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- Thomason, Sarah G. and Kaufman, Terrence (1988). *Language Contact, Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
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## 19 Bilingualism and Gender

INGRID PILLER AND ANETA PAVLENKO

### 19.1 Introduction

The field of language and gender research has “exploded” (Kendall and Tannen, 2001) since 1990. One of the directions in which the field has expanded is away from its former monolingual bias towards research into the ways in which gender is played out in multilingual contexts. This increase in research activity is apparent from a number of recent review articles (Ehrlich, 1997; Pavlenko, 2001a; Pavlenko and Piller, 2001; Sunderland, 2000; Winter and Pauwels, 2000) and edited volumes (Burton, Dyson, and Ardener, 1994; Pavlenko, Blackledge, Piller, and Teutsch-Dwyer, 2001). The expansion of language and gender research into multilingual contexts was made possible by a paradigm shift in the field which entailed a reorientation away from an early focus on “women’s language” towards an understanding of gender as a system of social relations. Gender is now seen as structuring social contexts and, by implication, language use in a given context. We will start out by reviewing this paradigm shift (section 19.2), and then we will go on to provide an overview of the interplay between bilingualism and gender in five social contexts, which tend to be heavily gendered in many societies. These five contexts are the marketplace (section 19.3), intimate relationships (section 19.4), parent–child relationships (section 19.5), friendship networks (section 19.6) and education (section 19.7). In the concluding section we will discuss three factors that mediate the relationship between bilingualism and gender in all these contexts, namely ideology, access, and motivation. Throughout, our definition of bilingualism is an inclusive one, and we consider the use of two or more languages on a regular basis, irrespective of proficiency and age of acquisition as a bilingual practice (cf. Grosjean, 1982).

## 19.2 Approaches to Language and Gender

The expansion of the field of language and gender in the early 1990s was made possible by a theoretical reorientation of the field towards poststructuralist approaches. Prior to that, language and gender research had mainly been concerned with "women's language" and how it differed from "men's language." At the time of the inception of the field in the 1970s, bilingualism and gender was immediately put on the table as a promising area of inquiry (Gal, 1978; Schlieben-Lange, 1977; Solé, 1978). However, this early work in bilingual contexts found only few followers. Until the publication of Burton et al. (1994), language and gender researchers steered as clear of bilingualism as bilingualism researchers did of gender issues. The rather limited number of bilingualism and gender studies published during that early period adopted one of three frameworks, which also dominated the more general field of language and gender at that time: deficit, difference, or dominance.

In the deficit framework women are seen as a "muted group" (Ardener, 1975) of inferior language users, who speak a "powerless language": uncertain, weak, excessively polite, full of hedges, tag questions, emphatic stresses, and hypercorrect grammar (Lakoff, 1975). In the study of bilingualism, this approach translated into the "linguistic lag hypothesis," which suggests that minority women are less bilingual than men, and, thus, lagging linguistically behind them (Stevens, 1986). The deficit framework has been criticized because it treats men's linguistic practices as the norm, renders women's linguistic practices as problematic, treats women as an undifferentiated group, and postulates a one-to-one mapping between linguistic phenomena and their meaning (see Talbot (1998) for an overview). With regard to bilingual women, Gal (1991) and Spedding (1994) argued that women might be rendered mute and monolingual by the research context itself. They suggested that some of the earlier studies might have misrepresented the extent of women's bilingualism because it would not have become apparent in the "unequal encounters" with white middle-class male anthropologists, linguists, and ethnographers.

The dominance framework is similar to the deficit framework in that it is also centrally concerned with women's vs. men's language. However, it explains the speech differences between the two groups differently, preferring to theorize them as a result of male dominance and female oppression. Key studies in this framework showed that men dominate conversations by interrupting women (e.g. West and Zimmerman, 1983) or by failing to listen and to uphold their end of the conversational bargain (e.g. Fishman, 1983). In the study of bilingualism, the dominance approach offered an alternative interpretation of the presumed fact that women were less proficient bilinguals than men by portraying them as linguistically oppressed (Burton, 1994). Despite the fact that this framework explicitly acknowledges the importance of power relations, criticism of the dominance model has centered around the fact that it fails to recognize the social, historical, and political situatedness of power, the

effects of which are mediated not only by gender, but also by class, race, ethnicity, and sexuality (Cameron, 1992; Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 1992). Therefore, the dominance approach oversimplifies gender relations by portraying "women-as-a-group" as dominated by "men-as-a-group," and by overlooking the fact that ethnic or sexual minority men may be equally oppressed, and that women themselves may be part of the dominant group in a society (e.g. white middle-class women). This matters even more in bilingual than in monolingual contexts as bilingual contexts are often characterized by long-standing status differences between majority and minority language groups. In addition, it was also shown that the presumed fact that women are less bilingual than men simply did not stand up to closer scrutiny in a range of contexts. On the contrary, not only did women in some contexts turn out to be more bilingual than the men in their community, but it was also shown that it often was the women who initiated language shift in their community (Constantinidou, 1994; Gal, 1978; Holmes, 1993; McDonald, 1994; Schlieben-Lange, 1977; Solé, 1978).

Finally, the difference framework shares the basic research question "how do women and men use language differently?" with the deficit and the dominance framework. However, in contrast to both, it does not seek to explain these differences, but rather argues that sex or gender constitute the explanation in themselves. That is, women and men talk differently because they belong to two different sex categories (as, for instance, Chambers (1995) has argued) or because they belong to two different gender categories (as most famously espoused in the work of Tannen (1986, 1990, 1994)). This approach was most readily transferred to bilingual contexts by researchers in second language acquisition, who often posit that female learners generally do better than males (see Ellis (1994) for an overview). This claim, of course, does not sit easily with the assumption that women are less bilingual than men, which was embraced by the deficit and dominance frameworks, as we have shown. And, not surprisingly, there is indeed evidence to the contrary as well: sometimes female learners of a second language do worse than male learners (Hill, 1987; Holmes, 1993; Polanyi, 1995).

All three frameworks – deficit, dominance, and difference – reached an impasse in the late 1980s and early 1990s when more and more contradictory findings appeared. Conflicting evidence produced by researchers pursuing the same basic question "how do women and men speak differently?" – or, in the more specific form relevant to this chapter, "are women more or less bilingual than men?" – made the question itself seem fundamentally misguided. It became apparent that the question betrayed an unjustifiable universalizing assumption, which obscures heterogeneity across and within cultures (e.g. Bergvall, Bing, and Freed, 1996; Bucholtz, Liang, and Sutton, 1999; Cameron, 1992, 1998; Crawford, 1995; Hall and Bucholtz, 1995; Talbot, 1998). On the basis of this assumption, findings that are true for, say, the English-speaking monolingual white middle class of urban America had all too easily been transferred to other contexts. Consequently, the static opposition between

“women’s language” and “men’s language” was reappraised in a paradigm shift towards a variety of feminist poststructuralist approaches.

Feminist poststructuralist approaches, as applied to linguistics by Cameron (1992, 1997, 1998), cease to view language as a set of disembodied structures. Instead, language becomes the locus of social organization, power, individual consciousness, and a form of symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1991). Language use, in turn, is considered a situated process of participation in multiple and overlapping communities of practice, which may entail the negotiation of ways of being a person in that context (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 1992; Holmes and Meyerhoff, 1999). Furthermore, gender cannot be fully understood as an individual attribute: femininities relate to masculinities and all are connected to other social categories. Gender is thus no longer seen as a set of traits, a variable or a role, but as a product of social doings, “a system of culturally constructed relations of power, produced and reproduced in interaction between and among men and women” (Gal, 1991, p. 176). Thus, the production of gender, ideologies of gender, and beliefs and ideas about relations between the sexes vary over time and across cultures (Bonvillain, 1995). With language seen as a collection of heterogeneous discourses, individual linguistic strategies are no longer directly linked to gender and cease to be the main focus of research. Instead, the locus of study shifts to ideologies of language and gender, which embody speakers’ normative conceptions of gender identities, gender relations and gender-appropriate uses of language, and are produced, reproduced, challenged and negotiated in talk, and other forms of discourse (Bergvall, 1999). Similarly, with gender seen as a system of social relations and discursive practices, the goal of the study of language and gender becomes twofold: on the one hand, to study ways in which gender is constructed and negotiated in multiple discourses, and, on the other, to investigate the effects of gender on individuals’ access to linguistic resources and possibilities of expression.

Feminist poststructuralism also allows us to view the relationship between bilingualism and gender in a new light (Pavlenko, 2001a; Pavlenko and Piller, 2001). Instead of asking whether it is women or men who are more or less bilingual, research interest shifts towards the linguistic practices of particular women and particular men living in specific communities at a specific point in history. In turn, their linguistic practices are interpreted in terms of access to linguistic resources, agency, and gender performance. As noted above, in the following, we will exemplify this approach, as well as its findings, with case studies from the bilingual marketplace, intimate relationships, parent–child relationships, friendship networks, and classrooms.

### 19.3 Gender in the Bilingual Marketplace

The job market and workplaces constitute prime discursive spaces where access to linguistic resources may be gendered. These are major sites where

the symbolic capital of linguistic practices is transformed into economic and social capital. In bilingual contexts this means that knowledge of or proficiency in the majority language or the more highly valued language (or languages) will allow speakers to compete for more prestigious, better-paid or physically less strenuous jobs and to pursue career paths that will advance them socially and economically. By contrast, not knowing the “right” language/s often renders other forms of symbolic capital (e.g. professional expertise) worthless or diminishes their value, as is seen, for instance, in the numerous cases of highly qualified immigrant professionals who are finding it difficult to restart their careers in a new country.

Gendered economic prospects can explain why minority women are often found to be less proficient in the majority language than a community’s men. If a society assigns the role of breadwinner to men and unpaid domestic work to women – as many societies do – men may encounter more opportunities to become bilingual, since more chances for interactions in the majority language exist outside the home. This pattern has been reported for many indigenous communities in Latin America (e.g. Hill, 1987; Spedding, 1994). There, men are likely to be more proficient in Spanish than women because they are more likely to engage in paid work. By contrast, women are more likely to be restricted to non-paid domestic and agricultural work. For instance, Hill (1987) studied the use of Spanish and Mexicano, or Nahuatl, in rural communities in the region of the Malinche Volcano in Mexico. Women in this community had less access to education than men and spoke less Spanish. As a result, it was difficult for them to join the paid labor force, for which the use of Spanish was crucial, and they had limited opportunities to practice whatever Spanish they knew. Often, a vicious circle emerges in which limited proficiency in the majority language limits access to paid employment, which, in turn, limits interactional opportunities in the majority language.

It comes as no surprise that women in such contexts often relate their bleak social and economic situation to their use of the minority language. Consequently, they may be ready to spearhead language shift to the majority language if they have the opportunity. This pattern was first demonstrated by Gal (1978) in her work on the bilingual town of Oberwart in Austria. In the minority Hungarian community there, young women led the shift towards German. They were motivated by a symbolic link between German and industrial work that was becoming available at the time. For these peasant women, (German-speaking) factory work represented a significant improvement over the drudgery of (Hungarian-speaking) peasant life. McDonald (1994) reports similar findings for Breton peasant women for whom language shift from Breton to French represented a symbolic journey “from cow-shit to finery” (McDonald, 1994, p. 91). At the time of the research, young women moved away from rural Brittany in droves, in search of a better life in the urban centers. Of course, the move entailed a language shift away from Breton towards French. The gendered migration pattern was so pronounced that Breton-speaking men could not find local wives, just like the Hungarian peasant men

in Oberwart. As a result, a new New Year greeting emerged in Breton: "I wish you a Happy New Year and a lady wife before it's out." (McDonald, 1994, p. 100). Even those women who stayed on and married local men spoke French to their children instead of Breton, in the hope that this would afford their children better social and economic opportunities than they themselves had had. In Constantinidou's (1994) work in Scotland, old Scottish Gaelic-speaking women reported that they had had similar hopes when they started to transmit English, rather than Gaelic, to their children early in the twentieth century.

However, while many researchers attribute minority and immigrant men's greater bilingualism to their role as breadwinners, Goldstein (1996, 2001) and Holmes (1993) show that participation in the workforce alone does not guarantee access to the majority language for women. Even when they are in paid employment, minority women are more often employed in workplaces where only the minority language is used. In her review of language maintenance and shift among immigrant communities in Australia and New Zealand, Holmes (1993) found that immigrant men were more often employed in workplaces where English was required than immigrant women, who often worked in places where they used their native language. Similarly, Goldstein (1996, 2001) found in her ethnographic work with immigrant Portuguese women in a Canadian factory that the unspoken rules of that workplace prevented the women from using English. Portuguese was considered as the solidarity code by all the workers, who were either native speakers of Portuguese or proficient second language users of Portuguese (as was the case for some Spanish- and Italian-speaking women in that factory). Consequently, this Toronto workplace afforded no opportunities to interact in English, and many of the women assembly-line workers did not speak or understand it well. Goldstein (1996, 2001) points out that while this practice ensured solidarity and cooperation on the factory floor, it also kept the women in question from the social and economic advancement that their English-speaking compatriots enjoyed. Furthermore, the researcher also points out that gender relations in the immigrant Portuguese community further limited the women's access to educational opportunities. It was, for instance, considered unacceptable for women to be in a classroom with male strangers, thereby preventing them from attending ESL classes.

Indeed it is often the case that communities have gatekeeping practices in place that restrict access to the most valued forms of linguistic capital. Ehrlich (2001), for instance, describes how sexual harassment or the fear of sexual harassment is a powerful deterrent that keeps women language learners – be they from minority and immigrant backgrounds or exchange students and sojourners in a foreign country – from seeking out interactions in the target language. In this view, sexual harassment is a form of social and economic, as well as sexual coercion. The same goes for less tangible gatekeeping practices such as ridicule and reprimands, which are most often expressions of ideologies about interpersonal relationships – intimate, parenting or friendship

relationships – and we will investigate how such ideologies structure bilingualism in the following sections.

In sum, linguistic capital can be transformed into social and economic capital in the bilingual marketplace. Societal groups vie for access to symbolic capital just as they vie for access to social and economic capital. Given that many societies are structured hierarchically along gender lines it is not surprising that women's access to the most valued forms of linguistic capital – the first of which, in bilingual contexts, is most often proficiency in the majority or dominant language – is often limited, as is their access to social and economic capital. At the same time, access to the most valued forms of linguistic capital may hold out greater promise for women than for men and they may seek to obtain it more actively than men. Of course, economic considerations are just one of many that motivate human practices, including bilingualism. In the following we will turn to gender and bilingualism in the family, a context where actions are more typically motivated by love and affection and the need for affiliation and group membership. For the sake of textual organization, we break the family context up into one of intimate relationships (section 19.4) and one of parent-child relationships (section 19.5).

## 19.4 Gender in Bilingual Intimate Relationships

Another important discursive space for the construction of gender is the context of romantic love and intimate relationships. Comparatively few cultures explicitly sanction exogamy and treat bilingual intimate relationships as the norm. Such groups include the Tucanoan in the Vaupés region of Brazil and Colombia (Gomez-Imbert, 1986; Grimes, 1985; Jackson, 1983), as well as some groups on the Solomon Islands (Lincoln, 1979) and in New Guinea (Salisbury, 1962). All the members of these communities are multilingual, and the rule of exogamy requires that marriage partners must be sought from another language group. Residence is patrilocal, but both husband and wife continue to use their native language actively and receive the other's language in return. In these communities the gender identity of a person is clearly marked by the language he or she speaks. Evidence from exogamous cultures such as these suggests that multilingual groups in which each member uses mainly one language actively and understands many others passively are much better equipped to deal with the threat that globalization poses to minority-language maintenance than are traditionally monolingual minority groups (Holmes, 1992).

By contrast, the vast majority of cultures consider linguistic outmarriage as a deviation from endogamous norms. Minority groups that do not sanction exogamy but are characterized by high levels of exogamy (because of their proximity to another group or the effects of internationalization and globalization), often express concern that exogamy will lead to language shift and language loss. In the Canadian context, for instance, talk about the "threat"

of exogamy to francophone language maintenance (Bernard, 1994) is common. Exogamy takes on even more sinister connotations when it is described as a "Trojan horse" type of threat (Mougeon, Savard, and Carroll, 1978). It is most often women who are faced with such negative perceptions of their exogamous relationships because women are also often seen as the "guardians of the minority language" who, as mothers, socialize the next generation into the community (see section 19.5 for details). Heller and Lévy (1992a, b, 1994), for instance, describe the sense of guilt that an ideology of treason – to their native language and culture – engenders in francophone Canadian women married to anglophone men. Similarly, many of the female partners in the Afrikaans-English marriages studied by De Klerk (2001) report initial negative reactions to their exogamous choice by their families and friends, as do female partners in Castellano-Catalan marriages (Boix, 1997). In Mexican culture there is even the archetype of La Malinche, whose story warns of the dangers of seeking out a partner from another culture (Lenchek, 1997). La Malinche, an Aztec woman who was given to Cortes as a slave and who became his interpreter and lover, is said to be responsible for the success of the conquest (conveniently ignoring the Spaniards' superior firepower, the diseases they brought, and the internal weakness of the Aztec empire). The moral of the La Malinche story thus equates female bilingualism with treason and loose sexual morals. Immigrant communities that are strongly preoccupied with maintaining their native language, culture and traditions often attempt to do so by sexual coercion of their daughters. In her interviews with Filipina Americans, Espiritu (2001) learned that immigrant families from the Philippines tend to restrict the autonomy, mobility, and personal decision making of their daughters more than those of their sons in an effort to maintain the daughters' sexual virtue and, thereby, their virtue as potential transmitters of the home language and culture. If daughters make independent choices, their behavior is described as cultural ignorance and betrayal – an accusation which hurt even the more "rebellious" daughters deeply. Attempts to maintain the minority language and culture are thus part and parcel of a patriarchal discourse of "cultural 'authenticity' that locates family honor and national integrity in the group's female members" (Espiritu, 2001, p. 435).

However, despite the fact that exogamy is often met with disapproval in the culture of origin, bilingual relationships are on the rise internationally, as chances for people from different backgrounds to meet have been increasing dramatically. Often, the desire to learn another language goes hand in hand with a sexual desire for a partner from another culture. This was already evident in the work of Gal (1978) and McDonald (1994) (see section 19.3). Furthermore, many of the participants in Piller's (2002) study of English-German couples reported a long-standing desire for the other language and culture that for some culminated in their choice of a partner from that background. A German woman, for instance, describes how she spent her adolescence listening to the British Forces Radio, imagining herself as English and dreaming of English men. At the same time, her future husband, a Briton, read

German literature and watched German movies of the 1970s and imagined himself leading the life of an intellectual Bohemian in continental Europe. Similarly, Espin (1999) found in her interviews with migrant women to the USA that many considered that becoming bilingual and becoming romantically involved with a partner from the target culture somehow belonged together. Like some of the Filipinas interviewed by Espiritu (2001), they saw a love affair with a partner from another culture as the only way to break free from the sexual restrictions imposed on them by their native families. This connection between language desire and sexual desire is most apparent in Takahashi's (2001) exploration of the English-learning journeys of young Japanese students in Australia. This researcher finds that many of the women tell stories of "akogare," 'desire' for the English language and for Western men that motivate them in their pursuit of an overseas education at an Australian university. Some of them take finding an Australian boyfriend as an important measure of their success in learning English. By contrast, the male students in the sample do not have discourses of "akogare" at their disposal and romantic relationships are not an avenue into the target language and culture that they imagine for themselves. The gendered desires of the learners are matched by those of their host society, which also portrays Asian women as desirable partners for Western men, but does not view Asian men as desirable partners for Western women.

Once a bilingual intimate relationship has been established, the question of language choice arises. It is often assumed that this is a gendered choice in which the male partner's language prevails because women are "more likely to adapt their language use than men in cross-language relationships" (Lyon, 1996, p. 188; quoted in De Klerk, 2001, p. 209). Piller (2002) shows that bilingual couples do not necessarily choose between the two languages but often engage in a range of bilingual practices which allow them to use and maintain both languages. Thus, the question whether "her" or "his" language is chosen by bilingual couples is misguided in itself. Furthermore, the evidence that suggests that it is the male partner's language that is preferably chosen needs to be re-evaluated in the light of residence and proficiency. To begin with residence, Piller (2001b) shows that migration patterns are a prime factor which genders a couple's language choice. International couples from developed countries are more likely to choose the male partner's native country as their place of residence than the female's. This preference is due to economic reasons: migration often involves downward occupational mobility, and on average women continue to earn less than men. Therefore, migration of the male partner would be more disadvantageous for the couple as an economic unit than migration of the female partner tends to be. Secondly, proficiency overrides gender factors and it is gendered research, with its traditional focus on women's – rather than everyone's – practices, which may have produced the impression that women are more likely to adapt to their partner's language than vice versa. For instance, the work of Heller and Lévy (1992a, b, 1994) shows indeed that the couple language for the anglophone and francophone Canadian couples

they studied was the husband's language in the overwhelming majority of cases. However, the explanation for that pattern is a proficiency issue rather than a gender issue. All the wives in the sample were francophone and all the husbands were anglophone. While all the wives could speak at least some English when they met their partner, few of the husbands could speak any French at the time. Further evidence for the crucial importance of proficiency comes from De Klerk's (2001) study where the gender-nexus does not hold. Most of the Afrikaans- and English-speaking couples in South Africa whom this researcher interviewed had chosen English over Afrikaans as their couple language irrespective of whether it was the female or the male partner who had Afrikaans or English as their first language. The couples explained that in most cases the English-speaking partner had had little or no Afrikaans at the time they met while the Afrikaans-speaking partners in all cases knew at least some English. In yet another context, it is the female partner's language that is chosen in most cases. In his interviews with Anglophone wives married to Tunisian husbands in Tunisia, Walters (1996) found that most of them used English together, and some French, the colonial lingua franca. However, no couple used Tunisian Arabic with each other and very few of the women were actually proficient in it. Indeed, this study shows that the partner whose language is chosen is not necessarily at an advantage – an assumption that, explicitly or implicitly, often pervades work on linguistic intermarriage. By contrast, Walters (1996) found that the women would have loved to learn more Arabic but found that their husbands did not necessarily support their endeavors. As reasons the researcher cites the fact that the men felt that Tunisian Arabic-speaking Western wives would sound stupid and would lose their status as "trophy wives." For the women, their limited proficiency in Arabic resulted in exclusion from or restricted access to female family and friendship networks and limited control over their children's education (see section 19.5). Evidence that linguistic accommodation in an intimate relationship is not necessarily beneficial to the speaker who is accommodated to also comes from the work of Teutsch-Dwyer (2001). This longitudinal study of the naturalistic acquisition of English in the USA by a Polish man in his thirties found that the man's English fossilized at a very early stage. It emerged that one of the reasons for his lack of bilingual development was the fact that his American girlfriend accommodated to his limited proficiency: she only used basic grammatical structures and only lexical items which she knew he could understand. These accommodations, as well as those of other female members of his circle of friends and acquaintances, hampered his acquisition of English considerably.

In sum, the gendered nature of intimate relationships also genders bilingualism. In exogamous cultures, gender may be indexed by the language a person uses. In endogamous societies, some people may be motivated to imagine new and different identities for themselves which they aim to attain through becoming bilingual and engaging in intimate relationships with a partner from the target group. To date, female attempts to transcend the

confines of their native language and culture have been more often recorded than those of men. However, as argued in Pavlenko's (2001b) study of immigrant narratives and language learning memoirs, rather than reflecting "reality," this disparity suggests that in some cases women may be more willing than men to discuss intimate relationships.

## 19.5 Gender in Bilingual Parent-Child Relationships

As we showed in the previous section, female exogamy is considered problematic in many cultures. This is so because images of ideal femininity place women firmly inside the community, making them the transmitters of the home language, and of cultural, ethnic, and religious traditions. Consequently, language maintenance efforts in immigrant and minority communities are often seen to stand and fall with the community's women. In many cultures, parenting practices are strongly gendered and mothers spend significantly more time socializing their children than fathers do. If that is the case, it is not surprising to find that minority languages are better maintained if the mothers are the minority speakers or choose to transmit the minority language. An example comes from Boyd's (1998) study of the maintenance of English in the children of US-Americans married to Danes, Finns, or Swedes in Scandinavia. The children of these couples were more fluent in English – in addition to the local Scandinavian language – if the mother was the English speaker. The researcher explains this pattern as a result of gendered family roles: a breadwinner father who uses English "virtually all the time" with his child, will expose the child far less to English than a homemaker mother who uses English to the same degree.

However, as we demonstrated in section 19.3, the role of guardians of the minority language is not always accepted by mothers. For instance, Constantinidou (1994) and McDonald (1994) show that Scottish Gaelic- and Breton-speaking mothers chose to educate their children in English and French respectively because they felt that would open opportunities to their children they themselves had been denied. Indeed, mothers often seem rather reluctant "guardians" of the minority language and culture. Language transmission is often forced upon them by ideologies of femininity and motherhood which obfuscate the fact that the "guardian" role is not highly valued and comes at a significant price for their own bilingualism. In the contexts of indigenous Latin America (Hill, 1987; Spedding, 1994; see section 19.3 for details), for instance, local ideologies construct indigenous women as more Indian than men, both in their looks and in their speech. This Indianness, in turn, positions women simultaneously as guardians of the home language and as backward members of the community. Another example comes from Kouritzin's (2000) interviews with immigrant mothers in Canada. One woman, an immigrant from India, could not attend ESL classes despite the provision of government-funded



childcare because her husband was adamant that only family – which, in the absence of an extended family in the migration context, meant the mother – should care for the children. In an attempt to explain the origins of bilingual mothers' frequent linguistic oppression, Cameron (1992) points to the paradoxical situation in which many immigrant and minority men find themselves with regard to assimilation: while beneficial socially and economically, it may also undermine their way of life, their values, their beliefs, and ultimately their ethnic and cultural identity. Positioning women-as-mothers in charge of language maintenance may become a way out: "In a male-dominated society, men can resolve this problem by taking the rewards of cultural change for themselves while requiring the community's women to be living symbols of tradition" (Cameron, 1992, p. 202). (For an additional case in which women are seen as carriers of the traditional culture, see chapter 29.)

Furthermore, ideologies of motherhood do not only emanate from the minority community and place language maintenance in the mothers' hands. Because of their roles as prime caregivers and socializers of the next generation, immigrant and minority mothers may also become the target of assimilatory efforts on the part of the majority culture. An example comes from the "Americanization" movement at the beginning of the twentieth century. Then, immigrant women were seen as the main reason for the insufficient assimilation of immigrants and thus became the key locus of educational efforts. The Association of Collegiate Alumnae in Milwaukee, for instance, argued that "one of the gravest problems that our harassed government has to face at the present moment is the Americanization of emigrant women, the mothers of the citizens of the future" (1916–17; as cited in Schlossman, 1983, p. 177). Similarly, McClymer (1982, p. 98) demonstrates that the General Federation of Women's Clubs viewed immigrant mothers as a "reactionary force" and became determined to "carry the English language and American ways of caring for babies, ventilating the house, preparing American vegetables, instead of the inevitable cabbage, right into the new houses." Not all assimilatory approaches are necessarily as forceful as the early Americanization movement was, but oppressive ideologies of motherhood may also inform approaches from the majority to the minority in the more benign context of contemporary social work with its "benevolent racism" (Villenas, 2001). Blackledge (2000, 2001), for instance, describes how British primary school teachers talk about the mothers of their Bangladeshi pupils. They imagine those mothers to be the primary caregivers while fathers are imagined to be largely absent from the household. At the same time, those mothers were perceived as incompetent caregivers who had nothing to contribute to their children's education, particularly their literacy in English. As the researcher convincingly argues, less stereotypical views of Bangladeshi women, and Muslim women more generally, might have opened avenues to bilingual education in which the parents could have supported their children's education in English and Bengali.

These findings are echoed by Villenas (2001) in her ethnographic work with Latina mothers in a small town in North Carolina. Public discourses in that town are pervaded by a perception of Latin immigrants as a problem. As such they are at the receiving end of all kinds of "helping" responses from welfare agents, who unwittingly strengthen this perception. Latina women are portrayed as a particular problem because they are seen as victims of the Latino men's machismo, and as lacking English, culture, and, particularly, parenting skills. Thus, Villenas's (2001) discussion offers convincing evidence that the use of English and white middle-class parenting practices are normalized while Spanish and Hispanic cultural practices, including parenting, are pathologized. The women Blackledge (2000, 2001) and Villenas (2001) spoke to affirmed the value of their own linguistic and parenting practices in the face of racist attitudes – whether benevolent or not – on the part of the majority society. Their insistence on maintaining their traditional culture, which they saw as one of the few avenues they had in the face of poverty in their native countries and discrimination in their new ones, was interpreted by the majority society as mindless submission to Muslim or Latino patriarchy.

In sum, in the eyes of minority communities, women-as-mothers may become the main "culprits" for initiating language change. At the same time, the dominant society may blame these same women for being a reactionary force that resists and subverts assimilation efforts. Thus, in a classical double-bind situation, bilingual mothers carry the double burden of guarding the minority language and culture and facilitating their children's entry into the majority language and culture.

## 19.6 Gender in Bilingual Friendship Networks

While most of the work on gender in bilingual contexts centers on women, there is some work in the context of bilingual friendship networks that centers around boys' and men's practices. Woolard's (1997) ethnographic case study of high school students in the Barcelona area was one of the first to indicate that gender differences in the ways in which friendship networks are structured can affect the use of the bilingual repertoire. In that context, the girls' friendship circles were more solidary and cohesive than the boys' groups. Therefore the girls' groups favored ethnic and linguistic homogeneity and set stronger constraints on linguistic behavior. In contrast, the boys' peer groups often were ethnically mixed and linguistically diverse, with Catalan and Castilian boys mixing more freely than Catalan and Castilian girls. As a result, the girls were more monolingual in either Catalan or Castilian while the boys tended to be more bilingual.

However, it is not only between girls and boys that differences in bilingual friendship practices emerge. Different boys' friendship groups also value different forms of masculinity and use their two languages differently, as



Pujolar (1997, 2001) shows. This researcher also worked in Barcelona, and the participants in his ethnographic study were two groups of adolescents, the *Ramblers* and the *Trepas*. The *Ramblers* were a tight-knit friendship group of working-class adolescents of Castilian descent. They usually spoke Castilian with each other although they had grown up in Barcelona, had learnt Catalan in school, and some of them had to use it at work. By contrast, the members of the *Trepas* group, who were also children of Castilian-speaking immigrants, made significant efforts to use Catalan in their group. In contrast to the *Ramblers*, the *Trepas* saw themselves as drop-outs whose use of Catalan was motivated by their desire to challenge the predominant conventions of language choice. Pujolar (1997, 2001) demonstrates that ideologies of language, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, and class shaped the groups' linguistic practices and forms of self-expression, but they did so in different ways for the two groups. The *Ramblers* used Castilian to construct and evoke working-class masculinities, and they strongly resisted the use of Catalan, which they found ingenuous, posh, and unmasculine. By contrast, the *Trepas* used Catalan for its political dimensions. To them, it implied a rejection of Spanish chauvinistic attitudes, and the use of a code-switched variety seemed to them to be as transgressive of traditional gender arrangements as it was linguistically transgressive with regard to the pervasive assumption that conversations should be monolingual.

It is particularly in adolescent peer networks that the importance of the feminine or masculine connotations of languages emerges. Labov (1966) was the first to distinguish between overt and covert prestige in language choice in monolingual contexts (where the choice is between standard and non-standard varieties). Standard varieties carry overt prestige, which means that they are sanctioned by the educational system. While the standard has officially recognized prestige, it also often carries connotations of femininity or effeminacy. By contrast, non-standard varieties often have "street cred" – their prestige is licensed by their associations with authenticity and transgressions against authority (therefore "covert"). Varieties with covert prestige often carry associations of tough, rugged working-class masculinity. The importance of such gendered connotations of languages to language maintenance efforts has so far received little attention, but the work of Pujolar (1997, 2001) clearly indicates that Catalan has little appeal to the *Ramblers* boys because they find it to sound feminine and effeminate – "unmasculine." Similarly, Pavlenko (2001b) describes an instance where an American man failed in his efforts to learn French because he found the language to sound effeminate. The learner, the philosopher Richard Watson, traced his negative attitude to ideologies of masculinity internalized in early childhood, in particular, the deep-seated belief that "real men don't speak French." Not surprisingly, he could not bring himself to speak French although he reads it well. The desire of some young men to sound hyper-masculine as a crucial factor in their linguistic choices also emerges from the work of Bucholtz (1999) and Cutler (1999). These researchers describe how white US-American boys of highly privileged backgrounds use

code switching into African American Vernacular English in order to perform a stylized tough hyper-masculinity. Like the discourse of benevolent racism exposed by Blackledge (2000, 2001) and Villenas (2001) (see section 19.5), these appropriations of a language construct not only gender but also race. By seeking identification with African-American masculinity, the boys whose code-switching practices are described by Bucholtz (1999) and Cutler (1999) also "reproduce the 'racialization' of African-American men as violent and dangerous" (Hill, 1999, p. 547). Indeed, a gendering of languages very often goes hand in hand with racist stereotyping of their speakers. Hill's (1995, 1998) work on "Mock Spanish" – the use of Spanish or pseudo-Spanish expressions by speakers of American English – for instance, shows that code switching into Mock Spanish constructs the speaker as colloquial, relaxed, capable of humor, streetwise and masculine. However, by iconic extension, Spanish and the "real" speakers of that language are constructed as disorderly and given to obscenity. By contrast, languages that carry connotations of femininity are often used to construct them and their speakers as weak, inferior and affected. Hutton (1999, p. 222), for instance shows that European anti-Semitic writing from the pre-Holocaust period regularly included comments about the feminine nature of Yiddish.

In sum, bilingual friendship networks are further discursive spaces where bilingualism may be gendered. Like all the other contexts discussed so far there is no simple mapping between gender and bilingual practice. Rather, linguistic practices do not only construct gender but they simultaneously construct other aspects of social identity, such as class, race, or political stance. Furthermore, the relationship between gender and bilingualism is mediated by ideologies of femininity and masculinity and the gendered connotations that languages carry in the attitudes of users.

## 19.7 Gender and Bilingualism in Education

None of the contexts we have discussed so far is strictly separable from education in bilingual settings. To begin with, access to languages that carry symbolic value is first and foremost access to education in that language. Second, desire for a second language may make some people seek out education in that language while ideologies of feminine virtue may restrict access to the classroom for others. Third, the obligations of motherhood may keep some women out of the classroom while they and their children may be the target of educational efforts that do nothing to alleviate their poverty and disadvantage. Fourth, peer networks are often constituted in and around educational practices, and gendered connotations of languages may make them desirable or undesirable to learn. Sunderland (2000), for instance, argues that boys do not choose foreign language subjects at school, do not like them, and are likely to fail in them because they see foreign language learning as a "girls' thing," an unmanly activity. While none of the contexts we are discussing here is thus

strictly separable from issues of access to the classroom, this section focuses on gendered classroom interactions (see also Corson, 2001; Pavlenko, forthcoming; Sunderland, 2000).

Even when students have access to formal education and do access the classroom, interaction patterns – teacher talk, student talk to the teacher and with each other during pair- and group-work – may be gendered, and favor some groups more than others. In the 1970s and 1980s there was a lot of concern that boys dominate classroom talk and get the lion's share of the teacher's attention (see Pavlenko (forthcoming) and Sunderland (2000) for overviews of this research tradition and Chavez (2000) and Shehadeh (1999) for recent examples). As Pavlenko (forthcoming) explains, these studies are flawed for a number of reasons, including, most crucially, the assumption of a simple dual gender dichotomy within which they operate. As a result, they fail to take into account linguistic, ethnic, cultural and socioeconomic diversity in the classroom. It is not girls or boys who are advantaged or disadvantaged, but certain groups of girls or certain groups of boys. In particular, it appears that immigrant and minority girls are the least visible and most disempowered in majority schools. Losey (1995), for instance, studied the classroom participation patterns of American and Mexican-American students in a community college classroom. Mexican-American women participated less than Anglo women and men, and also less than Mexican-American men. The Mexican-American women were thus doubly marginalized in the class, both as women and as ethnic-minority members. Thus, it is not surprising that the school drop-out rates of Latina girls in the USA continue to increase and have reached the alarming rate of 30 percent (American Association of University Women, 1999) and that immigrant girls exhibit lower self-esteem and higher depression rates the longer they are in the USA (Olsen, 1997). In short, educational systems oftentimes fail minority and immigrant girls and women.

However, it is not only minority and immigrant girls and women who may be disadvantaged by classroom interaction patterns. In some cases, stereotypes about immigrant and minority boys may actually contribute to their failure in the classroom, as Willett (1995) demonstrates. This study of four 7-year-old ESL children within a mainstream US classroom shows that the combined effects of differences in gendered peer cultures and the seating arrangements – which were designed to keep the boys apart but allowed the girls to sit together – favored the three female learners. The friendship between these three ESL girls allowed them to collaborate and support each other, thus earning them a high status in the girls' subculture and the status of "good learners" in the eyes of the teacher. In contrast, the boy, who was of working class Mexican-American background, did not get any help from his female seatmates and was not allowed to get out of his seat to get help from his male bilingual friends. As a result, he had to rely on adults for help, thus acquiring the status of a needy child, unable to work independently. This view became so entrenched that, when all four children scored the same on the Bilingual Syntax Measure test, the three girls were allowed to exit the ESL class while the boy

had to stay on. These findings are echoed by McKay and Wong (1996) whose ethnographic study of four Chinese ESL students in California found that the student who got least attention, was judged the most harshly, and was the least successful – he ultimately dropped out of school – was a boy from mainland China, whose parents had experienced considerable downward economic mobility since their immigration to the USA. This boy neither fit the nerdy stereotype of the "model minority" that applied well to two other ESL students from Taiwan (a boy and a girl), nor did he excel in sports, which was another "boys' identity" that made sense to the majority teachers and students. Similarly, Heller (1999, 2001) found that one of the most alienated student groups in the French-medium Toronto high school she observed consisted of working-class boys. These monolingual speakers of vernacular Canadian French were marginalized by the valorization of Standard French referenced to France norms as well as by their peers' preference for English in peer interactions. They often stopped speaking French at school altogether, dropped out, or dreamt of the day when they and their families would move back to Quebec.

In sum, research into classroom interaction in bilingual contexts shows that there are not two undifferentiated groups of "girls" and "boys" or "women" and "men." Rather, ideologies of gender and gendered friendship groups marginalize specific learners and/or groups of learners, be they immigrant women or working-class boys. Furthermore, once a student or student group has been stereotyped as poor learners, the perception is likely to become a self-fulfilling prophecy, which may permanently alienate such students or groups from mainstream formal education.

## 19.8 Conclusion

Increased attention to gender and power relations provides exciting new perspectives on the sociolinguistics of bilingualism. To begin with, gender structures access to linguistic resources as symbolic capital that can, in turn, be converted into social and economic resources. In the context of the bilingual marketplace, studies in a diversity of contexts have to date found that access to highly valued linguistic practices is most restricted for minority and immigrant women. At the same time, these women often stand to gain more from actively pursuing those resources than men do, and therefore women actively pursue language shift in a number of contexts. In the bilingual marketplace, women are more likely to face gatekeeping practices that make access to valued linguistic resources more difficult for them. Even in communities that have espoused gender equality as a common value and where hierarchical differences between women and men are minimal, valued linguistic practices continue to be iconically linked to masculinity as Heller (2000) and Piller (2001a) demonstrate for the bilingual business elites of the European Union and Germany.

Second, research in the contexts of bilingual intimate, parent-child, and friendship relationships shows that gender relations cannot be reduced to

questions of economic and social power. People also become bilingual or give up their first languages for reasons rooted in their personal desires and dreams, in love, affection, and affiliation. These factors are as potent in bilingual language choices, code-switching practices and learning outcomes as economic and social factors are. Furthermore, there is significant interplay between the two areas, as ideologies of romantic love, parenthood, and friendship often constrain people as rational economic actors. As regards romantic love, ideologies of feminine virtue often associate bilingualism with loose sexual morals and treason against one's native community. Ideologies of motherhood are also frequently designed to keep minority and immigrant women from transgressing linguistic and social boundaries. Finally, friendship networks can serve to create connotations between a language and femininity or masculinity. Depending which ideal of femininity or masculinity a person or peer group aspires to they may engage in linguistic practices that iconically associate them with the language(s) with the "right" connotations.

Third, gender ideologies and the gendering of friendship and peer groups, with their particular developmental importance to adolescents, also have a crucial role to play in the ways in which discursive interactions in the classroom are structured. While negative stereotypes of immigrant women may keep them silent in the classroom, negative stereotypes of working-class boys may leave them disaffected. In each context discussed in this chapter, it has become obvious that the relationship between gender and bilingualism is not a straightforward one. Rather, it is mediated by speaker status (as based on ethnicity, race, class, sexuality etc.) and language status in local contexts.

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