

Tilburg Papers in Culture Studies

Paper 107

How Language Communities Intersect: Is “superdiversity” an incremental or transformative condition?

by

Michael Silverstein ©
(The University of Chicago)

m-silverstein@uchicago.edu

© September 2014

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Michael Silverstein
The University of Chicago

To the governing elites in the European nation-states – to be sure a provincial, if powerful perspective – the linguistic minorities within their states’ borders have become unruly, indeed, in a sense ungovernable; from a wider, sociolinguistically informed perspective, minority and majority language communities in the states of the politico-economic “north” or politico-economic metropole are now intersecting in ways that we have long observed as students of the peripheries of colonial expansion, of empire, and of globalization. These kinds of dynamic intersections of language communities have in a sense thus moved to the center of the political North, and with these shifts of locus not only nervous policy-makers but linguists have been trying to take account.

What are these processes of “intersection” of language communities within speech communities and how have they manifested in the historical record of language? What are the linguistic imaginaries of the modern nation-state and what are its consequences? How do the contemporary facts of language challenge these imaginaries even in the European North and West? Most importantly, in place of a language-community centered linguistics of denotational code-norms, which grew up within the framework of the modern nation-state, how can the tools of the sociolinguistic study of speech communities give a clearer picture of “superdiversity?”

The identification of the modern nation-state with a language community (Anderson 1983; Silverstein 2000; 2010) and its shaping as such render the linguistic manifestations of

“superdiversity” one kind of crisis of the contemporary European nation-state. “Superdiversity” certainly has been perceived and conceptualized from within this socio-political order. (See Vertovec 2007; Blommaert & Rampton 2011.) The phenomena noted by these authors trouble the relationship between the language community as a form of cultural group and the nation-state as a political form, which has been for a long period in European history conceptualized as a kind of maximal autonomous polity. “Superdiverse” phenomena test and challenge the state’s organizational flexibility to encompass and to control one or more language communities in which the people within its borders participate. In particular, “superdiversity” presents multi-dimensional fluidity and excesses of language-ing (language behavior) which the institutional apparatuses of the state polity have been, as yet, effectively unprepared to countenance and assimilate into official practices. These excesses constitute realignment – or at least an audibility and visibility that can no longer be ignored – of how language communities intersect one with another within one or more plurilingual speech communities which the nation-state order is not yet prepared to embrace as its own.

Various writers’ use of the term “superdiversity” in the realm of language thus seems to point to new, creative expressions of minoritization connected with economic and political immigration and other trans-national movements or flows of people, and to sites and modes of expression perhaps heretofore uncountenanced or at least not remarked upon by the contemporary nation-state order. Of course, majority or minority language status is a numerical fact in the first instance: it can be seen only in some framework, for example circumscribing political boundaries, where people and their attributes are countable – for example, what language(s) and linguistic variant(s) people know and use. But not only censuses but broader institutionalized political interests are never far from majority/minority status. A practical sense

of minoritization results, for example, from conditions where the governmental apparatus of the state or the state's compatible surrogates in the public sphere operate with some form of de facto differential bias with respect to categories of languages and thus to their speakers.

Such examples are everywhere: in the early 1970s, as an act of decolonization in Sri Lanka, all English language signage was eliminated in public places such as roadways and railroad terminals, in effect eliminating direct access to anyone who could not read the Sinhala *abugida*. Politics like the post-Soviet Lithuanian and Latvian states demanded competence in the now national language for many sectors of employment, rendering pure Russophones, the former hegemon under the Soviet system, an embattled linguistic minority. Same with the *Generalitat*, the regional government, in Catalunya, where from 1993 all schooling in lower grades has been through Catalan language medium, with Castilian, i.e., Spanish, now having the school status of a "foreign" language – notwithstanding heritage ethnicity and all the continued media access through Spanish, which continues unabated on television and radio.

In the United States, there is a paranoid fringe of monoglot Anglophones who are threatened by any foreign tongue – even indigenous languages of Native Americans! – and therefore who want to add an amendment to the U.S. Constitution, stating that English is the "official" language of the nation-state – whatever that means (the term "official," according to the U. S. constitutional system, would not be legally meaningful until administratively implemented and sufficiently adjudicated in case-law and appellate rulings). Notwithstanding, in United States elections ballots are available in those minority languages the speakers of which comprise a certain percentage of the population of an election district. As well, vast domains of civic signage are in multiple languages, those domains not so much related to tourism as to communicating with and indexically recognizing significant minority populations of the area.

(In Chicago, for example, English—Spanish—Polish are the generally expectable languages; Mandarin and/or Cantonese in certain neighborhoods, as well as Vietnamese, Arabic, Hindi, etc.)

Nation-states thus have ideological investments in LANGUAGE COMMUNITY, and linguistic “superdiversity,” I hold, is comprised of phenomena we can recognize only in a SPEECH COMMUNITY perspective – phenomena relocated from erstwhile global peripheries to current global metropolises, where they are perhaps not welcomed. To explain this thesis, let me lay out the framework in which this can be seen.

Language Community and Speech Community

Firstly, let me address this distinction I have invoked between ‘language community’ and ‘speech community’. It is now more than forty years since I insisted, based on my work on language-contact phenomena of indigenous and colonial North America, that one must make a sharp distinction between a ‘language (or linguistic) community’ and a ‘speech community’. (See Silverstein 1972:622-3; 1996b:127-30, 138-9n.1; 1996c:284-6 and numerous references there.¹) The language community is a social group, generally a primary reference group, the members of which are, by degrees, oriented to a denotational norm, however much within its compass they recognize situated variation. Antoine Meillet termed this orientation “le sentiment et la volonté de parler la même langue,” the orientational sense of speaking the same *langue*, using the Saussurean term very deliberately. Denotation, one should recall, is the linguistically

¹An anonymous reviewer points us to Rampton’s (2010) review of the undifferentiated concept of “speech community” in various sociolinguistic writers’ usage, an essay particularly useful in that it catalogs the series of confusions and theoretical dead-ends – as well as unsatisfactory proposed replacements – that result from sociolinguists’ lack of sophistication in social and semiotic theory. “Communities” are, of course, not mere empirically describable social ‘categories’ but kinds of ‘groups’ (see Sapir 1932), just like polities; they have all the complex internal structure of such informed by members’ orientations to norms of one or another kind.

mediated practice of representing or describing the universe, referring to entities and modally predicating states-of-affairs as, by degree, true or false about such entities (sometimes in relation to other denotata, as in complex and continuous discourse). Among all the things we “do with words” in-and-by using them for communicating, denotational use, events that attempt a verbal description of universes of experience and imagination, suggests to the naïve – here I include many philosophers, formal grammarians and other persons willfully uninformed by professional stance – that the denotational code, a.k.a. one’s “language” norm, is something separate (and separable) from the world, the better to represent that world by removal from it (a feat as difficult as squaring the circle, as at least some philosophers are coming to understand). Denotational use is, notwithstanding, highly salient, and when even laypersons ask “What language(s) do you speak?” they mean what denotational code(s) – centrally, grammatically conforming words and expressions – for representing things and states-of-affairs in the world do you control. When members of a language community oriented to a particular denotational code conceptualize their ubiquitous context-sensitive variability of usage, they do so in terms of perceiving “different ways of saying the same thing,” which we sociolinguists encompass under the rubric of ‘register’ (Agha 2004), an intuition of coherence or compatibility of textually manifest forms that index the context in some respect, whether as to identities, occasions, or institutional sites of communication.

The speech community, as I have long been pointing out, by contrast organizes people by how they engage in and interpret such context-bound (inherently indexical) communication, seeming therein to reference social norms for discursively mediated social interaction, whether carried on through the medium of one denotational code or many. The speech community involves norms of indexicality, the interpretability of (in the case of language) verbal behavior in

relation to expectations of appropriateness-to and effectiveness-in dynamic real-time contexts – especially the “who”–“to whom”–“about what-or-whom” matters of identity that differentiate social contexts. In the speech community, semiotically speaking, it is indexicality not only “all the way down,” but all the way up in sociological scale, all the way out into network-framing social spaces of actualized and potential interdiscursivity, etc. When the distinguished thinker Benjamin Lee Whorf wrote of a “Standard Average European” (1956[1941]:138), he meant a speech community encompassing multiple denotational codes or “languages,” evidenced by the word-by-word and idiomatic phrase-by-phrase usage equivalents across them which was noticeable when considered against the larger-scale set of all the language communities of the world. Even where there is not perfect comprehensibility of message across denotational codes, still, in much of Europe the pragmatics of communication in ‘entextualizations’-in-context rest on generally shared sociocultural norms indicated by parallelism of construction in expressions. These he termed “fashions of speaking.”² When with a pregnant quip Winston Churchill proclaimed the British and the Americans one people separated by a language, he meant, of course, that both belong to the same language community, but to distinct speech communities, as

²How this – as it has been termed by J. Neustupny (cf. Hymes 1972:54-55) “*Sprechbund*”; *Bzw. Sprachbund* – has arisen is yet another, diachronic matter. The long superordinacy of Latin and, to a lesser extent, Greek in relation to any of the once vernacular-only languages is one factor involved, as each local vernacular constituted a merely popular register in relation to the unifying superordinate backed by graphic and print culture and institutional use. But as well, the shifting crown politics of expanding and contracting empires even within Europe and the practicalities of their administration played a decisive role in creating donor and receiving languages; and even during the modern period in which have been created standard scientific and literary registers associated with the nation-state form, there has been much imitative calquing and other indications of ideological value asymmetries among donor and receiving intelligentsia. See Auerbach 1965, esp. ch.4; Elcock 1960:esp.ch.3-5; Pollock 2006:ch.11-12; Kahane & Kahane 1979. Anderson 1983 portrays the “modular” role of standardizing vernaculars in the nation-state form as part of the snowballing world-wide history of nationalism as a cultural form.

becomes obvious at the level of interaction. Much more detail on the nature of the distinction will, I hope, emerge in what follows.

As I noted, the historical record of language forms indicates that denotational codes – and, by inference, their users in language communities – have intersected by degree and kind in many different types of speech community, so as to leave traces of those intersections in the very language forms we now situate by diachronic descriptions of their linguistic history, etymologies. Such intersections have been the rule even for the languages of Europe, many now identifiable with nation-states – think of Finnish – and with so-called stateless ethnic nations or nationalities, such as Roma, no less than it has been the rule for speakers in pre-state, local, indigenous language communities around the globe. The latter are now “endangered” through the cumulative effects both of extractive colonialism at a distance and of close-by settler colonialism and, more recently, of de-colonizing nation-state formation as the modality through which formerly colonized peoples create post-colonial polities under the demanding gaze of the global North.

Invasion as Superdiverse Immigration

What, for example, we term the “English” language has, in fact, existed under conditions we might well term “superdiversity” since the end of the 8th century C.E.³ To be sure, its speakers had been for centuries in contact to the north and west with several Celtic languages, and Latin, of course, was the ecclesiastical language of the Church, from which both borrowings and calqued loan-translations derived. But into this regional and functional patchwork came

³See the accounts of the early periods of English in Baugh 1935:ch.4-7; and several chapters in the *Cambridge History of the English Language* (Hogg, ed. 1992-2001), in particular in vol. 1, Hogg’s “Introduction,” pp.5-10, and D. Brumley on “Lexis and semantics,” §5.1; and in vol.2, N. Blake’s “Introduction,” pp.5-9, 15-20.

waves of attacks, depredations, and finally conquest and settlement by several groups of speakers of North Germanic dialects, in particular Old Norse of the Danes. For fifty years there were attacks on the northern coast; by 867 the Danes had captured York; and by 994 London was attacked by a combined force sponsored by the Norwegian and Danish crowns, and ultimately, in 1014 by driving Ethelred, the English king, into exile, the Dane Cnut claimed the English throne and ruled for twenty-five years.

Norwegians and especially Danes settled and were amalgamated into the population, which took on a decidedly mixed socio-cultural character. The linguistic reflexes of this long-term settlement are not only Scandinavian-derived place names, which we would expect, but a few thousand ordinary words of what is ultimately a common Germanic lexicon as well come from North Germanic, not the West Germanic Anglo-Saxon, as their phonological shapes attest when considered by criteria of the “sound laws” of these two branches of the family. We might note among them such common words as egg (rather than Anglo-Saxon-derived ey), nay (existing alongside no), sister (rather than *sweostor* [cf. German]) and numerous etymological doublets, where competing terms have survived in the later language with semantic differentiation, such as skirt : shirt, hale : whole, rear : raise, fro : from, skill : craft, etc. Even a piece of the verb conjugation of ‘[to] be’, the third plural present indicative they are, replaces the Anglo-Saxon *hīe syndon* [compare modern German *Sie Sind*]. In effect, speakers in two language communities whose forbears had centuries earlier diverged within the Germanic language family came together in an amalgam that must rest on patterns of usage that established complex dialectal and register variance drawing on both denotational codes.

But of course in the longer history of English this intra-Germanic amalgamation is *kleine Kartoffeln* – small potatoes – compared to the consequences of the Norman Conquest in 1066.

William the Conqueror and his folk and their descendants brought the French language in its northwestern major dialect form to England along with a new ruling aristocracy and an apparatus of royal government and, to a great extent, commerce in the public sphere all carried on by means of the invading denotational code (as well as Latin, still the province of the Church). By the middle of the 13th century, it appears that even native social elites knew some of both languages, as a powerful, English-speaking bourgeoisie had begun to emerge as essential to Norman rule. Until the latter part of the 14th century, as courts, Parliament, and other official sites of affairs switched for the most part back to English, French denotational code was the superordinate urban (and urbane) register in a complex set of functional relationships to the English – that is to say, Scandinavianized English – of the laboring and rural masses.

The effect on the language was decisive at all planes of structure and lexicon, accelerating as well in a very particular convergent direction morphosyntactic tendencies already manifest in the late Old English period. Even the resulting rules of phonological stress placement in Modern English are basically of Romance origin (see Chomsky & Halle's discussion in 1968, ch.3). The vast majority of Germanic inflectional endings on nouns, their modifiers, and verbs, disappeared. Strong verbs of the sing : sang : sung vowel-changing type gradually assimilated to weak verbs, using conjugational suffixes, leaving a finite and now morphologically irregular residue in the later language. Syntactic phrasal order began to look like that in French. Vast amounts of vocabulary in denotational domains involving government and administration (for example, authority, sovereign, adjourn, parliament), religion (for example, sacrament, chaplain, divine, anoint), law (for example, plea, felon, warrant, heir), military (for example, army, navy, lieutenant, vanquish), fashions and social life (for example, apparel, petticoat, ermine, jewel), food (for example, biscuit, salad, boil, platter), art (for

example, painting, color, turret, sculpture), learning (for example, story, prologue, treatise, geometry), medicine (for example, palsy, jaundice, remedy, surgeon) are French in origin, a snowballing process of adoption into English that peaks, as Baugh (1935:219-220) notes on the basis of counts by Otto Jespersen, precisely in the period when the stratification of the two denotational codes as separate entities declines, from ca. 1250 to ca. 1400, such vocabulary thus becoming integrated into superordinate and subordinate registers within an emergently unified language community. Note in the later language the earlier class or caste distinction still remnant in our distinction of pig and pork, sheep and mutton, cow and beef, the first of each pair being the common noun for the animals tended to by laboring folk, the second denoting the dressed flesh prepared for the table – in earlier times, principally that of the elites on any regular basis.

(Two asides here. First, the English seem not to have gotten over this stratificational subjugation, as viz., in the Harry Potter series of young people's novels, every evil being seems to have a French name. Second, I was charmed, in late April, 2013, while being driven from the Philadelphia airport to my hotel at Independence Park by an Azerbaijani driver, to be asked to explain the difference between the denotata of the second items, beef, pork, and mutton and those of the first, cows, pigs, and sheep, which to his non-native lights constituted a puzzling lexical hypertrophy. Why, he asked, do you people keep two different words for the same thing? Why, indeed, other than as a residue of an era of complex “superdiversity” at the level of enregisterment!)

Superdiversity from Invasive Exploration and Immigration

More florid, though inverse, is the case of effects of invasion on language communities of the Northwest Coast of indigenous North America, where one of the more well-documented pidgins arose, Chinook Jargon.⁴ Chinook Wawa, as it is termed in the language, evolved from a ship's jargon in the earliest, 18th century European exploratory and trading contact with coastal peoples, becoming a regional lingua franca for almost all inter-ethnic communication from the Alaskan panhandle to southern Oregon, from the Pacific Coast clear east to the meridian of current Alberta and Idaho, an immense area. The indigenous Northwest Coast region (see Map 1.) was exceedingly dense with ethnolinguistically differentiated peoples who knew of and denoted each other by name. These were peoples oriented to sea, the Pacific Ocean, its estuaries and inlets, and the mighty rivers flowing into it along which they lived amid lush abundance of salmon, sturgeon, sea mammals, etc. and seasonal roots, tubers, nuts, berries, etc. for the gathering and preservation. They lived in exquisitely caste- and rank-conscious, slave-holding societies that intermarried and traded one with another as much as they also warred one with another and raided to capture and enslave individuals in the process. Any reasonably sizable and wealthy permanent "winter" village, with houses made of hewn cedar planks, would thus be a diversely plurilingual environment, even in pre-European-contact times, with inmarried or enslaved speakers of other languages. And evidence in mythological and other narrative forms indicates that people had a consciousness both of differences of denotational codes and of dialectal variation within language community-sized units.

⁴There is a large literature on the origin and spread of Chinook Jargon. See the citations in Silverstein 1972; 1996a:127-130; 1996b that include many of the important sources in early explorer and missionary accounts, as well as the careful interpretations based on actual historical material and extrapolations therefrom. These contrast with speculative or fanciful theories postulating its use from time immemorial in the era before European contact – for which there is no evidence.

A listing of such units as have been grouped into families indicates a plethora of mutually unintelligible “languages” spoken in the region, a tooth-by-jowl congeries of territorial primary bases that can be associated with their speakers – Wakashan languages on Vancouver Island, the British Columbia coast and the Olympic Peninsula; Tsimshianic languages on the coast and up the Nass and Skeena Rivers; Salishan languages in several geographical clusters both along the Pacific coast and inland; Chinookan languages from the mouth of the Columbia River up to present-day The Dalles; multiple possible small congener families in coastal and inland Oregon and northern California; multiple members of the Tlingit-Athapascan-Eyak family from coastal and especially inland Alaska and the Canadian territories and then down a series of Pacific Coast enclaves in Oregon and California (and in forested tracts near the lower Columbia River): an incredible regional diversity from the point of view of historical grouping into “family”-like clusters. Yet, as Franz Boas pointed out, and as some of us have been working out, the amount of micro- and meso-areal “diffusional cumulation,” i.e., *Sprachbund*-defining convergence at every plane and level of language, indicates long periods of bi- and multi-lingualism of inhabitants of the region due to the multiple institutionalized relations (kinship; trade; raiding; etc.) implying language-exogenous movements, sojourn, and domicile of people, who regularly dealt with exo-linguistic strangers both in situ and elsewhere, many of whose linguistic features diffused across these boundaries.

As if this – shall we already call it “super-?” – linguistic diversity were not enough, into this mix by the mid-to-late 18th century arrived waves of Europeans and mixed ship’s crews in numerous Pacific-trade ships that poked along the coastal waters looking for likely places to commence trade and to colonize for one or another crown. The Russians had already long been in the Aleutian Islands and Alaskan north and in this period sought a foothold at California’s

Russian River; the Spanish and British had been competing for Quadra's – later, Vancouver's – Island, with the British – remember Captain Cook (1778) among 'em – clearly soon in ascendancy all along the continental coast by the turn of the 19th century; and Americans in the Pacific triangle trade out of Boston as well arrived first by ship. Both Canadians and Americans as well reached the Pacific coast by overland trek, whether more northerly, as, for example, the 1793 transcontinental journey of Sir Alexander Mackenzie and Alexander M[a]cKay for the Northwest Fur Company, reaching Bella Coola in British Columbia, or more southerly, as for example Meriwether Lewis and William Clark at the command of President Jefferson in 1804–06, ascending the Missouri River and its tributaries and then descending the Snake and Columbia River drainages to reach what the mouth of the Columbia River at what is now Astoria, Oregon, in December 1805.



FIG. 1: Map of the Nordwest coast of North America

Now by the time of Lewis and Clark's winter sojourn at the coast, about twenty-five or thirty years of increasingly regular ship-based coastal trading for fur pelts and fresh provisions had already been in progress. An astonished Clark reports in his journal for 10 December 1805 that, meeting a presumably Clatsop Chinook-speaking party for the first time, "they said in their

own language Clouch Musket, wake, com ma-tax Musket” that is, ‘Good musket, [we] do not understand [this kind of] musket’.” (Clark in Thwaites 1904-05:3.276). All the words in this utterance, except musket, of course, which derives from English, are Nootka-derived contact vocabulary: $\lambda u\cdot\check{s}$ (European pronunciation [klo·š] or [klu·š]) < Nootka λol ‘pretty; good; correct; satisfactory; well; clean’. The replacement of the final -l segment of the Nootkan with the -š segment compatible with European languages’ phonological segment inventories confirms its route of travel from the northerly Hope Bay of Vancouver Island via ship’s jargon in non-indigenous mouths (as does the European re-shaping in initial kl- replacing the common Northwest Coast sound λ -).

The reason for this indirect route of transmission is not hard to find. In fact, ever since the ship’s surgeon, Dr William Anderson, on Captain Cook’s ship *Resolution* had recorded a Nootka vocabulary in 1778, published shortly thereafter in numerous editions of the *Voyages*, explorers all along the coastal waters attempted to communicate with “the Natives” using these forms to facilitate barter and self-ingratiation. Nootka vocabulary was the proffered, if jargonish medium against which comprehension of the local peoples was gauged. This continued the Europeans’ practices in northeast North America, where the Algonquian language Montagnais and the Iroquoian language Huron were the standards of comparison in encounters with various local indigenous languages encompassed within these two respective families; thus each such local dialect was found by the British and French to be “somewhat corrupted though intelligible” in a vast eastern region of North America during the 17th and early 18th centuries. In the utterance cited by Clark, the form “wake,” i.e., [we·k] < Nootka *wik* ‘not; nothing’. The form

“com ma-tax,” i.e., [kʷm(ə)taḥ] or the like < Nootka *kamat-* ‘[be] known; definite’ + ‘-a-ḥ ‘irrealis’.⁵

Already crystallized by 1835 in a wide region around the Hudson’s Bay Company fur-trading post of Fort Vancouver, this lingua franca was as well spread by the missionaries attempting Christian conversion of the indigenous and mixed-race peoples. Here is Catholic Father François Norbert Blanchet of the Quebec mission that arrived at Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River in late 1838 (Blanchet 1956:19):

The real language of the Chinooks is of almost insurmountable difficulty and is entirely different from that of the neighboring tribes. But they understand a jargon by means of which the whites generally can make themselves understood by the Indians frequenting Fort Vancouver. This jargon, composed of 350 to 400 words borrowed from different languages and distorted in pronunciation, is of so easy a study that, three months after the arrival of the missionaries, one of them, [Father Modeste] Demers, possessed it sufficiently well to be able to explain the catechism and give instruction to the catechumens without having to force himself to write [aforehand] what he had to tell them. A large number of the [Chinookan-speaking] natives of the Cascades, as well as part of the Klickitats [a group speaking one of the Sahaptin languages], understanding the jargon, regularly attend catechism and evening prayer, which are observed every day at Vancouver.

⁵One particularly relishes the proper irrealis mode on the negative predicate. Perhaps because of European tendencies to spelling pronunciations when learning from printed guidebooks to the Chinook Jargon, as these soon arose in the early 19th century, the fusing of the irrealis that ends in a pharyngealized aspirate in Nootka, as Clark’s <x> grapheme perhaps tries to capture, has been everywhere replaced in this lexical form by final [-ks], thus: [kʷm(ə)taḥks] universally by mid-19th century, the indigenous people then learning and using the innovative spelling pronunciation from the Europeans.

All throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, missionaries and settlers writing accounts to stimulate new Euro-American and Euro-Canadian settlement gave vocabularies of Chinook Jargon to prepare the newcomers for easy communication among the diverse surviving Native peoples. In 1907, Alexander Chamberlain, Boas's former linguistic anthropology student from his Clark University days, computed the sources in various languages of the vocabulary attested by documenters of Chinook Jargon from the middle to the end of the 19th century. His figures:

WORDS CONTRIBUTED	1841	1863	1894
Nootka	18	24	23
[Lower] Chinook	111	221	198
English	41	67	570
French	34	94	158
Other languages	48	79	138

Observe both the absolute growth of the lexicon over 50 years and the radically shifting proportions of that lexicon as a function of lexifier language. The Nootka component, representing the earliest phase of its formation via ship's jargon, is essentially frozen, becoming a decreasing proportion of the total, but remaining as increasingly multi-functioning grammaticized phrase-markers and derivational operators yielding lexical collocations. The French component modestly increases as a function of many French-Canadians, families of settlers descended from *coureurs-de-bois* of the fur-trade period, taking up residence in the Oregon Territory and Canadian west. The English component soars by virtue of the eventual Anglophone settlement of much of the region that includes Alaska, and, after the boundary was settled, British Columbia, the territory and then states of Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. English-derived lexicon by Chamberlain's count ultimately outnumbers the sum of all the other

etymological components combined. Obviously, by the end of its run as the lingua franca of the contact settlement community in the region, the indigenous peoples were participating in the Chinook Wawa community on their way to learning a marginal form of regional English pure and simple.

Now that's what we might usefully term "superdiversity" revealed within the time-course of a speech community of shifting patterns of contact that resulted in intersecting language communities in determinate, gradually shifting social relations. The congeries of small indigenous language communities within a populous region notable for plurilingual villages admitted a seasonal trickle of traders and barterers, who soon became a torrent of permanent settlers and missionaries eventually backed by the sanctioned force of two powerful North American states. The indigenous peoples were, by the third quarter of the 19th century, relegated to the politico-economic peripheries of the settler societies, yet having a continuing presence in and intercourse with the dominant Euro-Americans and Euro-Canadians. In this process, Chinook Wawa had become the synecdoche of and conduit for their ultimate shift to English much more than a remnant emblem of traditional indigenous ways, as its speakers participated in a now Anglophone-focal "superdiverse" speech community.

A Proper Non-Statist Sociolinguistics of Superdiversity

The political scientist James Scott (1998) has characterized "seeing like a state," a mode of recognition or Althusserian interpellation of groups and categories of people, including immigrants, in a framework of other such states, particularly nation-states. This mode of seeing projects a state's own official classifications onto those other states and hence onto people coming from them, for example presuming competence in the standardized official or

governmental language of such a state. We see this again and again in the literature on asylum seekers, as Jan Blommaert (2009; 2010, ch.6) and others have pointed out. And the linguistics and sociolinguistics of the state, especially the modern nation-state, have also tended to see things like a state, or, let us say, in conformity to how the state sees.⁶ And I take what is currently captioned as “superdiversity,” emphasizing a plenitude of in-migrated socio-cultural and linguistic difference and hybridity beyond that countenanced by existing state mechanisms, as an empirical site that ought to stimulate a new kind of sociolinguistics to render problematic the taken-for-granted concepts of state-focal vision.

Tentatives in this direction are, it seems to me, already to hand in the kind of semiotically informed linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics that has developed on both sides of the Atlantic over the last few decades. For example, we have superseded the somewhat mystical concept of a Saussurean – or worse, Chomskyan – norm of *langue*/‘competence’ invariant within a language community, in relation to which sociolinguistic variation is a true problem: is it *parole*/‘performance’ merely?⁷ We now can recognize the indexical (context-dependent and context-creating) significance of variant forms at any plane of language structure, and note that within a language community, a native perspective organizes such variation into registers (alternative ways of “saying the same thing”) centered on register shibboleths, comprising all those variant forms as well as invariants that make unremarkable, contextually appropriate text. Suddenly, we realize that the normativity immanent in language is the (always non-disjoint)

⁶To be sure, during the 20th century strong ideological currents have emphasized the nation-state form as a universally desirable maximal polity in the wake of two World Wars and the ultimate dissolution of empires consequent thereupon.

⁷What then is the status of Labov’s sociolinguistic “grammars” of factor-weighted generative rules (Weinreich, Labov, & Herzog 1968:172-176) and other hybrid half-solutions?

union of all its registers, so that a ‘language’, the collective attribute of a ‘language community’, embraces variation from the very get-go.

To be sure, the great modernist project of the state, especially of the nation-state, has been to create so-called “standard” registers for erstwhile vernacular languages (see refs. at Silverstein 1996b:140, n.3; 1996c; 2000:132-133, n. 17; Inoue 2006; Agha 2007, ch.4) – codified though socio-historically changing prescriptions and proscriptions (“say such-and-so; don’t ever say this other form”) – enforced as part of the mechanisms of governmental and public-sphere control. Thus linguistic stratification emerges as a function of the polity. The standard register not only informs the norm, being incorporated into it as a register, but to the extent that it can create a structure of orientation to, and anxiety about, denotational code, it comes to be identified with the norm.⁸ And, as Labov’s work long ago (1966, ch.11-12; 1972:117-118) brilliantly demonstrated, such standard-anxiety is itself a social fact distributed across the language community in correlation with – and contributing to – stratifications of various sorts that define a conical structure of those imagined to be at the top-and-center (easily confused with Chomsky’s [1965:3-4] “ideal speaker-hearer”) and those relatively more and more “down and out” as divergence from standard becomes a negative index, an index of deficiency, speaking like one is demographically “from somewhere” – Ethnic-and-Immigrant-land, Gender-land, Class-land – as opposed to communicating “from nowhere at all” – a mere ethno-semiotic construct, to be sure – within the language community. Such is the logic of the system of standard enregisterment as a socio-cultural reality.

⁸ How many of us, when revealing on a social occasion that we are linguists by scholarly profession, get the reply, “Oops! I better watch my language!” – as though we are codifiers of and enforcers of standard, the “grammar [and pronunciation] police,” as it were!

Seeing like a state expects that immigrants will be oriented to their former national standard on arrival, and gradually become oriented to the new environment's standard, whether by immediate immersion, as in an Israeli *ulpan*, or over generations, as by remedial bilingual education for first generation children and beyond, with linguistic replacement by the receiving state's standard as its vanishingly attainable goal for them. Note then the double devaluation of non-elite second-generation students in educational systems, even where their parents' language is a language of Europe within this nation-state sociolinguistic order, when they are treated as deficient users both of the language of the receiving state and of that of the state of origin of their parents! (This happened to several of my school friends in New York City, whose "Italian" or "French" was the non-standard and decidedly dialectal home language – local Calabrian and French-Canadian, in the instance, that landed them grades of C, D and worse in "foreign language" class!)

Think of the second-generation student whose parental language was not even standardized in the place – the presumed state-level polity – of origin: how does the receiving state "see" the sociolinguistics of the situation? In the U.S., for example, as John Haviland (2003) has pointed out, court interpreters regularly provided for immigrants and other Mexican nationals accused of crimes are bilinguals in English and Spanish. From the state's perspective, it "sees" a Mexican national, and Spanish (Castellano) is, after all, the standardized national language. For defendants for whom, say, Zapotec or Nahuatl or Yucatec is their actual language, Mexican Spanish being a poorly controlled pidgin at best, what good does a Spanish interpreter

do in explaining something as complex as U.S. legal concepts so as to be able to follow charges, motions, procedures, etc.?⁹

Seeing like a state ignores that in many situations the very indexes of ethnicity in a minority context involve denotational-code “mixing” and that such “mixed,” i.e., denotationally hybrid registers become positive indexical signs of belonging. Bonnie Urciuoli (1985; 1996) certainly found this to be the case for Puerto Rican ethno-national identification in New York City, a kind of “Spanglish,” as it is called, a real marker [in the Labovian (1972:237) sense] of belonging that persists across generations. The same with the high school young people studied by Jonathan Rosa (2010) in a mixed ethnic environment of first-and-a-half and second-generation Puerto Rican and Mexican heritage students, who used mixing of shibboleths that differentiate these two major regional dialects of New World Spanish – standardized at San Juan and Mexico City, respectively, by the way – to keep the lines of identity clear. Again, note the phenomena of Ben Rampton’s (1995) pluri-ethnic affinity groups of youngsters in school, who do brilliant mock-ups of the various ethnic languages for each other as a kind of male-male mutual “T”-talk, celebrating difference as they performatively mock-embrace one another. And note how indexically (contextually) specific the effect is: were a speaker of “posh” or plummy standard to do such an imitation, it would be automatically a put-down in poor taste – like a non-ethnic telling an ethnic joke to a member of that ethnic community, perhaps!

⁹Paja Faudree (p.c. 20 V 14) points out that “the home state’s ‘vision’ is not all that much better,” and that, with some few exceptions, such as Nahuatl (Mexicano) and Yucatec, “speakers of Zapotec and indeed not only all Oaxacan languages but pretty much all of the country’s other indigenous languages are not regularly provided translators for legal matters (to say nothing of medical settings Rather, there are assorted NGOs and civic organizations that have taken over that responsibility precisely because the state does not provide such support, or ‘see’ that kind of difference as one it is required to manage.”

The Languages and Linguistics of Locke-ocracy

The nation-state order is a cultural formation that thus functions on the assumption of translatability across denotational codes, note, implying a certain equivalence of each code to all the others from which it can be differentiated, and thus, as well, a certain differential equivalence of each group of people for whom such a code is the norm. Here we see the underlying program of ethnolinguistic separatism and nationalism which, conforming to semiotic expectation, essentializes and naturalizes each denotational norm, each “language,” as a kind of psychic patrimony of ethnolinguistic identity. As well, in the politics of the emerging modern nation-state, stabilizing the denotational norm projects a language community into a polity through command institutionalization enforced or at least propelled by state apparatus, a.k.a. government organizations. In this political culture of – as I like to term it – Locke-ocracy, governments and equivalent command organizational sites have license to standardize languages, that is, to instill the concept of a top-and-center standard register for denotation, a “voice from nowhere” down-and-out from which in a kind of sociological conic array negatively valued deviations are merely “dialects” or “sociolects.” Every population with an ethnolinguistic identity of this sort (a language community) is thus a nation-state-*in-potentia*, even if stateless or confined to some other level political formation; every known modern state has used mechanisms of standardization to inform one or more denotational norms that confer legitimated national identity. How much strife Locke-ocracy as a cultural form has caused in this respect! But the very concept of ‘superdiversity’ shows that the woe and strife it imposes refracts disciplinarily and conceptually, since, however successful for a few hundred years at imposing an ideological order on linguistic diversity and its scholars, the phenomenal shit, as it were, has really hit the fan.

We may wish to note here that linguistics as a modern “disciplined” field of research grew up within the Locke-ocratic or (Benedict) Andersonian (1983) nation-state order, and was exceedingly useful to its aspirational imperial phase as well. To be sure, comparative-historical linguistics emerged to the consciousness of educated elites in nineteenth-century Europe and America as a scientific window on their ethno-racial ancestries, projecting, as it were, the concept of the linguistic community’s unique norm back into prehistory via the reconstructive techniques of the *Stammbaum* – some thought practically all the way to Adam’s hominin ancestor. No less a thinker than the startlingly revolutionary Ferdinand de Saussure had, from an early age, grown up in this milieu. (See Joseph 2003; 2012:147-158.) His brilliant youthful achievement (see Silverstein 2012; 2013) was the intuition of the morpho-phonological – not merely phonetic – structure in the Indo-European parent language and its transformation into the morpho-phonological structures of the daughter Classical tongues. When this structuralist vision was generalized in his posthumous *Cours* (1916) by his editors/amanuenses to the concept of synchronic *langue*, it served inadvertently to solidify this notion of the internally structured and societally shared norm of the language community enduring over time where – to use Antoine Meillet’s phrase – “*tout se tient*,” everything systemically hangs together independent of any of the fiercely applied sociolinguistics of the nation-state order that projects onto his theoretical concept of the denotational norm the image of the standard register as the norm of indexical – and hence speech-community—derived – valuation via the conical ethno-model described above.

Of course, language as it is experienceable, even by us linguists, presents no such thing as a Saussurean norm. It is, to use the Saussurean terminology, phenomenally *parole* all the way down. By contrast, we should think of the disciplinary genealogy of the concepts of contemporary “regularism,” as we might term it by contrast to “analogism” (Cf. also Bloomfield

1933:§16.6.). In a real sense the old Neogrammarian distinction between so-called “regular” and so-called “irregular” sound change (the latter was considered to be an empty set in the “true” diachrony of *langue*, which allowed one to define, in fact, a proper *Stammbaum* or line of descent), as well as between sound “law” and all other, disturbing forces of language change, has been replicated – recuperated in a different guise – in the post-Saussurean notion of synchronic *langue* as a perfect organon of structured rules that operate on categorized elements at whatever plane and level of structure, a view that attempts to encompass, insofar possible, as much of the inevitably messy pragmatic phenomena of *parole* in the form of a rule-governed “logical pragmatics” grafted on to the completely context-independent, immanent phonology—morphology—syntax of *langue*.

Thus, in this view every legitimately etymological form in a language comes down a single stemma of derivation on branches of a family tree, within a language community of unbroken transmission among generations who, to recall once more Meillet’s characterization, “ont le sentiment et la volonté de parler la même langue,” who, we may say, unconsciously orient to a single norm. But what about all that other stuff we have had to deal with in actually doing the history of languages, as my extended examples above presented?

Indeed, as those of us who have worked at the growth edges of empires have discovered, commercial efforts (such as trade in fur and commodities; plantations; extractive industries) and Christian missionizing encountered the languages of already polyglot and pluri-registered peoples drawn additionally into now colonial and imperial peripheries. Even the Norsemen discovered this in what are now the British Isles. So not only does an historical view of language in such places have to deal with the usual kinds of borrowing of lexical items, convergence of grammatical constructions in areal “fashions of speaking,” such as was long recognized for the

Sprachbünde and *Sprechbünde* of Eurasia; one has to see that various new and hybrid systems of communication, ranging from makeshift jargons to institutionalized pidgins and even indigenized creoles repeatedly emerged, in a real sense confounding the one-language-family provenience of language forms used in such complex speech communities. At the frontiers and interstices of empires or spheres of influence of metropole-focal political economic radiations, we are used to encountering complex social formations in which denotational codes themselves have come into intimate contact, people controlling a repertoire of formal and functional variance enregistered across more than one “language.” Language no less than anything else is, as one used to say disparagingly, “Balkanized” or a “*macédoine*” of situation-specific deployments forever escaping the ideal of the imagined community’s register-“from-nowhere.”

Whence “Superdiversity” at Home?

So much for the imperial and colonial peripheries at which we who work in relatively local, small-scale language communities have long confronted these problems. I think that we live today in a world in which these very processes have been in effect noticeably spreading to the politico-economic metropole, causing consternation in many organizational sites – for example, educational, medical, legal – that administer in one or another domain of contemporary mass social life, but therefore necessitating a thorough revision of the tacit reliance on the Enlightenment mapping of language community into polity. Multiple factors are responsible for the breakdown felt perhaps most acutely within Europe as the languages of the peripheries of former empires are practically experienced at home, not just in scholarly settings, thus setting up new dilemmas widely experienced as social forces in any First World post-imperial metropole. These forces are inverse images of one another, it seems to me. Let me explain.

First, it seems to me one must keep one's eyes and ears open to the shifting contours even of the so-called global languages, the ones that formerly mediated the administrative hegemony over empires political or economic. Like tectonic plates undergirding more superficial strata of linguistic life, these are slowly reconfiguring one with respect to another stimulated by new patterns of trans-linguistic contact in the contemporary world. Here is an example.

As I traveled in the summer of 2012 with my family as a tourist in Italy (Rome) and France (Marseille, Paris) I was struck by the contrast of the linguistic landscape since my first trips to these places in the early 1970s. At that earlier period, I did a certain amount of shopping in Rome, for example, for clothing, fancy writing instruments, and other personal items. In almost any solidly bourgeois shop, I found, I could address the salespeople in French and get answers back in Italian or accented but fluent French, as the case may have been. The point is, the sales staffs at reasonably upscale establishments had studied sufficient French so that I could rely on its value as a currency of international transactions. (At the time, even the U.S. passport was in bilingual English and French, we might note.) In summer 2012, my wife, older daughter and I again shopped in comparable – in some cases, the very same – establishments in Rome. Not a single staff person seemed to control French; it was English, English, English – sometimes exceedingly minimal, to be sure, but the shift in what was considered the “international” or transnational language in such commercial and touristical venues had clearly taken place over this 40-year interval. The availability of people who could comfortably engage with a Francophone has plummeted, while the presence in the public and commercial spheres of at least pro-Anglophone good-will has skyrocketed. Why?

Now many people – not the least the anxious French – have pointed a finger at American superpower hegemony as an exporter to the global ecumene of fiercely monoglot Anglophone

popular culture (as well spreading death and destruction in national pursuit of oil and other extractable riches). The allure, I dare say, and the density and obtrusiveness of American, British, Canadian, etc. First-World tourism as a presence seems, however, to have been rather constant across these four decades. But as we did a bit of the usual tourism in between glorious eating and drinking, visiting the usual tourist pilgrimage sites, I could not help but notice that around us a large fraction of the tourists in large family groups were not Yanks or Brits or their monoglot Anglophone ilk, but people from South Asia and East Asia. These were families speaking Hindi and Urdu, Japanese and Mandarin, excited by such sites as the Fontana di Trevi and laden with shopping bags from purchases along the way that afternoon. Their “global” contact language is not French; it never has been. It is English, resulting from a long and deep political and political economic engagement mediated by the erstwhile imperial and transnational administrative language in those vast regions.

I was amazed to discover precisely the same pattern of accommodation to English in Marseilles, notwithstanding its Arabophone and generally Maghrebian and Mediterranean orientation, and especially as well in Paris. Once a server in a restaurant overheard me explaining something in English translation, out came an English-language menu for Mme. (Only in a celebrity-chef two-star in which we dined one evening did the entire encounter take place in – of course, hushed and just-this-side-of-tolerant – French!) Salespeople at least knew English translations for various nouns for products to please Mme (and Mlle), even if this was the jargonish extent of their commercial interlanguage. Here seems to be a pattern of transformation that at first blush has been taken to be a direct confrontation between those Anglophones from Dover on west and those Francophones from Calais on east. But that is not, it seems to me, what is driving the retreat of French even in France; it is the new waves of

moneyed and mobile tourists and perhaps even settlers from places where English was the contact language (or has become such) that opened some kind of “global” window on the wider world. It has been tipping the balance in Europe itself, as these sojourners are the markets of the future.

So observe how this strains the workings of the Locke-ocratic model for policing the boundaries within each nation-state and offering one’s standardized denotational code for transnational mediation in the global world beyond.

The converse case contributing to “superdiversity” is this. Minoritized ethnicity within the nation-state order ain’t what it used to be. Consider the ideologically acceptable story – documented in both North America and Europe of the last century and more – of in-migrating seekers of economic, religious, and other freedoms, come to a better place. As a result, in the scheme of stratification of negatively valuated, marked variation down-and-around the standard register of the nation-state’s language, emerged characteristically ethnic variation: mixed-code registers whether from interference by a particular phonologico-phonetic “accent” in the adopted language or particular “immigrant” words and expressions from “the old country’s” denotational code, etc.¹⁰ In the USA, the socio-historically repeated pattern of immigration in the 19th and 20th centuries looked like a timeless “social structural” fact: by the third generation, language assimilation to American English as peoples are incorporated into the cone of stratification. Thus, a *blanchissage*, as it were, in which class ascendancy and other forms of group mobility allowing access to places of publicity and power implies the inverse of ethnic and ethno-

¹⁰See for example Einar Haugen’s classic study of *The Norwegian Language in America* (1953), based on research in the previous decade, and many subsequent studies of heritage language maintenance and language loss among immigrant ethno-linguistic minorities. From the point of view of language maintenance, Joshua Fishman’s *Language Loyalty in the United States* (1966) was an early sociological study of trends over generations.

linguistic manifestations by members of the group. Linguistically, then, one expects to observe self-transforming movement to the top-and-center, where one speaks/writes “from nowhere,” that is, from no identifiable demographic [other than eliteness, of course]. It has been both expected by dominant elites and, to the degree possible, fulfilled in ethnic group after ethnic group.¹¹

Now the new immigrations in recent years have rendered the picture much more complex. What one might consider a “defanged” and unproblematic ethno-linguistic diversity is, in a sense, already scheduled into the social space-time of the nation’s landscape (see Silverstein 2003) providing for a multiculturalism the existence of which is emblematically suggested in public, if actually enacted in private, in-group moments and venues. This model seems to be not a structural universal so much as a one-off socio-historical fact about the world of our fathers, grandfathers, etc., one that yielded the “three-generations-to-ethno-linguistic-assimilation” model that has become a staple of the sociology of ethnicity. As cosmopolitan elites from several places of emigration have become increasingly present in the Euro-American “North”; as continued immigration at all socioeconomic levels has continued unabated; as immigrants have been able to reinvent once definitively diasporic relationships with new kinds of continued contact and circulation of cultural goods, etc. – as all this has been happening, ethnicity (and with it ethnically identified languages) has increasingly become compatible with a range of socioeconomic class positions, from the top of a stratified category to the bottom. When “Chinese” is taught in North American cities’ elementary schools, it is *Putonghua*-based Mandarin, no longer (actually, if ever!) the Cantonese etc. based on southeastern and other

¹¹See the interesting work of Alba et al. (2002) and references there to classic work, and the review by Waters & Jiménez (2005), offering a framework for evaluation of the structural fact in terms of the functionalities of ethnic distinction and assimilation.

languages of the “overseas Chinese.” Mexico City standard Spanish is now the language of instruction in the USA, both in the remedial bilingualism context of public education and in the useless elite “foreign language instruction” that *gringo* children are exposed to – no longer the standard of Madrid. (In New York City, it is predominantly San Juan standard for children of Spanish heritage language.)

So whether we look at the immigrant ethnolinguistic landscape of “Chinese” so-called, of Spanish, of Urdu, of Japanese, or of Polish in the Anglo-American political context, these language communities now exist in an entirely different relationship to the expectations of earlier times, in fact substantially revitalized as rhizomic – multiply situated and connected – rather than diasporic; they are resonant with linguistic-cultural production and contact from high to low in relation to the now multiply standardized forms beyond the nation-states of origin. Members of these communities are no longer buying in to the zero-sum ideologies of linguistic and cultural assimilation with which government and public sphere institutions had earlier greeted them.

Now, I have nothing against statism, even if the fiercest nation-statisms seem everywhere to have caused trouble, only some of it linguistic. But the phenomena of “superdiversity” seem in fact to emerge as troubles for such statist vision of the *longue durée*; they constitute really an aggregate index of the fact that the institutional forms of these contemporary nation-states are outstripped by what they face in the way of language (and culture) in the communicative richness of our present-day world. The ideologically strong, polity-stabilizing projects of the last few hundred years of European views of language were already problematic at Versailles at the conclusion of the First World War.¹² These projects have become increasingly problematic, even deleterious in the post-colonies in the wake of the Second World War. But these problems

¹²See Meillet 1928 for an early report.

have come home to roost, as it were, in the historical present of Europe and North America, where we need to move on from thinking about language communities to thinking about speech – or discursive – communities as the phenomena which nation-states in particular must be made to see – and hear – and to respect.

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