was assumed that Black English arose on Southern plantations as slaves learned an imperfect version of their masters’ language. Some dialectologists, tracing features of Black English to seventeenth-century East Anglia, went so far as to argue that it was no different from Southern white English. However, many experts now believe in the creole origins of Black English. That is to say, they find in Black English a substratum of West African languages with an overlay of English. This evidence suggests the development of Black English in African slave-trading ports, on slave ships coming to America, or on plantations. In all three, slaves from different language backgrounds were mixed together to hammer communication and lessen the chances for revolt. Defeating the intentions of the traders and overseers, the slaves forged a pidgin, or contact, language, an amalgam of their different languages and dialects that served in a limited way to meet their most immediate communication needs. According to the theory, the pidgin eventually expanded, or became creolized, assuming the more general functions of language (including rhetorical and literary use) and becoming more and more like English, the language from which the creole eventually drew most of its grammar and vocabulary (in Haiti, where the administrative language was French, the slaves developed a French–West African creole).

Despite the general acceptance of the creole theory, in recent years sociolinguists have been finding less evidence of creolization in the historical record. Walt Wolfram is one of several researchers in this area calling for reinterpretation and reevaluation of the accounts of the origins of Black English. Linguists now recognize as well that there are many varieties of Black English, related to age, social class, and the context of communication. Research in the next decade will examine these varieties and their relation to the notion of standard English. Labov (Increasing Divergence) has warned, however, that black and white varieties of English are diverging at the social distance between the races increases, particularly at the lower levels of American society. As Bruce W. Wolfram’s claim has received much publicity in the popular press, the validity of the data on which it is based has been questioned (see, for example, the well-taken comments of Butters as well as those of Wolfram). The perceived distance between Black and white English is widely regarded as one reason for the failure of many minority children in American schools, and linguists are likely to pay more attention in the years to come both to the divergence hypothesis as proposed by Labov and to ways in which language education in schools can help bridge this gap.

The question of language variety leads inevitably to the question of standard English, the spoken or written dialect of a distinct class of language users that in many societies is promoted by the schools and the culture in general as a model to be emulated by all. In some cases, as with French and Italian, language academies were set up as long ago as the sixteenth century to adjudicate usage disputes and to promulgate dictionaries and grammars of acceptable speech and writing. Speakers of English have traditionally formed the formation of a language academy, preferring to derive their standards indirectly from literature, from language commentaries, and from a loosely defined approximation of what they see as educated usage (see Hearn).

The word standard as a measurement of correctness or perfection first appeared in English in the fifteenth century, but it was not connected with language until the eighteenth, when it was applied to usage in the several languages whose reputed superiority was frequently held up for users of English to emulate. Standard was not joined to English until the nineteenth century, (the first OED citation is from 1836), though such expressions as the King’s English, the King’s language, and Received English do occur before that, giving evidence for an early and ongoing concern with correct, good or approved English. However, the strong association of the terms standard with precisely defined and regulated weights and measures, as well as with monetary systems, creates the illusion that standard language has scientific validity, that it can be defined and copied, like the standard meter or kilogram, and that it has the same currency for everyone.
It is commonly supposed, for one thing, that a standard of usage exists for English, and for other languages as well, that all agree on, a standard that may be described with some precision, reduced to a few simple rules, and imposed on an entire nation, if not the whole English- or French- or Russian-speaking world. As a concession to the varieties of English used in such diverse areas as Australia, Japan, Canada, India, Ireland, New Zealand, Nigeria, and the United States, we usually—but sometimes humbly—acknowledge the existence of regional or national spoken and written standards (see Kachru for a discussion of English varieties in Asia). Arabic similarly recognizes regional or national standards as well as the more universal literary standard of the Koranic language. But whether we are dealing with standards of Standard or Standard, we are invariably thwarted by the problem of definition.

Try as they hurt, linguists have achieved nothing even closely approximating an exhaustive description of the varieties of English or any other modern language. Nor have they arrived at an understanding of the complex nature of language standards and the degree of variability permissible within what can be broadly termed acceptable usage. Put simply, the grammars and dictionaries of language are all open-ended. No matter how many correct ways of saying things we manage to collect, many are missed, and more still have yet to be invented. Ever since the publications of Claude François Fuger's Remarques sur la langue française, in 1589, the question of good usage in French has produced volumes of debate. Recent studies (for example, Harnett) suggest that after two centuries of central control language education, variation in French is as common as ever. Similarly, speakers of English solidarity on what they mean by Standard English, beyond an ideation of it with a vague prestige norm, and though the schools are frequently blamed for a failure to inculcate good English usage, there is little agreement on how acceptable language use is to be enforced. Instead, it is generally easier to reach a consensus on what is not standard—for example, double negatives (I don't got none), errors in subject-verb agreement (they was) or in the concord of pronouns with their referent (Everyone put on their coat).

Frequently, the usage experts find themselves on opposite sides of an issue. In his Daily-Book of Errors in English (1907), the lexicographer Frank Vizelley protested the common time-saving expression a quarter of seven on the grounds that it literally means "one and three-quarters"—that is, "seven divided by four." Vizelley favored the phrase a quarter to seven. More recent usage authorities (also 1907) contended that to mean "in the direction of" or "toward" and insisted that a quarter to seven can therefore only mean "one quarter of an hour in the direction of seven," or at fifteen. Baker chose as the only correct way to tell time the one rejected by Vizelley. This standoff leaves the perplexed seeker after Standard English to select between two equally illogical expressions. Neither expert mentioned a quarter till seven, a common variant that is virtually unobjectionable by the usage critics as skeletal, nor did they have the foresight to predict that the more neutral six forty-five would become the term most appropriate to today's digital timepieces.
1971 by the Conference on College Composition and Communication, the
"students' right to their own language." Arguing that each variety of a language
is a legitimate vehicle for communication and expression, the authors of the
ppamphet changed that to deny students the right to their dialect or native
language was a form of linguistic discrimination that robbed them of their
fundamental humanity. Such a view remains an important corrective to the
notion that there is one, and only one, right linguistic way to do things in
speech and writing. Of late, however, it has come to be tempered with the
equally compelling perception that possession of the standard language, or the
"language of wider communication," as it is sometimes called, represents a form
of economic and social empowerment, that denial of access to the standard
language produces a form of enslavement. Empowerment has become a catch
phrase, and confusion over the linguistic obligations of the schools is rampant,
with linguists, education specialists, and lawmakers still trying to sort out theory
and practice. In the Ann Arbor School decision (also called the King decision)
in 1979, the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan
ordered the Ann Arbor School Board to use the latest linguistic and pedagogical
knowledge to ensure that all students possessed the ability to speak, read, and
write Standard English (see Chambers; Smithers, Black English). The confu-
sion over standard language may result in absurd situations that place disadvan-
taged students in even further educational jeopardy. For example, attempts to
institute one English Spanish bilingual program in New York City were thwarted
by the insistence of Hispanic parents that the schools use standard Castilian
Spanish rather than the local Puerto Rican variety with which their children
were familiar. As a result, the children were forced to learn Spanish as a foreign
language, as well as English. It will be up to the English language specialists of the 1990s
to ascertain the effectiveness of second-language teaching and to contribute to
the resolution of the problems of majority-minority language education.

ORALITY AND LITERACY

Literacy is a protean term, changing with the times and charged with political
meaning. To be literate means to be educated or, more narrowly, to be able to
read and write. There was a time when to be literate meant knowing Latin, and
perhaps Greek as well. A literate person can simply indicate someone who
is "educated" or "educated," and its opposite very often refers disparagingly
to someone who does not know how to do, or disagree with our point
of view. What literacy has come to signify now, however, is its use in such common
expressions as "literacy crisis," "literacy market," and "those illiterate, that is, those who
don't have the individual or social level of competence needed to get along in life" (this
concept is also called functional literacy and refers to such minimal skills as reading
recipes or tool manuals and filling out job applications). More optimistic, perhaps

is the view of literacy as the ability of the individual to participate productively
in the national culture and economy.

More specifically, and more practically, linguistic empowerment focuses on
the development of literacy—reading and writing education. To these tradi-
called "basic" literacy, with its own opposition to "functional," psychological literacy,
"economic literacy, musical literacy, science literacy, computer literacy, and even television
E. D. Hirsch's umbrella term "cultural literacy," which has mesmerized educators and
social critics in the United States seeking a clearly defined, shared curriculum in order to
rejuvenate a culture, or at least an educational system, that they believe
perceived as both fragmented and failing. At the same time, cultural literacy has
generated strong opposition to its narrowness from traditional advocates of the "liberal
Western knowledge (some times disparagingly called "the books of dead white
minorities, the oppressed classes, the East, and the Third World—in short, of
most of humanity (see Schles in this volume)." Robert Parks and Harvey Graft, the latter in The Legacy of Literacy, have
outlines the history of views of literacy in order to demonstrate that it is no less
according to time and place. Jack Goody and Walter Ong have suggested ways
social organization and human consciousness and the literacy produced thereby
that reality and literacy are polar opposites. Taking her cue from composi-
tion and contextualized rather than noncultural and objectifying: such a theory
places literacy in the political context of class struggle, while Graft (Literacy
and E. B. Leacock has argued that literacy is a tool that society uses
to maintain stratification and segregate certain groups from the center of power
the advent of modern technology, suggesting, for example, that the linear
reading). Their questions range from the future—shock type (Will there be books
in 2011?) to more productive explorations of cognition and linguistic production.

The debate focuses scholarly interest in a wide range of fields on
likely to remain so, it promises to produce some valuable scholarship in the next
decade as linguists, cognitive psychologists, educators, and computer scientists
explore literary theory and examine the practical issues of reading and writing
instruction.
Eve and language

Dorothy Rowe

The questions of what language is and whose language it is to be standard hinge on a great extent on the distribution of power and prestige in a given society. They raise, as well, the related issue of language and gender, another example of language in social context that evokes cultural values and power relationships. Since the early 1970s, language sociologists have been examining the connections among language, sex, and gender to determine whether men and women use language differently and to remedy the sex bias perceived in English and other languages. Some researchers initially suggested that women and men favored distinct vocabularies (women use more color and fabric terms, men knew the names of tools). Others found women's language more tentacular, favoring trivializing adjectives and self-effacing constructions as sig questions (The theory is cute, isn't it?). Further investigation showed that vocabulary tends to be a function of experience: those who work with color and textiles, or with wood and machineries, whether male or female, know the appropriate terms. And self-effacing constructions may be used by those in subordinate roles in an interchange, or by those (un)consciously assuming one, nonobvious role, regardless of their sex.

The complexities of language use have made it difficult to sort language out on the basis of sex alone. While language is conditioned by social factors, and they in turn may be conditioned by sex bias, there has yet to be convincingly demonstrated that the biological distinctions of sex have context-independent linguistic reflexes. For example, even some pitch, which seems an obvious sex-linked characteristic, does not pattern categorically: not all men have low voices; not all women have high ones. Nonetheless, a stereotype of men's and women's language based on a sex extent on cultural assumptions about their biological and social roles, has persisted over many centuries. It is clear, too, that the axes are frequently portrayed as well as canonical literature as in-un language distinctly, and their differential access to language has largely been the subject of discussion in critical circles.

Since classical times, grammarians (who were generally men) have tried to ensure the dominance of the linguistic masculine in their patriarchally organized cultures. For example, the use of the term gender to identify certain morphological classes of nouns in Indo-European languages has been responsible for the attempts to trace gender categories to biology proved futile. Grammarians assigned priority to the class of nouns categorized as "masculine" in declension, giving them the "neutral" and "feminine" traits, though even more numerous, lower status in the grammatical pecking order. They assumed, as well, a system of generic reference in which a masculine noun or pronoun is used in representing not only masculine but mixed-sex groups-except for example, everyone loves his mother: Men is a dead man. A doctor should be in his opinion. In Italian, girls are le ragazze, but the addition of the infant boy to a group of 99,999 girls requires a masculine plural noun: i ragazzi. One language

referee earlier in this century argued that gender was an unnecessary category in English and proposed eliminating the feminine and neuter personal pronouns in favor of a generalized he, him.

The notion of women's speech has also been entrenched by views of women as subordinate to men. And because in the Genesis story the expulsion of the first couple from the Garden of Eden is attributed to Eve's speech and writing have often been discouraged or deliberately suppressed. Eve several centuries it was common to find the very word woman, from the Old English wef + maor, literally "female person," some suggestions to discover back up rather than Scripture reflected in language, voiced woman's initially meant "belly" or "stomach," thus raising an issue of position and the two,

Because Eve is physically derived from Adam in the Old Testament story of Genesis, or at least in one of the two creation myths retold in Genesis, women's words are also frequently supposed to derive from men's. Hence a woman who writes is still sometimes referred to as an appendage of the words that suggest differentiation or secondary status. Other masculine-feminine pairs imply a similar status gap between the sexes: woman-men, woman-men, master-men. Linguists have further observed a general semantic derogation of nouns that refer to women in English and other languages. Many negative terms for women originated as positive or neutral words from an Indo-European root meaning,"clear;""easement,""a member of the court"; "nuisance," a child of either sex." The word harlot referred only to men until the sixteenth century.

The marital system of kinship has developed accordingly, with a bias perceived to favor men: the title Mr. is neutral with regard to marital status in this, while Miss and Mrs. generally signal in western society.

The complications in the fact that the feminine term is sometimes sex-specific, Mrs.

being and for younger women, Mrs. for older. Furthermore, the words may mark marital status. Miss is used by many professional women who are married, while Mrs. is often retained by widowed or divorced women. Mrs., derived from the marriage-neutral use of Miss that was advocated by some feminists in the early twentieth century, was added to the paradigm as early as 1832 in the United States to restore gender balance to the "common" and "neutral" terms, even though it has become increasingly common, Mrs. remains controversial-though so among usage critics and the American literary establishment among the general cultural consumer. It recognizes the practical value of the term—and, to some extent, is an indication that it has simply court to replace Miss in the usage of many remarrying women.

In addition to the title paradigms, advocates of sex neutrality in language have targeted the English pronoun system, the word man in general refer;
ence to people, and compound nouns ending in -man on the grounds that
masculine bias in language reinforces discrimination in employment and has a
detrimental effect on self-image. In the past 130 years, more than eighty
proposals have been offered for a common gender pronoun to replace the generic
masculine he or the more loosely coordinate though often caustically he or she.
Then and the variations of her, hir, and herer were occasionally used in
public and were included, in a number of dictionaries. Because it is extremely difficult
to introduce an artificially conceived word into something so basic to a language
as the pronoun system, no extreme pronoun is likely to succeed for English.
However, the singular they, generally frowned on in formal writing, remains
the most common alternative to the more and more conscientious universal
masculine.
As the Oxford English Dictionary notes, English is the only Germanic lan-
guage that did not develop separate words to refer to man as "adult male" and
to man as "person, human being." Condition of the two functions of the word
produces confusion as well as bias, and many style manuals now recommend
that writers employ a nonbinary word like person when that is the sense
intended. Proposed alternatives to compound nouns ending in -man frequently
employ person—for example, sartorship—or they simply clip man from the
stem, as in chair. In other instances, mississippianeous putes may be neutralized
and standovers become flight attendants; actor and actress coalesce as actors;
waiter and waitress are replaced by server, serveress or wait, or occasionally by
such cognates as serf, with its pseudo-Latin plural, serfs.
Attention to the problem of sexist language has affected the style of edited
rejection English prose, particularly in the United States, and may ultimately
be a determinant in the course of the language in the late twentieth century.
In support of its stand against sex discrimination in employment, the United States
Government issued a revised, gender-neutral official list of job titles. The style
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warning writers not to refer to women as girls, using changing adjectives like
seminal to influence or nouns like seminar to study group. Feminist writers occasion-
ally propose fairly radical rewritings of English words to draw attention to
language discrimination and to correct it. French and German writers have also
explored their languages, which preserve grammatical gender in their noun
systems, to identify and correct the sexism inherent in language use and analysis.
While it is possible to argue that consciously changing language—a difficult task
to itself—is no guarantee that social attitudes will follow, it is impossible to
deny that language does influence how people think. Certainly, raising the
linguistic consciousness of speakers and writers can and does produce results,
though not always the results desired by language reformers. Research in the
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LANGUAGE TEACHING, PLANNING, AND LINGUISTIC ETHICS

As we have seen, linguists and other language specialists do not only observe
language in its natural habitat, they frequently use language to observe
language. Then and the variations of her, hir, and herer were occasionally used in
public and were included, in a number of dictionaries. Because it is extremely difficult
to introduce an artificially conceived word into something so basic to a language
as the pronoun system, no extreme pronoun is likely to succeed for English.
However, the singular they, generally frowned on in formal writing, remains
the most common alternative to the more and more conscientious universal
masculine.
As the Oxford English Dictionary notes, English is the only Germanic lan-
guage that did not develop separate words to refer to man as "adult male" and
to man as "person, human being." Condition of the two functions of the word
produces confusion as well as bias, and many style manuals now recommend
that writers employ a nonbinary word like person when that is the sense
intended. Proposed alternatives to compound nouns ending in -man frequently
employ person—for example, sartorship—or they simply clip man from the
stem, as in chair. In other instances, mississippianeous putes may be neutralized
and standovers become flight attendants; actor and actress coalesce as actors;
waiter and waitress are replaced by server, serveress or wait, or occasionally by
such cognates as serf, with its pseudo-Latin plural, serfs.
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find themselves in the uncomfortable position of having to serve as language arbiters without adequate preparation to do so.

Language teachers have always received both praise and blame from the general public for their traditional role in main-streaming language standards. Their opinions on correct grammar and usage are sought out, yet at the same time their judgments are feared or resented. One typical comment—which precludes further communication—should be familiar to language teachers: "Oh, you're an English (French, Latin, Japanese) teacher. I guess I'd better watch my grammar." Paradoxically, though they are considered language experts, the linguistic education of language teachers is often rudimentary, consisting of little more than a single course in descriptive grammar or history of the language, and they are consequently hard put to make the linguistic judgments required of them. Moreover, the contributions of linguistic theory to teacher training have often seemed unnecessarily abstract, indirect, or even at odds with the teaching mission (consider, for example, the failure of transformational-generative grammar to make an impact on the language teaching curriculum in the 1960s and 1970s). Clearly, teacher educators and curriculum development remain areas in which linguists and language teachers must learn to address each other with greater circumspection and effectiveness.

Linguists are often mocked by language commentators in the popular press for a supposed lack of standards. The charge that linguists are obsessively pernickety about language use, that they have no standards of their own and encourage others to abandon standards as well, wrongly confuses two separate issues: the scope of linguistic investigation and the contexts of language use. Assuming that language is by nature both complex and variable, linguists argue that, just as no language is inherently better than any other, the standard form of a language is not in essence superior to any other variety. It is simply the particular variety of the language that, through use and accident, has become the elite, prestigious, or official form of communication. Such a view is in no way denounces the standard, nor does it suggest that linguists abandon standard language in their own writing. Indeed, linguists are keenly aware of the contextual appropriateness of language, and when they write, they adhere to standards of formal, edited prose and expect their students to do the same.

In addition to serving as occasional objects of journalistic obloquy, linguists may disagree among themselves about their roles. Some linguists charge in the scholarly literature that their colleagues ignore the facts of language in favor of theories that fail to explain language phenomena adequately. They argue that an undue focus on standard language ignores language variety, particularly that of the nonelite, presenting an unbalanced picture of linguistic operations and placing users of nonstandard varieties as a disadvantage (see Friesius in this volume). They further charge that interfering with the language use of others, a quest often characterized in negative terms as linguistic engineering, is a violation both of scientific objectivity and a kind of Hyprocratic admonition to do no harm. In contrast, other linguists insist they have a distinct obligation to help nonstandard speakers learn the form of speech and writing associated with power and success. They maintain, as well, that it is naive to arrive for objectivity in language investigation, since we must use language to study language and since the very examination of linguistic features interferes with the phenomenon under study. They warn that if linguists, whose job it is to know the history and structure of language, do not involve themselves in issues of language standardization as well as in schemes for language modernization or improvement, these matters will be left in the hands of amateurs (Wyld's "cranks and quacks") whose interests are conceivably less enlightened and whose insights into language operations are certain to be less acute (see, for example, Greenbaum, Good English).

It is not likely that either side of this ethical debate will prevail in the near future. In fact, it may be that both points of view are necessary correctives to any single view of language: after all, it is disagreement among experts, rather than consensus, that keeps us all honest and provides the impetus for further investigation. More important, perhaps, than achieving consensus, is the increasing recognition that we must acknowledge and better understand the impact of the language opinions of linguists and nonlinguists alike. As Richard Bailey reminds us, ideas about language based on myth and misinformation are as real and powerful as those based on fact; both affect the way that language is perceived and used; both affect the way that users of language are treated, and both are appropriate objects of further study for the linguist.

Suggestions for Further Reading

Some good general introductions include such textbooks as Richard A. Hudson's Sociolinguistics and Ronald Wardhaugh's Introduction to Sociolinguistics and the updated collection of essays edited by John E. O. McCrum, Dell Hymes, as well as the sociolinguistics volume Linguistics: The Cambridge Survey, edited by Frederick J. Newmeyer, J. Maxwell Atkinson and John Heritage have edited a basic collection of essays on conversational analysis. Language and Nation. Wardhaugh (Languages) and Louis-Jean Coder discuss the effects of imposing English and French at home in Great Britain and France and in colonies and former colonies abroad. Ernst Haugen's classic study of Norwegian language planning was published in 1960, and the three-volume collection edited by Istvan Fodor and Claude Hagège contains essays on language reform and standardization in many other countries. Sidney Greenbaum (English Language) surveys linguistic attitudes in English-speaking nongt, and Richard W. Bailey and Manfred Görlach examine the variety and spread of English throughout the world. The Official Language Question, Joshua Fishman et al. (Language Loyalty) discuss, as their subtitle indicates, the maintenance and perpetuation of non-English mother tongues by American ethnic and religious groups; Fishman et
al. (Ethnic Revival) update this classic work. Arnold M. Leibowitz focuses on official- and minority-language legislation and case law in the United States. Calvin Veltman convincingly demonstrates the adoption of English by minority-language speakers in the United States. Heinz Kloss and Dennis Baron (English-Only Question) trace the official-English question and the status of minority languages in the country for the past two centuries, while Kenji Hakuta discusses changing theories of bilingualism. And James Crawford discusses the history and effectiveness of American bilingual education programs.

Language Variety and Standard Language. Basic studies in attitudes toward variation and standardization in English include Edward Fregnan's Anatomies and Baron's Grammar and Good Taste and Declining Grammar. No student of the subject can ignore William Labov's work on linguistic insecurity and on Black English. Two collections of essays (Ferguson and Heath; Trudgill) discuss the language situation in the United States and Great Britain, respectively. John Earl Joseph examines language standardization for a variety of languages. The first volume of the Dictionary of American Regional English (DARE), edited by Frederic G. Cassidy, appeared in 1987; the second volume is scheduled to appear in 1992. DARE contains the most up-to-date survey of lexical variation in the United States, with computer-generated maps indicating frequency of occurrence of variants of forms. Webster's Dictionary of English Usage provides a detailed summary of usage controversies against a background of historical citations and offers sensible advice for the perplexed.

Quality and Literacy. In the past decade, scholarly treatments of literacy have appeared at an impressive rate. In addition to the basic works listed in the essay are several recommended volumes. William V. Harris examines literacy in the Greek and Roman world, Michael T. Clanchy traces the shift from mistrust of the written word to an increasing dependence on it in thirteenth-century England, and Robert Allan Houston sketches a history of literacy in early modern Europe. The collection edited by Richard W. Bailey and Robin Melanie Poolehim for the MLA contains essential essays on the users, uses, and politics of literacy. Collectors by David R. Olson, Nancy Tormore, and Angela Hildyard, by Suzanne de Castell, Allan Luke, and Kieran Egan, and by Andrea A. Lunford, Helene Moglen, and James Slevin address the alleged literacy crisis from a variety of critical perspectives.

Language and Gender. This area, too, has seen a great deal of publication activity in recent years. Casey Miller and Kate Swift convincingly demonstrate in Words and Women the bias against women to be found in the ways English is used, and offer in The Handbook of Nonsexist Writing a detailed set of suggestions for neutralizing the bias. Chris Kramarae discusses differences in the language of men and women to the relative power they exert in social situations. The collection edited by Barrie Thorne, Kramarae, and Nancy Henley discusses the issue of sexism in language from a variety of social science and philosophical perspectives. Baron in Grammar and Gender surveys the treatment of gender issues in works about language—dictionaries, grammars, etymologies, and general commentaries—showing how stereotypes of sex roles have influenced the way we look at language. Deborah Tannen argues that because American women and men live in different worlds, their conversation, or lack of it, resembles. And Francine Warrman Frank and Paula A. Treichler offer a carefully reasoned theoretical context for sex-neutral language, together with specific recommendations for unbiased academic writing.

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WORKS CITED


