Academic Ignorance and Black Intelligence (Labov)

• Bereiter's deficit theory centers on the notion of "verbal deprivation"
• Black children from the ghetto receive little verbal stimulation, and hear few well-formed sentences
• Black families lack proper mother-child interaction
→ impoverished verbal expression (2)
• Cannot form concepts to convey logical thought
• They speak in "single words" and a 'series of badly connected words and phrases" (4)
Dangers of the deficit theory:
• "It **diverts the attention from the real defects** of our educational system to imaginary defects of the child" (p. 3)
• It **confirms prejudice**d teachers in their low opinion of black working class children (p. 18)
• "Class and ethnic differences in grammatical form are equated with differences in the capacity for logical analysis" (p. 17)
• It gives rise to **ill-founded remedial programs**, which start from the premise that the children have no language at all (p. 4)
• These programs then teach the children to mimic middle class speech, which is seen as a way to make them think logically (p. 17)
• It leads to the hypothesis of the**genetic inferiority** of black children (p. 3)
Labov attack on Bereiter:
• He shows that the monosyllabic behaviour that Bereiter takes to be a child's complete linguistic competence is a reaction to a threatening environment
• He shows how well speakers of Ebonics can handle complex arguments in their own vernacular

Academic Ignorance and Black Intelligence (Labov) (cont)

• He shows that Bereiter "confuses logic with explicitness" (p. 15) and is ignorant of the grammatical rules of Ebonics (deletion of copula, as in "They mine") (16)
• He shows Bereiter is ignorant of the rules of discourse (16), which allow for deletion of subject and verb in answer to questions like "Where is the squirrel"! "in the tree"
• Bernstein vs elaborated code dismissed, AAVE can make complex constructions also
"The child is in an **asymmetrical situation** where anything he says can, figuratively, be held against him. He has learned a number of devices to avoid saying anything in this situation, and he works very hard to achieve this end."

Research Questions Labov/Bereiter

All: Why do children in inner-city school show such low educational achievement?
Is it caused by hereditary factors (i.e. genetic deficit, low IQ) (Psychologists etc.)
Is it caused by environmental factors? If so, which? (Sociologists etc.)
Is it caused by a disconnect between language and culture in schools and language and culture at home? (Linguists)
Deficit theory of verbal deprivation: black children from the ghetto are said to receive little verbal stimulation, to hear very little well-formed language, and as a result are impoverished in their means of verbal expression. (2) According to Bereiter, they have no language at all. (4)
The data that the studies are based on have not been obtained in ways

Research Questions Labov/Bereiter (cont)

that make sense. The questions about how children relate to their parents are culturally biased. The social circumstances of the interviews lead children to be uncommunicative. A different set-up leads the same children to display verbal virtuosity

Between two worlds (Hulsen et al)

Social networks, language shift, and language processing in three generations of Dutch migrants in New Zealand
The three network dimensions that the authors take into consideration in determining a speaker's social network:
1. **Relational characteristics**
• Nature (kin, neighbor, friend, colleague)
• Form of support (emotional, instrumental, informational)
• Intensity (= importance to the speaker) of contact (primary = most important contacts; non-primary= less vital)
2. **Structural properties:**
• Size of total network
• Size of primary and non-primary networks
• Density and multiplexity of the network
3. **Location in space and time:**
• Proximity
• Frequency of contact
Other factors:
• L1/L2 ratio in primary and nonprimary networks in home country and New Zealand
• Number of L1 / L2 speakers in primary and nonprimary networks
• Number of L1 contacts in home country and New Zealand

Between two worlds (Hulsen et al) (cont)

A sociolinguistic questionnaire to determine relevant non- linguistic factors (age, education, etc) and language-related factors (language use between generations, in different domains, attitude to L1 maintenance).

• A social-network questionnaire: List of people (with country of origin and language) who were important to them in different domains of their life (family, friends, colleagues, schoolmates, organisations)

• Multiplexity: needed for emotional and or practical and or informational support)

"the second part of the questionnaire investigated the multiplexity of the contacts by asking informants to indicate in which type of situation contact with network members was established or needed, for example, emotional, practical and/or informational"

'I'm not west. I'm not east. So how leh?'

Ho: Identity in flux: a Singlish speaker's dilemma.

Liverpudlian

Phonological resistance and innovation in the North-West of England.

The social stratification of /r/ in NYC (Labov)

NZ hypotheses etc

"... the following hypotheses will be tested with respect to the relationship between language maintenance and shift, social networks, and language processing:

NZ hypotheses etc (cont)

The relative number of L1 contacts in the social networks is positively related to (a) language use and the importance attached to language maintenance, and (b) language proficiency in the experimental tasks (i.e. fewer mistakes and faster reactions in the picture-naming tasks)

The presence of L1 contacts in the nonprimary network is a better indicator of L1 use, L1 maintenance attitudes, and L1 proficiency than the presence of L1 contacts in the primary network (cf. Stoessel 1998).

Informants with more "home-network" contacts in the Netherlands use the L1 more often, attach more importance to language maintenance, and show a higher level of L1 proficiency in the experimental task."

They have proven three and falsified one, so on the whole, yes, but

On p. 38 they mention that the questionnaire was problematic, because it took so long to complete. As a result, they had to leave the questionnaires behind, and not all questionaires were returned or fully completed. That would have a negative impact on the reliability of the data.

On p. 40 it becomes clear that the picture-naming experiment was not doable for the third generation (they do not have enough Dutch), so they cannot compare their abilities with those of the other two generations