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BASIC TYPES OF TREATMENT OF LANGUAGE PROBLEMS

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1. TREATMENT OF LANGUAGE PROBLEMS

The linguist's concern with language problems represents only an extreme case of a more general phenomenon which may be called treatment of language problems. Language problems, at least some of them, receive attention and are discussed in any community by linguists as well as by non-linguists. Patterns of thinking and talking about language problems are easily established and frequently strict constraints are imposed in this manner on the identification and understanding of the relevant issues.

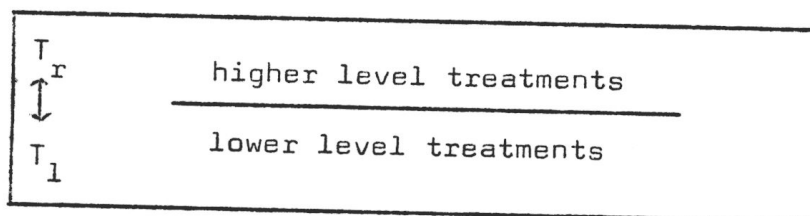
Treatment patterns display various degrees of systematicity. Problems may be exposed either in an ad hoc way as they historically emerge, or as an ordered system of items. Independently from this, some

treatment patterns are more theoretical in the sense of being meaningfully based on sociological and/or linguistic models, while others reveal no similar background. Treatment patterns may further either relate to problems as they are reflected in folk taxonomies and naive attitudes toward language, or try to treat the linguistic situation responsible for these taxonomies and attitudes. This important difference in depth of treatment has so far received little attention (cf. however a similar notion in Daneš 1968:122-123). In order to account for, for instance, the Japanese situation a "surface" treatment will accept the belief that all language problems in Japan are problems of script; on a "deeper" level problems ranging from stylistic and lexical (e.g., limits on pre-modern vocabulary) to phonological issues (e.g., borrowed phonological elements) may emerge from behind the "surface" slogan of script reform. Daneš (1968) has suggested another dimension which he calls rationality. Rational treatments are characterized by affective neutrality, specificity of goals and solutions, universalism, emphasis on effectiveness, and by long-term objectives. On the other hand, lack of rationality is marked by affectiveness, diffuseness, particularism, emphasis on quality instead of effectiveness, and preoccupation with short-term goals.

Systematicity, theoretical elaborateness, depth, and rationality (perhaps with additional features such as various kinds and degrees of adequacy) may be thought as contributing to the rigour of a theory or a treatment system (the term has been suggested to me by B. Jernudd) Note 1. With regard to rigour the historically observable

patterns in each community may be expected to fall within a range the extremes of which are

- (1) a considerably rigorous treatment (T_r), and
- (2) a treatment with no legitimate claim on rigorousness (T_l):



An attempt to divorce completely the higher level treatment patterns (linguistic, etc.) from the lower ones is of necessity futile. Linguists, if involved at all, have continually claimed a high degree of systematicity and theoreticity for their approaches to language problems. Their intention has been to attain T_r but mostly with little success. Manifold reasons for this may be quoted: the lack of a socio-linguistic theory, personal political involvement (because of which often also social scientists have been kept distant from T_r), and to a significant degree the limited extent of the problems treated ^{Note 2}. Lower level treatment patterns still play a role far exceeding what linguists working outside and inside language policy and planning agencies would readily accept.

2. BASIC TYPES OF LINGUISTIC TREATMENT OF LANGUAGE PROBLEMS

2.1 POLICY AND CULTIVATION

In present day linguistics two basically different and extreme approaches to language problems seem to coexist. I shall call the first policy approach ^{Note 3.} This approach covers problems like selection of the national language, standardization, literacy, orthographies, problems of stratification of language (repertoire of code varieties) etc. The emphasis is on linguistic varieties and their distribution. This approach is combined with notions of language policy and planning. It might also be called a sociological or macroscopic approach. Ferguson 1962, Rice 1962, Bright 1966, Fishman-Ferguson-Das Gupta 1968, Fishman 1970, and perhaps the majority of other studies connected with modern sociolinguistics supply representative examples of this approach.

The second set of treatment patterns may be described as the cultivation approach. It is characterized by interest in questions of correctness, efficiency, linguistic levels fulfilling specialized functions, problems of style, constraints on communicative capacity etc. The term cultivation of language (coined by Garvin to cover the continental Sprachkultur, jazyková kultura, kul'tura řeči etc.) is the most appropriate to describe this approach. Langue, language code, remains the central focus, but parole, speaking, is also considered: inclusion of phenomena

like "intellectualization" or "styles" (Havránek) is not accidental. This second approach might perhaps also be labelled anthropological or microscopic. Havránek's "Studie o spisovném jazyce" and the Prague School theory of Literary Language in general are typical examples of this attitude. While the policy approach appeals to administration, the cultivation approach addresses the public in general, and intellectuals in particular.

Acceptance of one of the approaches frequently excludes the other approach. It is noticeable, for instance, that although the distinct Bohemian diglossia (Literary vs. Common Czech) received descriptive attention already in the thirties (Havránek 1934), it was not raised as a language problem until recently (Sgall 1960, Havránek 1963 a, Daneš-Sgall 1964).

Both the policy and cultivation approach occur in various mutations with regard to the $T_1 - T_r$ axis. The examples used above (sociolinguistics and the Prague School) represent considerably rigorous attempts. A journalist's attitude toward the language problem of India, or a puristic attitude toward Czech, frequent before the emergence of the Cercle linguistique de Prague, approximate the other extreme. Reasonably developed attempts at linguistic treatment of language problems have so far been presented independently in four areas: the Prague School, Japanese linguistics, Russian linguistics, and Sociolinguistics. A careful examination of these approaches may, in the future, lead to a better understanding of the complicated structure of language treatment patterns.

2.2 THE PRAGUE SCHOOL THEORY OF CULTIVATION OF LANGUAGE

Future research in this area will undoubtedly reveal predominance of the policy approach over the cultivation approach for the Czech situation in the 19th and early 20th century. The basic idea of the Prague School linguists since the late twenties was, however, to provide a more systematic and theoretical alternative to the language problem treatment of their predecessors and contemporaries, and to incorporate this alternative into the novel framework of structural linguistics (cf. Vachek 1966:96-99, also Jedlička 1964). The initial formulation is found in Theses of the Circle in TCLP 1, 1929:27-29 (also available in Vachek 1964). Further elaboration is due to V. Mathesius and B. Havránek (cf. the bibliography).

One of the primitive terms in the discipline is a norm, conceived as being different from its codification in textbooks, dictionaries etc. (Havránek 1938:414). Norm has never been satisfactorily defined but its close relatedness to evaluation of language is obvious. Norm is basically identical with the phenomenon discussed by Bloomfield (1927) under the heading of "literate speech". Any type of language (any variety) has a norm. "Cultivation of language" is, however, mainly concerned with the norm of Literary Language ^{Note 4}. The two main problems concerning the norm of the Literary Language are: its flexible stability attained by fixation of the norm and destroyed by arbitrary interventions (Mathesius 1932), and functional differentiation (Havránek 1932; in 1947-1948:134 Havránek calls the problem "adequacy to the given purpose"). Functional differentiation does not imply only a different

inventory of elements, but also their different use (Havránek 1932:37). This is the point where the theory leaves the sphere of langue and embarks in the area of parole. There are two fundamental types of this special use: intellectualization (or rationalization) on the one hand, and automatization/foregrounding on the other (cf. Garvin 1964:9). Individual functional dialects and styles are characterized by a different share of these problems.

2.3 TWO JAPANESE APPROACHES

While a single approach has been characteristic for the Czech scene, two distinct currents may be distinguished in Japan. The first discipline is called kokugo mondai (Problems of the National Language, cf. Katō 1961) and contains chapters like "National Language policy", "Unification of spoken and written language", "Limitations on the number of characters", "Standard Language and dialects" etc. (cf. Kōmoku ichiranhyō in Kokugogaku ...1955:18-19). It is not difficult to recognize in these topics a typical policy approach. Since the Meiji Restoration language policy has always been given enormous attention in Japan, and Japan may easily be designated as one of the countries with most vigorous treatment of language problems. The post-war series of language reforms was not so much a measure imposed by the American Occupation authorities - as often believed - as it was a logical conclusion of the long autochthonous process of treatment of language problems.

Kokugo mondai is still an important term of reference in Japan. There is however no doubt that the post-war language reforms were the last for many years. After the war a new discipline referred to as gengo seikatsu (mostly translated as "linguistic life") appears as a strong representative of the cultivation approach to language problems (cf. Miyaji 1961, Nishio 1961, Tokieda 1964, Iwabuchi, T. 1964, Takahashi 1964). In the "Encyclopaedia of the Japanese National Language" (Kokugogaku ...1955:15-18) the entries relevant for gengo seikatsu are classified as follows:

1. General ...
 - 1.1 Language acts in general ...
 - 1.2 Types of language acts ...
2. Linguistic life and spoken language ...
 - 2.1 Speaking in general ...
 - 2.2 About monologue ...
 - 2.3 About dialogue ...
 - 2.4 Listening life ...
 - 2.5 Language product and language play ...
 - 2.6 Linguistic life and instruments ...
 - 2.7 Film, theatre, stage entertainment ...
 - 2.8 Society and language ...
 - 2.9 Language, customs and beliefs ...
3. Linguistic life and written language ...
 - 3.1 Writing in general ...
 - 3.2 Means and methods of writing ...
 - 3.3 Types of written works ...
 - 3.4 Calligraphy ...
 - 3.5 Reading in general ...
 - 3.6 Philology ...
 - 3.7 Books ...
 - 3.8 Printing, publishing ...

This system of topics, comparable to the "ethnography of speaking" (Hymes 1962) is treated not only as an object of description but also as a catalogue of language problems. The journal Genko seikatsu published since 1951 under the sponsorship of the National Language Research Institute is especially notable in this respect.

Paralleled by attempts in a different tradition (Iwabuchi 1961, Kindaichi 1964) and also by a recent interest in McLuhan (e.g. Hanashikotoba... 1968), the growth of the "linguistic life" studies gives a clear testimony in favour of a transition from the policy toward the cultivation approach ^{Note 5}.

E. Iwabuchi, Director of the National Language Research Institute, formulates perspectives for future development in the following way:

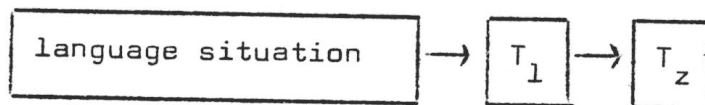
"The object of discussion of the so called Problems of National Language is at present most often represented by material which concerns its graphical representation. The Problems of National Language should not however stop in an area as narrow as that. Can, in the contemporary Japanese language, functions like cognition, communication, thinking and creation be satisfactorily performed? In which direction is it necessary to develop Japanese to further enhance the functions of human language? In my opinion this constitutes the real Problems of the National Language." (1965:2-3).

Fundamental to the Japanese situation is the problem of a theory. Standards of the journal Genko seikatsu, laid down basically by T. Shibata, are high, more than half way between journalistic and purely academic treatment. The reports of the National Language Research Institute on "linguistic life" (An Introduction...1966:6-9, Grootaers 1952; cf. also Hayashi, Sh.1966) still continue

to bring extremely useful and sometimes unique material. Even if these studies are sometimes considerably systematic, an outside observer may, however, not fail to notice that neither kokugo mondai nor gengo seikatsu have so far produced a generally acceptable attempt at establishing a modern theoretical framework. This situation has already been criticised in Japan (Takahashi 1964) but no improvement is immediately foreseeable.

2.4 WHY TWO DIFFERENT APPROACHES?

The variables responsible for the difference between the policy and cultivation patterns are not difficult to identify. Treatment of language problems, even on its deepest and most theoretical levels, has so far been strongly influenced by levels adjoining T_1 , and these, in their turn have received strong influence from features of the speech communities in question:



It is the less developed modern (or modernizing) societies in which the policy approach prevails. These societies are characterized by a high degree of arbitrary (Neustupný 1965: foot-note 6, p.89) social and linguistic heterogeneity. Under changed or changing social conditions the diversity within the repertoire of varieties is easily recognizable and leads to a clear policy approach on both the lower and higher levels of treatment. This explains the predominance of the policy

approach in sociolinguistics which has largely developed as a study of developing languages ^{Note 6}. The kokugo mondai approach in Japan slowly disappears (or significantly changes) with the country's transfer into the category of developed nations. From what I know of the Soviet treatment of language problems, a marked division seems to exist: the policy approach is employed for the less developed languages, while the cultivation approach applies to Russian (cf. already Polivanov 1927).

The cultivation approach coexists with a situation of functional (Neustupný 1965: foot-note 6, p.89) stratification of language which appears in the foreground in more developed communities. The inter-variety relationships become less conspicuous, variation is "fine" (Labov 1966), and it is now issues like stability and functional differentiation that matter. Problems of (non-literary) style and expression come under discussion ^{Note 7}.

Variations in this basic model can hardly destroy its general validity. It may further be expected that the contemporary transition of most developed speech communities from communication largely relying on written language (Japan, partly Europe) to patterns with less marked weight on written messages (American English) may constitute a third approach to treatment of language problems. M. McLuhan (Hymes 1963) seems to represent a lower level treatment of the third type.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The main points of the above discussion may be summarized as follows:

- (1) Linguistic approaches to language problems are only one section of a broader category of treatment of language problems.
- (2) Two extreme and opposite patterns of linguistic treatment of language problems may be distinguished: a policy approach and a cultivation approach.
- (3) The policy approach is connected with the study of less developed speech communities while the cultivation approach is found in modern industrialized societies.

Before any modern prescriptive attempt at language treatment is produced, at least the following three considerations seem necessary:

- (1) Can any advantage be derived from application of the policy approach in communities characterized by a high degree of social development? The already mentioned persistent neglect of the Bohemian diglossia seems to attest to the correctness of a positive answer to this question. Some linguists' surprise whenever a policy type problem (e.g., the language problems in Belgium or Canada) emerges in the developed world points out to the same conclusion.
- (2) Is the cultivation approach applicable to less developed societies? Undoubtedly the centre of language problems in these societies will remain

in the sphere of the policy approach. Issues of stability, functional differentiation, intellectualization etc. do however apply in any situation. A model like Haugen's (1966) which attempts to incorporate elements from both of the extreme approaches deserves careful attention (cf. also Jernudd-Das Gupta, in press, Section 3).

- (3) In order to develop the higher levels of treatment of language problems it will further be necessary to set linguistics free from its preoccupation with the problems of language code (grammar-code variety) and explore the vast area of parole far beyond what "code" linguists would imagine. The langue-and-only-langue approach in linguistics is close to going out of fashion also in the sphere of treatment of language problems (Neustupný 1968).

NOTES

I wish to thank Björn Jernudd for useful comments on many problems discussed in this paper.

1. "Rigorousness" differs ofcourse from "objectivity". I fully agree with G. Myrdal's remark that recommendations cannot be made without commitment to value judgements (1968:1941-1942). Principles applied in language treatment are accepted differently by different social groups (Neustupný 1968:292) and as long as social stratification exists no "objectivity" in language treatment is possible. Treatment patterns show various

degree of "rigour" independently from the question of "objectivity".

2. Too often the word language in the phrase "language problems" is accepted to mean only the linguistic code (grammar-code variety). What is obviously needed is coverage of the whole complex of communication patterns, including for instance network rules, rules governing the use of channels, thematic rules etc. (cf. Neustupný 1968). The extent of the field is best indicated in Hymes (1962, 1964, 1967, in press) and Ervin-Tripp (1964, 1968).

3. Words like "policy" or "cultivation" have been employed here as mere labels, without intention to declare what "policy" "cultivation" or "planning" etc. is or should be. A recent theoretical approach to some of the relevant problems may be found, e.g., in Jernudd-DasGupta (in press) and Rubin (in press).

4. I translate spisovný jazyk intentionally as Literary not Standard, Language, because it seems that the usage of the former term is closely connected with the cultivation approach, while Standard Language represents a concept typically discussed in the policy approach.

5. Useful surveys of language situation and a bibliography appear annually in Kokugo nenkan (Yearbook of the National Language), ed. by the National Language Research Institute (Tokyo: Shūei Shuppan).

6. The other source of inspiration for treatment of language problems in sociolinguistics seems to derive from studies of bilingualism in developed societies like America (Haugen 1953,1956; Fishman 1965).

7. Fishman (1970:69 et seq.) correctly argues in favour of both "uniformalion" and "differentiation" in industrialized societies. Undoubtedly new dialectal features do emerge (Shibata 1965) even if mostly they are isolated and do not constitute clear new varieties. Of much greater importance for industrialized societies than these examples of newly created arbitrary heterogeneity is, however, the fact of the fast growth of functional heterogeneity, establishment of a complicated set of so far nonexistent levels of linguistic means designated to fulfil new tasks (Neustupný 1965:89).

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