Advances in Language Planning

Edited by

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BASIC TYPES OF TREATMENT OF LANGUAGE PROBLEMS

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).[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 rigourousness (T_l):

$$T_r$$
$$\uparrow \quad \text{higher level treatments}$$
$$\downarrow \quad \text{lower level treatments}$$
$$T_l$$
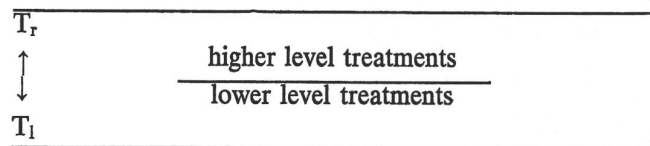
An attempt to divorce completely the higher level treatment patterns (linguistic, etc.) from the lower ones is of necessity futile. Linguists, if involved at all, have continually claimed a high degree of systematicity and theoreticity for their approaches to language problems. Their intention has been 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.[2] Lower level treatment pat-

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[1] 'Rigorousness' differs of course 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 degrees 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

terns 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*.[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*, *kuľtura reči* 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

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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-Das Gupta (1971) and Rubin (1971).

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 1963a, Daneš-Sgall 1964).

Both the policy and cultivation approach occur in various mutations with regard to the T_l - 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 aproaches 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.[4] The two main problems

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[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.

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 aproach 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 iten* 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, T. Iwabuchi 1964, Takahashi 1964). In the 'Encyclopaedia of the Japanese National Language' (*Kokugogaku iten* 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.   Linquistic life and spoken language . . .

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 *Gengo 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. *Hanashi-kotoba* . . . 1968), the growth of the 'linguistic life' studies gives a clear testimony in favour of a transition from the policy toward the cultivation approach.[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 *Gengo seikatsu*, laid down basically by T.

[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).

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 Sh. Hayashi 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_l, and these, in their turn have received strong influence from features of the speech communities in question:

$$\boxed{\text{language situation}} \rightarrow \boxed{T_l} \rightarrow \boxed{T_r}$$

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: footnote 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.[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: footnote 6, p. 89) stratification of language which

[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).

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.[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
1964) 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 lan-
    guage 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 ap-
    proach 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 to the same conclusion.
(2) Is the cultivation approach applicable to less developed societies?
    Undoubtedly the centre of language problems in these societies

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[7] Fishman (1970: 69 et seq.) correctly argues in favour of both "uniformation"
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).

will remain in the sphere of the policy approach. Issues of stabil-
ity, functional differentiation, intellectualization etc. do however
apply in any situation. A model like Haugen's (1966) which at-
tempts to incorporate elements from both of the extreme ap-
proaches deserves careful attention (cf. also Jernudd-Das Gupta,
1971, 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).

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THE THEORY OF LANGUAGE PLANNING

Language is a means of communication. By this statement two main and essential characters of the language are given. Firstly language is a means. Already Wilhelm von Humboldt maintained: "Die Sprache ist immer nur Mittel."[1] Secondly language is a social code, as well as a social institution. If we want to treat language realistically, and not as a mystery, we must always have in mind these two aspects of language. Much has been written on the importance of language. It is impossible to exaggerate the role of language in a society and culture, and its importance is still increasing steadily day by day. Joyce O. Hertzler in his book *A sociology of language*[2] discusses the following major general functions of language: language as the means of identification, categorization, perception, thinking, creative activity, technology, memory, transmitting knowledge across space and time and grasping the abstract and supernatural. Besides this language is the basic instrument of social behavior.

That language has a great social function is proved by man's great concern in linguistic matters. This is valid for the man in the street as well as for persons holding the highest posts in a state. One is anxious that oneself as well as other persons use correct and good language. This is manifest in the extensive demand for and success of manuals of linguistic correctness in various countries and in numerous

[1]   *Gesammelte Schriften* VI (2) (Berlin, 1907), 396.
[2]   New York, 1965, 38 ff.