LANGUAGE NORMS IN AUSTRALIAN-JAPANESE CONTACT SITUATIONS J.V. Neustupný

A new framework for the study of 'languages in contact', radically different from the paradigm established by Weinreich and Haugen, is developing within sociolinguistic (cf. Neustupný 1985b). The most characteristic features of the new approach can be summarised as follows:

- (1) Instead of focusing on the product of linguistic change in situations of contact between languages, emphasis is on the understanding of specific processes which take place in such situations. While the old paradigm asked what features of a language (or of two or more languages) did or did not change, we now are more interested in what it is that happens in a particular contact situation or in contact situations in general. Within the new framework the concept of a 'contact situation' replaces the concept of 'languages in contact'. The contact situation is considered to be a specific category, which differs in many ways from 'internal (native) situations', such as have been the target of traditional linguistics (and, for that matter, most other disciplines of social science).
- (2) Further, it is assumed that most, if not all processes which develop in contact situations represent various phases or types of what is referred to as the correction process. A correction process commences with a deviation from the norm, encompasses all processes which may follow as a consequence of such deviation, and often closes with a corrective adjustment. Correction processes in contact situations include the traditionally acknowledged interference or switching, but also cover processes such as evaluation of speech, precorrection, hypercorrection, secondary adjustment, 'foreigner talk', avoidance of communication, language treatment in contact situations, and many others.
- (3) Thirdly, the new framework implies that limiting the scope of contact studies to the study of grammatical competence (phonology, lexicon, syntax, graphemics) is fruitless. Equal attention must be paid to the whole of communicative competence (cf. Hymes 1972) and to social interactive competence in general.
- (4) Also, if contact studies are to concentrate on discourse processes, rather than on what has changed in the languages concerned, there is a need for the development of completely new research techniques, which will record

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as much of the processes involved as possible. The technique of 'follow-up interviews' (Neustupny 1981) and a further development of some other procedures (see section 4) are of particular importance here.

The new paradigm of contact studies places emphasis on the fact that within contact situations speakers deviate from norms. As a matter of fact, the acceptance of point (2) above implies that the concept of the 'norm' is one of the most important primitive terms of the new theory. Yet, very little theoretical or other work has been undertaken so far with regard to the study of the norms of contact situations.

The concept of the norm was in disrepute in modern linguistics until reintroduced in a rigorous way in the Prague School by Bohuslav Havránek. Havránek emphasised that the norm was a fact of language, independent of what is sometimes called the norm in the narrow sense of the word, namely the codification of language norms in textbooks or prescriptive manuals of language use (Havránek 1932, 1936, Garvin 1964). While a large number of rules applies in the course of the generation of any discourse, some of them may be undesirable for various reasons—for instance, because they are rules of an inappropriate variety of language or because they are not correctly applied. A norm only includes rules which are judged by speakers as the 'correct' rules for the particular communicative situation.

The character of language norms differs in various societies and use situations. Languages used mainly for writing lack a phonological norm and speakers of many Standard Languages of the past (and the present) were (or still are) free to apply, when using these languages, phonological rules of pronunciation which originate in their own dialectal norms. The norm of languages used mainly for speaking does not necessarily include the rules of spelling and a considerable amount of variation may characterise such rules. This, indeed, was the case in medieval Europe. Remember that in Mozart's times it still did not matter how one spelled. On the other hand, in the Modern period, spelling rules move to the very centre of the norm of most European languages.

In the context of this paper it is important to realise that norms on the basis of which deviations are judged in contact situations, are not identical with the norms we know from internal (native) situations. A pioneering contribution to the topic is Haugen's paper in Hornby's Bilingualism (1977). Characteristically, however, the paper only deals with the problem of mixed bilingual norms (as products, rather than as facts of discourse) in the case of immigrant speakers who speak their native language. No doubt, this is an important issue, but the full range of the problem of contact norms is much wider.

In this paper I shall try to develop the concept of the norm of contact situations somewhat further, using for that purpose data collected in structured interviews with speakers participating in Australian-Japanese contact situations. The situations took place in Australia and were conducted in English. The study is necessarily a preliminary one and aims more at developing a framework than at a full description of any particular system of norms.

SELECTION OF THE NORM — THE GENERAL STRATEGY

The selection of a norm is not a 'purely theoretical' problem. All participants in contact situations necessarily use norms as a yardstick from which all deviations are measured, and to which evaluation of behaviour is firmly bound. Without norms discourse could not exist.

What, then, is the more general strategy for the selection of a suitable norm in a speech situation? We can say that if language A is spoken in a situation and at least one central participant is a native speaker of A, rules of A normally serve as the base for the norm of that situation. All subjects interviewed for this study agreed that they expected norms of Australian interaction to prevail. However, this was, as some of them said, 'natural' and no conscious attention was paid to the strategy.

The matter would be simple if this were the whole story. But the presence of a general strategy such as this does not necessarily imply that the native norm of A will apply as such. It will be clear from further discussion that participants in Australian-Japanese contact situations vary the native norm of English to a considerable extent, omitting, applying norms from other systems and creating new ones.

VARIATION IN NORM

Thus, although the base of the norm of contact situations will be established using the general strategy described in the preceding paragraph, details show considerable variation. Of course, foreign and native participants must be expected to apply norms which differ to a considerable extent and the gap between norms of the two groups can be assumed to constitute one of the most characteristic features of contact situations.

2.1. Foreign participants

There are at least four ways in which the norm of foreign participants in contact situations -the Japanese participants in our case- differs from the norm of native -in our study native English Australian- situations.

First, the norm is deficient. For instance, data demonstrate that at the level of grammatical competence some Japanese speakers lack adequate rules for the use of the plural, the use of the tenses, or for adequate pronominalisation. Such speakers have a system in which there is only one rule for both singular and plural, in which by rule the past tense is identical with the present tense, etc. As a result of such norm deficiency speakers generate sentences which are ungrammatical for their native interlocutors. Of course, for some of these speakers the relevant English native norms are at least partly 'overt' (cf. section 4 below), they note their deviations and react to them. This fact has been confirmed in interviews as well as through the observation of attempts at post-correction of errors.

An important question is what happens in the case when the English norms are totally absent. Do the new reduced rules constitute for the foreign speakers involved new alternative norms? In order to accept a rule as a component of a norm we must possess some evidence that it is used not simply for the generation of speech acts but also for their evaluation. If we find that the failure to abide by the rule is noted, evaluated, or the misuse corrected we can speak of a new norm.

Should the lack of the plural in a speaker's English mean that he/she will notice the use of the plural in the case of other speakers, evaluate it negatively, and perhaps try to correct it (this is feasible if the other speaker is, for instance, his/her child) — then we could speak of a new norm. However, at this stage of

our knowledge it seems unlikely that any of the deficient rules which appear in my data would be of this nature. Rather they resemble the case of German spelling before the 19th century, a case where rules exist but norms do not — or, perhaps, where norms do exist but are weak.

Secondly, we must realise that the norm of foreign participants is not merely deficient but frequently also adapted. Since speakers have not yet correctly acquired all rules needed, for the sake of communicative efficiency they adapt rules which they already possess and use them as substitutes (interlanguage). This means that rules alien to both the foreign and the native speaker's norms appear in contact situations.

For instance, one of my subjects believed that the correct form of the TITLE+ LAST NAME address is 'Mr/Mrs/Miss+Last Name'. This rule is incorrect because in Australian English, in most situations, 'Mr/Mrs/Miss' can only be used if no other specific title (such as 'Reverend', 'Doctor', etc.) is appropriate. The speaker generalised in this case an existing English rule in a form that occurs neither in English nor, for that matter, in Japanese. Of course, some rule adaptations are decoded (noted) by Japanese speakers themselves as deviations from English norms appropriate for the situation, the speakers mark their own performance negatively, and sometimes make an attempt at a corrective adjustment.

Discussions with my subjects indicate that in a number of cases norm adaptations are not recorded as deviations from English norms. They are considered by Japanese speakers to be in full agreement with valid English norms. This means that an alternative new norm has been created. The speakers in question monitor the application of such adapted rules in their own behaviour and in the behaviour of other foriegn speakers in contact situations and use such monitoring for evaluation and (self-)corrective adjustment. In still other cases Japanese speakers produce rule adaptations which are not normative at all. What the conditions are under which adaptations create or do not create new norms remains to be established.

Thirdly, there are deviations from Australian English norms which are due to borrowing, interference from the speaker's native language. Here, too, we must distinguish between instances of breaking Australian norms, noted and negatively evaluated by the foreign speaker himself (sometimes with an ensuing corrective adjustment), and instances when the borrowed rule is considered to represent the correct English norm of behaviour.

My Japanese subjects use rules from their native system in a normative way not so much to generate their own behaviour but for the evaluation of behaviour of their native interlocutors in contact situations. Hymes' 'norms of interaction and interpretation' (Hymes 1974:60) come to mind here. One subject, for instance, noted her displeasure at the rather casual sitting posture of some of her Australian contacts, and made it quite clear that her evaluation of the behaviour was negative.

Of course, as in the case of rule deficiencies and adapters, borrowings, too, frequently do not constitute new norms at all. This is particularly true of interference in the phonemic system: Japanese speakers do show a strong influence of the Japanese system of intonation, but so far I have been unable to detect any evidence that the 'Japanese pronunciation of English' would be used as a new norm. The contrasts with the prerevolutionary use of French by the Russian nobility, in the case of which a clear norm existed — according to Roman Jakobson — which prescribed that one must pronounce the language with a

Russian accent. Of course, since the Russians spoke French to each other, as well as to other people, the situation was somewhat different.

The Japanese treatment of English pronunciation means that the existing deviations from English native norms do not become the basis of any reactive behaviour for the speakers. Of course, they may be noted by English native speakers participating in the situations and become thus the basis of further action.

Fourthly, in some cases foreign speakers acquire a rule correctly, but lack more general strategies which would allow them to vary the application of the rule in particular situations. The resulting norm is therefore very rigid and does not easily accept variation. The 'rigidity' of foreign participants' norms becomes particularly noticeable in the processing of deviations produced by other foreign participants in the same situation. Japanese speakers interviewed for this study frequently reported 'errors' committed by other Japanese speakers. One of my subjects reported, with obvious disapproval, that another Japanese speaker introduced herself on the telephone by using the formula 'This is Mrs Y (surname)'. In Australian usage this formula is somewhat unusual, but it is acceptable. Some of these 'errors' are not likely to be noticed by native speakers at all, while others, even if marginally unacceptable, would most likely remain 'covert' (cf. paragraph 4 below) in an internal situation.

To summarise, we can say that native English norms, while being in general the target of Japanese speakers in Australian-Japanese contact situations, are not necessarily applied without alterations. In the speech (and behaviour in general) of Japanese participants Australian norms are deficient, adapted, rigid, and there are norms borrowed from Japanese. Although Australian English norms are applied, there are also norms newly created and rules which are used with no normative effect.

2.2. Native participants

Foreign participants are not the only ones who change their behaviour in contact situations. Native participants, too, adapt their norms in a significant way.

First, purposeful deficiency and adaptation appear in what has been called 'foreigner talk' (Ferguson 1981, Clyne 1981b). Although very few of our Australian subjects admitted large scale use of foreigner talk, it was obvious from observation of their behaviour that they did use considerable simplification and adaptation of rules they possessed in the interest of efficiency. Foreigner talk, of course, has the character of a norm: the application of its rules is often noted by its users, and when the strategy fails, such failure is evaluated and corrective adjustment can take place. However, sometimes foreigner talk may remain fully unnoted by its users and in this case does not give rise to new norms. Of course, it seems not to be uncommon for English speakers to apply English native norms with regard to their own foreigner talk: since foreigner talk quite clearly violates the norms of native English situations, they note in this case the resulting deviations, evaluate them and/or correct. This attitude appeared in the case of some Australian speakers interviewed for this

Australian speakers also borrow a limited amount of rules from the Japanese system. For instance, quite a few subjects were using the Japanese suffix -san Mr/Mrs/Miss in their English sentences and showed a considerable degree of

acceptance of Japanese non-verbal behaviour, topics, etc. In none of the cases I have recorded the usage seems to be purely optional and it is very likely that it constitutes new norms.

The phenomenon of non-normative use of rules, mentioned in the preceding section, also appears in the case of native participants. Australians who possess experience of communicating with Japanese speakers who speak only broken English report that they 'do not mind' how they speak, as long as the message gets through. It seems to me that these reports can be trusted. The implication is that the speakers concerned suspend the operation of many (or most?) of their English norms and appear in a 'non-normative' state, in which applications of a number of rules are unnoted, and remain of course without evaluation or correction.

Nevertheless, in the majority of cases, in particular with Japanese speakers who have developed a high degree of proficiency in English (and to whom therefore foreigner talk is not normally used), Australian participants in contact situations do use their English norms with relative consistency.

Norm discrepancy 2.3.

My discussion in the preceding sections points to an interesting fact. Not only norms used in contact situations differ from those used in internal situations, but there is a considerable discrepancy between different speakers within the situation. In other words, foreign and native participants look at deviations from English norms in different ways and problems may arise from such differences.

For instance, a native English participant reported that she 'felt uneasy' not only because of the consistent lack of plurals in the speech of her Japanese interlocutor, but also because of his apparent 'lack of interest to do anything about it'. She assumed that he should try and correct his speech. However, her interlocutor obviously did not possess the English plural norm and could not, therefore, monitor or further process his deviation from the English norm. The case shows that foreign speakers in contact situations can pay a double penalty: once for deviating from English generative rules, and the second time for deviating from rules of correction as prescribed by the English norm.

2.4. The role of theories

Normative theories of a varying degree of rigour have recently been proposed with regard to the type of language which Japanese speakers should use in contact situations. One of them is the theory of Japlish. The word Japlish, used originally by foreigners in a derogatory reference to Japanese English, has recently been used by some Japanese writers who maintain that Japanese speakers are entitled to their own type of English, and that there is no necessity for them to attempt to approximate English native usage. The theory covers not only English grammatical competence but has been extended to rules such as letter writing. Proposers of this theory tell Japanese learners of English that they should retain in their English letters the introductory (and/or closing) passages which refer to the weather, as well as other particular features of Japanese letter writing which obviously deviate from English rules.

Attitudes such as this toward the suitability of rules in contact situations carry important consequences for the issue of language norms. If they spread throughout the speech community they can significantly influence a further

development of language norms in contact situations. Interference from the native language of foreign speakers can increase and cease being labelled as inadequate. On the other hand, the overall number of rules which a speaker must control may decrease and there is a possibility that in the case of a relaxed norm of this type foreign speakers may concentrate on the control of other rules, such as those which affect the content of the message and communication about their personality.

Theoretical constructs can also play a highly positive role when there is a necessity to reinforce positive attitudes of native participants in contact situations to their foreign interlocutors. The mechanism of teaching native speakers how to face deviations from their native norms generated by foreign interlocutors consists necessarily in establishing a 'lax norm' in the case of linguists concerned (language planners) and subsequently spreading it to the whole speech community.

AWARE AND UNAWARE NORMS

It would be totally incorrect to conceive of norms as merely aware norms. Only some linguistic norms cross the threshold of awareness. Others remain completely unaware for either the speaker or the hearer or both. A hearer may for instance expect that a certain type of 't' will be pronounced, without being aware of possessing this norm.

Only norms of which participants are aware will be reported in interviews. The existence of other norms cannot be established except on the basis of evidence furnished by other stages of the correction process. This includes evidence about unaware 'noting', 'inadequacy marking' and the presence of 'corrective adjustment'. In a VT recording of an interview a deviation may be accompanied by a hand movement of the hearer which provides a testimony that the deviation was 'noted' (for the technique of such investigations see Clyne 1975b). Native participants may obviously feel irritated when politeness norms are broken, without being able to report about the source of their irritation. A foreign participant may also perform self-correction (for instance, correcting a lexical selection) while remaining partly or totally unaware of the process.

On the whole it seems that compared with internal situations contact situations are characterised by a high degree of awareness. This is only natural if we consider the conditions under which contact processes occur. It is useful to realise this fact when approaching the study of contact situations.

The issue of the awareness of norms is of particular importance for research methods used in the study of contact situations. Direct questions can only be asked with regard to norms of which the participants are aware. Unaware norms cannot be investigated with the help of interviews. Some useful investigation techniques will be mentioned later in this paper.

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4. COVERT AND OVERT NORMS

In my previous discussion I mentioned on several occasions the fact that a speaker may possess a particular norm but that the norm may not necessarily be used in a discourse. This feature is shared by all rules of language (and culture). We can say that rules are 'covert' or 'overt' in a varying degree.

For instance, a rule which assigns a particular social label to a linguistic form (e.g. a social or a regional marker) may work in some cases, while in other cases the label may not be assigned: it remains covert. Or, the meaning of personal names such as 'Peacock' is normally covert, except in special cases when it becomes overtised. This can happen, for instance, when the bearer of the name in some sense resembles a peacock(?), or when perhaps a large number of names on a list are all bird names: Peacock, Hawke, Crane, Finch, etc. A rule which remains covert has obviously no significance for the speaker in that particular discourse. The covertisation and overtisation of rules is an important phenomenon of language. No theory of discourse can be complete without it.

In the case of contact norms we must ask to what extent they are overt, and what are the conditions under which their status can change. The whole process of 'noting' a deviation (Neustupný 1985b) belongs here. It seems that native speakers in contact situations mostly 'note' a deviation under special circumstances which include the following:

- (1) The speakers' metalinguistic attention is drawn to deviation through immediately preceding discussions of linguistic rules, or a direct request to monitor deviations.
- (2) The same effect occurs because of the unfamiliarity of the interlocutor.
- (3) The number of serious deviations is not very high. (When too many deviations occur within a segment of discourse, speakers find it difficult to note all of them at the same time.)
- (4) A deviation causes a serious substantive problem in interaction for instance when the misunderstanding of a message results in a serious inconvenience to one or more participants.

In general we can assume that the norm of native speakers in contact situations will frequently be covertised. This assumption is supported by our data. While in an internal situation a deviation, such as a wrong pronunciation of a sound, would be noted and might provide a starting point for a whole series of correction acts, in contact situations it easily escapes the attention of participants.

On the contrary, there may well exist cases when in a contact situation deviations from norms which would remain unnoticed in internal situations are noted and evaluated by native speakers. Our Australian subjects reported that they noticed, on a number of occasions, that Japanese speakers who had spent a long time in Australia used features of Australian 'general' (as opposed to 'educated') pronunciation of English and they commented that they 'did not like' such usage. I doubt whether the same features would have caused the same reaction in the case of native speakers of English.

Of course, it is essential to realise that the study of covertisation of rules cannot rely on interviews alone. Only some applications of overt rules are conscious (aware), many others remain below the level of awareness. It is therefore important to establish research techniques which would enable us to find deviations which are overt, though unconscious for a speaker. Several general strategies can be quoted here.

(1) One way of obtaining evidence concerning the overtness of linguistic norms leads through the identification of non-verbal reactions to the application of rules. This method has been pioneered by Clyne (1975b) who recorded non-verbal reactions of subjects to a videotaped conversation in a contact situation. Participants unconsciously changed their facial expression, moved their limbs, altered their body position, etc. Speakers can also be expected to react by changing their addressee, the topic of conversation, the variety of communication means (for instance by becoming more formal, or by switching to a different variety of language) and in many other ways.

- (2) Even when participants in a speech act are not aware of the application of a rule, they can assume, on the basis of such application, a distinctively evaluative attitude towards a speaker. Some Japanese speakers in my sample while unable to explain why, had a feeling of being treated in a 'light-hearted' or even 'impolite' way. Obviously they reacted, in an unconscious fashion, to the informal mode of communication of their native English partners. I guess that the informal mode totally agreed with native English norms appropriate in the situation. The 'feeling' of the Japanese participants represented an overt, though not fully conscious, application of Japanese norms of interaction, which in the encounter in question prescribed a more formal mode of communication.
- (3) Another testimony conc rning the overtness of a rule is furnished by the occurrence of corrective adjustment in discourse. If, for instance, a native participant replaces a difficult lexical item by a simpler one, this provides an evidence that he noted the communication problems of the foreign participant and was reacting to them.

No doubt, a more extensive repertoire of research techniques will be available in the future. Along with developing those which enable us to study unaware applications of norms, it will also be necessary to further augment our techniques for the study of cases in which norms operate on a fully aware level. An interview such as used for this study represents only the most primitive form of investigation. A more sophisticated form, referred to as the 'follow-up interview' has been developed but could not be used for this study.

5. ARE SOME NORMS MORE STRONGLY AWARE AND/OR OVERT THAN OTHERS?

The question whether some types of norms are prone to being more aware or overt than others is certainly of interest. My interviews reveal that this, indeed, seems to be the case.

For instance, Australian native speakers of English seemed to be particularly sensitive in at least two areas: spelling and etiquette. It is interesting to note that these two areas are those which receive strong metalinguistic attention in native situations as well. Spelling is an important correction item in schools and self-correction of spelling retains its importance even in adult life. Etiquette represents a relatively late addition (acquired mostly in the teens) to the individual's system of communication means. On the other hand it seems that grammatical errors do not reach a very high degree of overtness—at least they are not frequently mentioned among items which require attention.

On the other hand, grammatical competence seems to play a very important role for Japanese speakers. This fact may perhaps be related to their experience as learners of English in Japan, where strong attention is traditionally given to such matters. They do not, in general, pay much attention to non-verbal and non-grammatical competence or to stylistic differences.

6. CONCLUSIONS: TOWARDS A DESCRIPTION OF NORMS OF CONTACT SITUATIONS

As long as the study of contact situations is based on the concept of deviation we must pay proper attention to the question: deviation from what? Following the theoreticians of the Prague School I have assumed that 'norms' of language use and interaction exist, and I have postulated that the concept is also applicable in the case of contact situations.

However, norms of contact situations are not identical with norms of native situations. I have tried to show that considerable variation is involved, that some of the norms are aware, some are overt, and some covert. Techniques necessary for the study of norms of contact situations have also been discussed.

A group of Japanese speakers living in Australia and Australian (native English) speakers who possess experience of communicating with Japanese speakers were interviewed and a number of hopefully useful observations has been made. However, the techniques of investigation were limited and the issue of the norm of Australian-Japanese contact situations still needs further systematic attention.

NOTES

- Of course, apart from being interested in processes, we also remain interested in the products of such processes.
- 2. It is interesting to note that already U. Weinreich wrote:

Those instances of deviation from the norms (italics mine, JVN) of either language which occur in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language, i.e. as a result of language contact, will be referred to as INTERFERENCE phenomena. It is these phenomena of speech, and their impact on the norms of either language exposed to contact, that invite the interest of the linguist. (1953:1)

It is not surprising that in a historical period which so strongly emphasised 'language as a system' Weinreich in his own work concentrated on 'language' and did not develop the concepts of 'deviation' and 'norm' as processes of speech.

- Other strategies may be applied under different conditions, for instance when none of the central participants is a native speaker of English.
- 4. Haugen (1977) also describes a situation in which the use of 'pure Norwegian' by immigrants in the U.S.A. was evaluated negatively. Of course, the pronunciation of English loanwords in Japanese sentences in English, rather than in the accepted Japanised pronunciation, is negatively evaluated, but this is a totally different matter.

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