This book presents a discussion of the multifaceted meanings and uses of language. It emphasizes the ways that language encapsulates speakers’ meanings and intentions. It includes data from cultures and languages throughout the world in order to document both similarities and differences in human language.

NEW TO THIS EDITION

This seventh edition of Language, Culture, and Communication contains updated information throughout the chapters as well as several new sections and reworking of some material. New discussion of research in various topics are included, with particular attention to examples of language practices in African societies.

- Chapter 2 (“The Form of the Message”): streamlined to focus on significant examples of language structure.
- Chapter 6 (“Digital Communication and Signed Languages”): expanded discussion of online communication, especially of distance learning contexts.
- Chapter 10 (“Language and Gender”): new section on language and sexuality, including discursive practices of gay men and lesbians.
- Chapter 12 (“Bilingual Communities”): new introductory section on the cognitive benefits of bilingualism that explores cognitive research with bilingual infants and with elderly bilinguals. Also expanded discussions of language and development and of language revitalization strategies for endangered languages.

FORMAT OF THE BOOK

This book contains 13 chapters that together present surveys of the field of linguistic anthropology and the study of language and culture. In addition to discussing research that is basic to the discipline, it focuses on the analysis of discourses as central to communicative interactions, revealing how social relations are produced and continually reproduced through speech. The text also highlights the analysis of language ideologies, that is, the beliefs that people have about language structure itself, about language usage, and about appropriate norms for producing and evaluating speech. These concepts are introduced in Chapter 1 and then discussed throughout the book.

Chapter 2 presents some of the structural features of language that are basic to an understanding of what language is. Chapter 3 discusses current issues in linguistic relativity, cultural and cognitive categorization, and the uses of metaphor. The next two chapters (Chapters 4 and 5) describe situational aspects of communication, including structural and interactional features of conversation and the social meanings conveyed through speech encounters. Chapter 6 deals with digital communication, that is, telephones and the Internet in personal communication, chats, and online courses. It also contains material on signed languages, drawing upon data from several countries. Chapters 7 and 8 describe the processes of language acquisition, including the learning of structural properties of language and of communicative competence. Chapter 9 focuses on speakers’ class and race as significant influences on speech style. In Chapter 10, we discuss
Preface

the role of gender identities on one’s choices of speaking. Chapter 11 focuses on language use, loyalty, and conflict in multilingual nations. Chapter 12 discusses multilingualism in communicative interactions, including both the micro level of individual choices and the national and international processes that affect local patterns of usage and meaning. The last chapter, Chapter 13, is devoted to analyzing inequalities of power in institutional encounters.

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