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**Power of Language across National Boundaries:
The Case of Tertiary Education**

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Abstract

This paper examines the problem of power qua language management, with special attention to assimilation of foreign tertiary students in Japan. The conclusions, detailed in section 4, indicate that

(1) Further attention to our understanding of the issues involved are needed,

(2) Language managers should be prepared to assist those who do not wish to assimilate,

(3) Language managers should also be prepared to assist those who intend to assimilate,

(4) Assimilation and acquisition mix and we should not speak about either of the categories as a separate system.

Introduction

Power must be assessed in both major types of language use situations: native and contact. Educational situations form one category which, in the case of non-native students, is a subcategory of contact situations. Within the area of educational situations I shall mainly deal with those in which foreign university students participate in a majority culture other than English, namely in the environment of Japan (Marriott 2000, Kadokura 2003, Marriott and Nishizawa 2003, Neustupný 2003). However, I shall not deal with so-called 'academic situations'[1] of such participants alone – all other domains in which they participate (daily life domain, friendship domain or others) form one whole, the components of which cannot easily be separated from each other. Such situations, according to Jernudd (1996) are a type of sojourner situations, because they do not involve a permanent shift of domicile. This is an important statement. We can supplement it by observing that within the 'sojourner' category, study abroad has assumed a specific position: unlike foreign executives or teachers, students are not paid for their work and although not completely powerless, command, in general, a limited amount of power.

The behaviour of participants in foreign students' situations is strongly influenced by power relationships (Neustupný 2003, Marriott and Tse, forthcoming). In particular, processes of 'assimilation' stand out as an omnipresent characteristic particularly in situations that are recurrent and it is these processes that will primarily be the target of the present paper. I am of course aware of the existence of other power relationships concerning foreign students, such as their subordinate position in networks. Unfortunately, these relationships cannot be given adequate coverage in this paper.

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1   'Academic situations' are usually defined by their close relationship with 'education' and 'research'. For a listing see Jernudd 2002 and Neustupný 2004.

1. The Problem of Power

A deep understanding of the problem of power in linguistics implies the concept of language management (cf. Jernudd & Neustupný 1987; Neustupný 2002).[2] Management is 'behaviour-toward-language'.[3] What we have in mind when we speak about power is not simply the process of generation of power, but 'behaviour-toward-power', the way power is or should be managed in society.

The management process in general is characterized by a number of stages: the establishment of norms, noting of deviation from norms, evaluation, selection of adjustment, and its implementation. The same is true about power: when managing power we ask what norms concerning power are or should be held, how power is or should be noted, evaluated, and how adjustment of power-related problems is or should be selected and implemented. In order to capture power, we must realize that it involves various stages of the management process. Power existed in language probably since the early beginnings of the human race, but failed to become the object of management. It is characteristic for contemporary postmodern societies that power is being widely managed by their members.

Apart from the management process another feature of power as management that must be given prominence is the fact that power is basically a relationship appearing in individual processes of interaction. This parallels the general claim that it is individual acts of interaction from where management sets off and where it aims (Neustupný 1983, Jernudd and Neustupný 1987). From interaction acts (discourse, etc.), 'simple' management is transferred to 'organized' management, such as society wide language treatment in language

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2   The history of the concept of language management goes back to 1973, when the theory of 'language correction' was born (cf. Neustupný 1978, chapter 10). It has been developed principally by Neustupný and Jernudd and most features of the framework were more or less finalized by the beginning of the 1980s (Neustupný 1983), with the description of the management process being presented in Neustupný 1985. At that stage the term 'language planning was still hesitantly used. The classical statement, which for the first time applies the term 'language management', is Jernudd & Neustupný 1987; the 'correction theory' has always been interested in the problem of unequal power but it was the term 'interests' that, in reaction to Weinstein 1983, dominated the 1987 joint paper. The issue of power has been actively pursued since the 1990s e.g. in Jernudd 1966 and Neustupný 1966, both going back to earlier conference presentations. I wish to welcome in the encampment of language management Bernard Spolsky, whose paper for this conference (Spolsky 2004) employs the term. To give terminological recognition to the fact that the traditional 'language planning' has not been at present what it used to be in the 1960s is important. It is only natural that frameworks and paradigms change. Work in language management, as manifest at least since the 1980s in the papers given above as well as in the work of Saukuen Fan, Helen Marriott, Satoshi Miyazaki, Hidehiro Muraoka, Jiri Nekvapil and others, and with contributions from other fields such as Joan Rubin's, attempts to provide a systematic basis for such change.

3   This phrase is modelled on Fishman's 'behavior-toward-language' (Fishman 1972, p.191). The slogan admirably characterizes the object of language management. By quoting Fishman in Jernudd & Neustupný 1987 we did not intend to impute to him participation in the theory of language management. Later research revealed that already in the programmatic introduction to Slovo a slovesnost, the Czech language journal of the Prague Linguistic Circle, Havránek, Jakobson, Mathesius, Mukařovský and Trnka characterized in 1935 the 'cultivation of language' as a matter of making language the 'direct object of our attention' (Úvodem 1935, p. 2).

planning networks. However, there are cases where management, rather than emanating from discourse, is based on ideological or other theoretical constructs. This may also be true of the management of power. For example Čmejrková has always argued that the problem of gender (which is a subdividsion of the power problems) is being transferred into Czech linguistics not from the perception of inadequacies in interaction acts but from ideologies and theories developed on the basis of languages where the discourse base does exist (Čmejrková 2002). In other cases the management of power in language may also be an import into communities in which power is (still?) dormant at the discourse level.

Already here I would like to note that the word 'power' is not necessarily a dirty word. Much power serves the interest of wide strata of society and as such is likely to be widely accepted and positively evaluated (Neustupný 2002). For example, the use of power by ordinary speakers in language revival processes is unlikely to attract negative evaluation. Similarly, ideology (as Patrick Heinrich has recently emphasized) is also evaluationally neutral: there can be good as well as bad ideologies.

2. Power and Assimilation

2.1. Assimilation and Acquisition

Most assimilation is close to the phenomenon we know as language acquisition which, like assimilation, is a management process and implies the shift of norms. Acquisition, in turn, can be seen as a subcategory of acculturation, which has always been considered a term that captures the basic character of change in cultural contact (Spicer 1968). However, the norms of acquisition (acculturation) require simply that one of the existing systems will prevail, without specifying that it will be the dominant one. It has been noted, for example, that there is two-way acculturation, or sometimes a complete mixture of cultures, and these cannot be based on one way dominance. Also, it is not certain that all language acquisition is propelled by power: I have in mind, for example, language acquisition for pleasure, an old lady studying Sanskrit, where power is difficult to identify. On the other hand, there are aspects of acquisition which clearly derive from power: in the case of foreign students it is the dominant language that is acquired, and it is other (non-grammatical) norms of academic (and other) interaction of the dominant culture that are expected to prevail.

Hence, it seems to be appropriate to assume that acquisition (acculturation) is a wider concept, which includes assimilation, but does not overlap with it. We can write:

acquisition (acculturation)>assimilation.

We can also claim that

assimilation = acquisition (acculturation) + power,

because power always participates in assimilation. Assimilation norms are obviously closely connected with the management of power. It is the dominant set that is or is not supposed to

prevail. Contemporary dictionaries of sociology, of which there are quite a few, usually emphasize that the relation of 'dominance' is present and assimilation is the result of this relation (Johnson 2002: 70). Of course, not all assimilation is by force, much of it being by consensus (Fairclough 2002) and, as in other power processes, participants are not necessarily aware of the power component.

We must assume that in practice there will be a mixture of norms in any acquisition process and that only some of these will be assimilation norms (based on power). What I mean is that there are some norms that are based on power, for example, a norm specifying that change will proceed in the direction towards the dominant language system, or a norm that prevents assimilation. (Some readers may hesitate to call the latter 'an assimilation norm'.) In the case of pronunciation we can assume adjustment based on the need of the speaker to make his/her speech understood as well as on the need to communicate the acceptance of the relation of dominance (differential power). In other words, only the latter will be an assimilation norm.

Perhaps it would be more precise to speak of assimilative aspects of acquisition than of assimilation as a process completely different from acquisition (acculturation).

Much language acquisition is in the service of assimilation: it empowers, or disempowers, and both aspects may be mixed. By 'empowerment' I mean here an adjustment through which power is achieved. Language students are empowered when they achieve competence to communicate to fulfil their personal interests. The disempowerment function occurs, for example, when they are taught in order to become effective subordinate personnel in foreign companies. Nozomi Tanaka (2000) has long argued for the acceptance of the power element in another case, that of Japanese language teaching for foreign wives of Japanese men, recruited in East Asian countries. It is wrong, he said, to teach them Japanese; the question is how to empower them socioeconomically: 'give them a voice' is the expression he used, following others. This claim is correct, but Tanaka obviously absolutizes the disempowering function, at the expense of empowering effects, such as enabling the women to successfully conduct daily life for their own interest.

In the case of foreign students, acquisition is structured to assist students in achieving their academic and other aims, i.e. to assist them in assimilation through empowerment. However, such acquisition can also be for disempowerment, when for some participants it aims at reinforcing the research personnel of the Japanese universities concerned. This is reflected in the structure of programs when they provide no competence in conducting participation in academic social networks, little competence in the spoken language needed to assert one's voice, and leave foreign students with strongly accented Japanese that communicates their foreign status. Already Jernudd (1981) showed that in the case of foreign students, the research interests of students of linguistics from developing countries who studied in Europe or North America were channelled away from language treatment to non-applied linguistic topics. It could be said that they were assimilated into the system of

linguistics of their host countries. I have argued elsewhere (Neustupný 2003) that students who come to study Japanese language teaching in Japan are sometimes assigned to departments of Japanese language and literature, and are assimilated to the non-applied Japanese system with regard to their study topics. I also noted that many do not exercise metamanagement (see section 2.3). The fact that foreign students become 'guests' in Fan's terms (Fan 1994) while their teachers are 'hosts' also indicates that a power relationship is involved. Foreign students may acquire enough Japanese interactive competence to fill subordinate positions, but not to go to the top. There is no doubt that foreign students in Japan, not unlike foreign students in other countries, are strongly assimilated. However, we would be wrong to assume that such assimilation is always seen as disempowering and negatively evaluated. Some students evaluate it positively, because they see it as an important factor for securing a job on return to their own country.

It remains to be seen whether all 'language shift', a phenomenon pursued vigorously by Joshua Fishman and others since the 1960s, can be brought under the same heading as assimilation. In my reading Clyne (2003) is using these two terms in an analogous way. Let me add that assimilating other cultures is not an exclusive province of English speaking societies. In a forthcoming paper, Nekvapil and the present author have shown how pervasive it is even in small to medium countries such as the Czech Republic (Neustupný and Nekvapil, in print), where a relatively small language community assimilates all minority communities on its territory.

2.2. Assimilation as a Management Process

We can assume that assimilation proceeds as a management process: from norms, their noting and evaluation to adjustment plans and their implementation.

(1) Types of assimilation norms

Assimilation commences from the normative expectation that within a network a dominant set should or should not prevail. Such norms can be called assimilation norms. Lukes (1974) follows an earlier study by Bachrach and Baratz when he distinguishes between five types of power: coercion, influence, authority, force and manipulation. Other types, such as status, prestige, etc. exist and some of them seem to be highly relevant for assimilation. We can imagine domination based on the norm that participants who are coerced assimilate; the same is true of those who are influenced, possess lower authority, are affected by force, or are manipulated.

No need to say, norms vary in dependence on who the participant is. They also vary in time, their system being constantly rebuilt. Nevertheless at any point of time norms do exist. Some acquirers accept that power exists and that they will have to adjust themselves to it. Many members of the base communities expect that acquirers will have to yield to economic or academic power of their communities and assimilate.

There are deviations from these norms, for example a dominant strategy does not prevail, and these become the input into the process of noting and the following stages of the management process.

(2) Noting of deviations

Deviation from norms is noted by participants in individual behaviour (such as discourse), in other words, becomes the object of attention. Unless a deviation from a norm is noted, overtised, the management process cannot proceed further. Noting is not necessarily a conscious process; participants can note the dominance relationship without being consciously aware of it. We know, for example, that native speakers of Japanese note deviations from status norms (honorifics) by foreign learners, base further management on it, but cannot report; in other words, we can assume an unconscious or semi-conscious noting process here.

(3) Negative and positive evaluation of noted deviations

When a deviation from an assimilation norm is noted, it may be evaluated, with different degrees of intensity and different evaluation labels. Often it is assumed that all evaluation will be negative (i.e. assimilation is considered an undesirable feature); however, as I shall emphasize later, the evaluation of assimilation is often positive (assimilation is considered desirable).

(4) Designing adjustment

An adjustment strategy is selected; for example, an attempt is made to stop assimilation or assimilation is given positive support. All such planning can be pursued in many different ways.

(5) Implementation of adjustment

An assimilation adjustment is implemented.

It is important to realize that assimilation is not just the process of adjustment (see 4) but that it starts with norms of assimilation (that must be empirically established), deviations from these norms (some of which are only noted by researchers), include the processes of noting, and of evaluation. Finally, assimilation may or may not be implemented.

Assimilation (and the question of power in general) has a completely different status when deviations from participants' norms of power distribution are noted and evaluated by participants, and when they are not. When they are not noted and evaluated, they are potential, not virtual problems; this is not to say that language managers should ignore potential problems, they are of enormous importance. But they should discontinue the practice of putting them in the same compartment as problems that have been noted and evaluated by participants.

2.3. Simple Management and Metamanagement of Assimilation

Assimilation contains at least two processes. One is management in which assimilation is not *overtly* questioned. This is what on other occasion has been called 'simple' management. Deviations from the assimilation norms are noted, evaluated and adjustment initiated – but this process is not accompanied by overt speculation, theories, appeals or policies. Marriott and Nishizawa (forthcoming) describe the case of a Japanese student in Australia as follows:

> "Time management did not appear to be perceived as such a serious problem … In comparison with the previous year, Eri thought that she now had a more relaxed schedule, which also allowed her to engage in self-study. Nevertheless, during the week under investigation, she struggled with writing an essay for her management subject and interrupted her normal routine by missing some classes and also cancelling an exchange lesson in order to concentrate on writing the essay task at hand."

This student obviously did not possess a clear essay-writing schedule, and has only been acquiring it through participation in her Australian courses. She is proceeding through a process of assimilation with regard to time management. At the time of Marriott and Nishizawa's research, Eri was still managing her time in some situations, assimilating herself to Australian norms but this management was relatively simple.

However, there are cases in which foreign students not only manage particular rules but where the process of assimilation itself becomes the object of overt management: speculation, theoretizing, appeals or policies. For example, Marriott and Nishizawa quote an oral report of a Korean student, who actively comments in the following way:

> "[Tutor] didn't explain everything. Just ah, stand[s] alone, and just watching around there… Usually programming time, he just looks around. So if you have any problem, just handing… So first time was very confusing. Especially, programming part, we needed more explanation. And then we needed more exercise. But they don't. Just walk around. And just say, 'if you had any problems, just ask me.' Just lecturer, well, tutor, walk around. And you [raise] hand, and tutor, just walk to you. Yeah, then they said 'what kinds of problem you had?' 'I have this kind of problem because this, this, this…' Just checked it out. I think I need more explanation, and more detailed exercises about special subject".

The student, Kim, not only manages his academic competence but also widely manages (notes and evaluates) the Australian system of academic interaction as such. The amount of such management in the case of Eri was more limited. This is a case of metamanagement. Participants who metamanage have a different approach. While Eri accepts that assimilation is beneficial to her, Kim remains critical in many respects: Eri's assimilation is mostly by concensus while Kim is often being assimilated 'by force'.

It seems that a difference exists in the case of management and metamanagement by foreign students. Evaluation in metamanagement is often switched on by negative attitudes to Japan in the student's country and may not necessarily be parallelled in day-to-day management by the same student.

'Assimilation policies' (Clyne 2003: 16) represent an extreme case of metamanagement. We can say that metamanagement is 'organized management' (cf. Jernudd and Neustupný 1987) which involves overt noting and evaluation not only of own but also others' behaviour, complicated networks, the use of theories and specialized idioms. Foreign students manage assimilation at various distance from the two extreme points of the line connecting simple and organized management.

3. Assimilation of Foreign Students in Japan

In the present section of this paper, the management of assimilation by foreign students in Japan will be illustrated on the basis of comments on the process in existing literature and informal reporting by Japanese students of intercultural communication.

(1) The assimilation norms

Foreign students in Japan, especially those from nearby Asian countries, clearly face the power of Japan. It is difficult for them to study in the country without financial support from the Japanese side or without earning money through performing manual work of low status. The power relationship between Japan and their own country is obvious. Furthermore, the prestige of Japanese education, science and technology is paramount. Japanese academic degrees are highly valued. Many norms specify that power is on the Japanese side. On the other hand foreign students also possess norms (shared by some strata of Japanese society) that are anti-assimilationist in their character, for example assume that foreign relations are governed by the principle of zero power (equality). When strategies of interaction within Japanese society are acquired, Japanese participants and foreign students use as the base of the process various norms derived from this repertoire. What norms are held in the process of acquisition is an empirical question that must be established in each interactive situation separately. On the basis of these norms we can judge what deviations from norms occur, and which of these deviations are noted.

(2) Noting deviations

Foreign students do not note the power of Japan only after they arrive in Japan. Kanazawa (2004) has shown, that students from some countries close to Japan perceive such power already in their home country. This noting is not only performed at the macro level, but affects individual areas of social activity; the students often arrive with a long list of power-comparisons between Japan and their country, and further actively note individual cases. For example, students in Kanazawa's sample compared washing machines, shopping power, and the quality of life in their country and in Japan.

Fairbrother (2003) has argued that the Japanese note the behaviour of foreign students differently depending on whether they are white Westerners, Brazilians of Japanese extraction or students from China. Obviously, the power differential between countries of origin, as perceived by Japanese participants, plays an important role in directing the process. Most foreign students in Japan are from East Asian countries, mainly Korea, Taiwan and China. The assimilation of the Brazilians of Japanese origin and of Asian students is perceived in many interactive situations as a natural development by a number of members of the Japanese community.

(3) Evaluation of the power relationship

We know that assimilation is evaluated differently in different areas of behaviour. Assimilation in grammatical competence is usually evaluated positively in the case of self or friends. Here assimilation is sometimes perceived as empowering, and the fact that it partly derives from higher power of Japanese speakers remains unevaluated. On the other hand, while on the whole assimilation with regard to non-grammatical competence is evaluated positively, there are cases, such as the area of politeness, where the evaluation of assimilation may be negative. Such evaluation has particularly been reported in the case of Chinese students, who sometimes refuse to use the Japanese honorific forms. Similar cases have also been reported in the case of Australian and US students studying in Japan. The recent date of the noting testifies that assimilation has now been required, whereas formerly this was not the case. By those who refuse to use the honorifics, such use is thus interpreted as refuting at the micro level, in daily contact with the Japanese, the higher status (power) of the Japanese participants (teachers, landlords, etc.).

(4) Adjustment of power relations

The two main groups of strategies of adjustment are assimilationist and anti-assimilationist.

Fukui (2003) has shown that some Chinese students in Japan are particularly prone to initiate assimilation. They start with social strategies (such as the establishment of networks with the Japanese) and proceed further to a skilful application of a number of other learner strategies. Anti-assimilationist adjustment proceeds in the opposite direction: limitation of social contact and lack of interest in acquiring interactive competence. Students sometimes

claim that they have already acquired all they should and refuse suggestions of further additions to their competence.

(5) Implementation of adjustment

Even if certain adjustment strategies are actively selected, it may be difficult to implement them. The interference of the native interaction system is particularly strong in areas such as pronunciation. On the other hand, unnoticed natural acquisition works against the anti-assimilationist strategies. Students say that after 3 or 4 years in Japan it is difficult for them to completely return to their native system of interaction.

4. A case study

4.1. Third party interview

A case study involving three subjects has been conducted to further develop the picture presented in the preceding section of this paper. In view of the sensitivity of the topic, the methodology used on this occasion was a 'third party interview'.

A third party interview uses a respondent who is a member of a community (in this case a foreign student community in Japan), and reports on his/her own observation of members of that community. In the case of this procedure the respondent is not compelled to answer questions about his/her own behaviour that may be of a damaging character nor does he/she disclose the identity of subjects who are spoken about. Respondents in third party interviews normally know the subjects intimately and possess a wealth of observations that are difficult to elicit through other research procedures. Understandably, the third party interview is a summary interview that requires from the respondents a summary of individual tokens of their experience (Neustupný 2003); as such the narrative of the respondent derives not only from the objective behaviour of the observed but also from their other knowledge, beliefs and attitudes. In other words, it provides data, but these data cannot be directly presented as a blueprint of actual behaviour. The role of the researcher is essential, and in this respect there is no difference in comparison with many other methodological procedures.

The third party interview is suitable as the first approach to the problem of assimilation. It allows us to establish an overall picture of the situation but it is not sufficiently detailed to enable the identification of individual behaviour. Other data, such as discourse data, will be necessary to further develop our knowledge in this area. Let me remark that within discourse data code-switching is a phenomenon to be carefully watched (Auer 1998, Jørgensen 1998).

4.2. The respondent

R1 is a former postgraduate student at a private university in Tokyo. He/she has come to Japan after the completion of undergraduate courses in his/her home country in East Asia and has spent altogether just under 10 years in Japan. This time, during which extensive networks with other East Asian students have been formed, has qualified R1 to serve as a respondent in a third party interview. However, only R1's experience with students from his/her own country (country Y) became the target of the interview. The interview lasted approximately 1.5 hours and was conducted in Japanese.

4.3. The interview: results

Since specifically academic norms in Y and in Japan were in R1's assessment almost identical, little assimilation of such behaviour was reported. In R1's opinion, the use of libraries in Y was more frequent, while the 'seminar system' (where students present reports on their research) was more rigorous in Japan. However, such variation was not connected by R1 with any particular behaviour of the subjects he/she reported about.

(1) Norms of power relationship in the interview

Although we cannot decide on the basis of this interview which particular behaviour of students from Y is connected with the issue of power (in other words, is due to assimilation), much of it obviously is. According to R1, the fact itself that students from Y enter Japanese networks by coming to study in Japan is a result of unequal power (economic, academic and other) of the two countries. Further along the way to assimilation lies the assumption of superiority of the social behaviour of the Japanese, politeness and their daily life, reported by my respondent. Superiority means there is power. R1 did not report on the behaviour of Japanese participants connected with her subjects but it is not difficult to hypothesize that it was more than occasionally patronizing. This again implies power.

My following discussion will show that there were deviations from these norms, both norms held by foreign students and native speakers, and these led to management processes. Where differential power was accepted within the acquisition process of the subjects, assimilation took place; otherwise assimilation was rejected.

(2) Noting of power relationships

R1 confirmed that students from country Y, whom he/she knew, clearly perceived the economic superiority of Japan. In their perception Japan was also considered to be much more advanced in the academic domain and more sophisticated with regard to social behaviour and etiquette. There was a clear recollection of political and military dominance of Japan prior to the end of WWII, which contributed significantly to the allocation of relative power by these students.

According to R1, the awareness of the power relationship is always latently present but,

he/she says, we should not imagine that power is noted in each component of each situation. In R1's view it flashes through particularly strongly when major management processes take place. As mentioned above, other investigations conducted at Obirin University (Kanazawa 2004) seem to indicate that at least some students from Y arrive in Japan with a very pronounced overt presence of the problem of power, and further develop it.

(3) Evaluation of power

R1 was asked to single out as the main objects of her reporting three students (or former students) who held different attitudes to interaction with the Japanese. The following three subjects were selected and referred to systematically throughout the interview:

- A: (male, total length of stay in Japan approximately 3 years) who held antagonistic views towards Japan (i.e. clearly engaged in metalinguistic management including negative evaluations), (A = anti-)
- P: (male/female, total length of stay in Japan approximately 3 years) who clearly aspired to assimilate (i.e. prevailingly used positive evaluations), (P = pro-) and
- L: (female, total length of stay in Japan over 5 years) who occupied an intermediate position between the two.

R1 guessed that students such as L accounted for approximately 50 percent of her contacts in that particular community, while the remaining 50 percent were divided between students of the type of A and P.

The evaluation of Japanese norms in the case of A was negative. On the other side, P highly evaluated the Japanese life style which was more individualistic than the life style of Y, and admired the way the Japanese did not annoy others (*meiwaku o kakenai*). He accepted the power of Japan as a fact. R1 reported that his trend toward assimilation notwithstanding, P supported teams from Y in international sport events. L was characterized by a relaxed interaction style in which a positive attitude to the acquisition of Japanese norms (assimilation) appeared in some situations, while in others (where power was considered immaterial) her native norms were applied; various students close in their position vis-à-vis Japanese culture to L, could no longer use pure Y norms in situations in which they considered the application of such norms desirable. Norms, in this case referred not only to norms of grammatical (narrow linguistic) competence but also to non-grammatical communicative and sociocultural competence. Students such as P or L had decided they would like to stay and live in Japan, and this decision, R1 thought, exerted an influence on their attitude to assimilation. A decision such as this is not unusual in the case of students from Y. Assimilation is the way to join the side of the powerful within contact situations.

In the situations on which R1 reported there existed management as well as metamanagement strategies of assimilation. Some students from Y, such as P or L, directly commented that many aspects of Japanese sociocultural behaviour were superior, and

communicated about their desire to personally profit from them. These students are not cultural relativists. They use 'universal' criteria for evaluating culture and they have arrived at the conclusion that one of the two cultures carries superior values. It is difficult to persuade them that this is not the case. Whatever linguists may think about such evaluation, I consider it important that in this case-study the positive attitude to assimilation was clearly confirmed. Rather than being an exception, it seems to be widely distributed and linguists and anthropologists must take a serious interest in it.

(4) Adjustment of power

Subject A gave my respondent the impression of keeping his acquisition of Japanese language, communication and sociocultural competence to the minimum necessary for the acquisition of academic knowledge pertinent to his field of study; on the other hand, P tried to assimilate in virtually all respects. Yet, although A wanted to maintain his Y norms intact and claimed no interest in things Japanese, he accepted some facts of Japanese culture, such as sports (baseball, soccer, or sumo). R1 volunteered the observation that even A unwittingly, against his own conviction, also employed Japanese norms.

An interesting observation reported by R1 was the fact that foreign students commenced by acquiring Japanese competence as a second system, the use of which was limited to situations in which the Y system was inappropriate. At that stage they possessed two different systems of norms. However, subsequently they lost the ability to distinguish and finally only retained the Japanese norms, sometimes without realizing that this has happened.

According to my respondent, in many cases new behaviour is acquired through 'natural' acquisition, without either the Japanese or the students from Y holding executive control (Rubin's term) within that situation. A did not, R1 claimed, seem to possess this pattern, because he did not form deep-rooted networks with the Japanese, but the other two students benefited from natural acquisition with regard to all sub-components of interaction competence. According to R1 this was primarily valid for the system of politeness where, however, negative evaluation of the Japanese system did occur on the way to assimilation. For example, students from Y often felt that Japanese students were impolite to their teachers. In this case they evaluated their Y system as superior.

The observation volunteered by R1 that students initially were 'bilingual/bicultural' but later often only retained the Japanese norms is important for our understanding of the process of assimilation. The dream that two separate systems are used intermittently appears to reflect the practice of some particularly high skilled personnel (including primarily intellectuals) but even in these cases it often applies only to some levels of grammatical competence, with non-grammatical and sociocultural competence being strongly affected by assimilation.

In other words, assimilation is a process in which initially a second system is acquired

under the conditions of dominance. Subsequently individual elements of this second system push out elements of the original system and replace them. We know, that those who are assimilated normally not only acquire a new system but also lose the previous one. However, linguistic assimilation is not necessarily, and in the case of adults probably never fully completed: an 'accent' remains in the speech of acquirers after a certain age. It is a pious wish for foreign students to become bicultural. In fact they move on a cline between a single (native) competence and another single (host society) competence. Only the most talented ones achieve the degree of proficiency of members of the host society, or the stage of biculturalism.

(5) Implementation of adjustment

The implementation of adjustment in time is an important issue. In my case-study students from Y were subject to the U-curve phenomenon. The LOW phase arrived, according to R1, approximately one year following their arrival in Japan. This is when negative evaluation of Japanese norms occurred most frequently, and some students returned to Y. When such negative evaluation was made, the issue of differential power appeared. However, some students came back to Japan and proceeded in the same direction as students L or P, with positive evaluation appearing.

5. How to Empower

The conclusions I can draw concern the range of situations covered in this paper, with primary and secondary education remaining of course out of my scope. Nevertheless I hope that some of my general strategies will be more widely applicable. What can we do? I shall divide my comments into three parts.

5.1. Consciousness raising

Consciousness raising is of course one area. Firstly, our endeavour should target all agents who conduct management with regard to the assimilation of foreign students, not only the students themselves, but their friends, teachers, educational authorities, and the Japanese public in general. All these people should know that assimilation is going on and what its sources and consequences are. Within the atmosphere of non-political theories of acquisition, it is necessary to explain that power is involved. Perhaps the most important single point is to accept that there are both students who wish to retain their identity and those who wish to assimilate.

The agents of language management should not only understand the issue (which sometimes they do not), but they should realize that it may be wrong to propose policies without consultations with the students. Of course, this should not mean that any single management strategy of each student should be accepted without further scrutiny. However, the agents should realize that simply acting on the basis of a 'variation ideology' will not

solve or alleviate the existing problems. (As 'variation ideology' I designate the contemporary trend to highly evaluate variation without reference to the entirety of the management processes as they develop in the society in question.)

5.2. Empowerment against assimilation

Supposing that a decision for anti-assimilation management is reached, one has to prepare for more detailed elaboration of the adjustment plan (design). Some of the tasks involved are:

(1) Providing assistance to maintain the students' first language/culture in general by neutralizing the noting and evaluation of the power difference between Japan and the students' society.

(2) Providing tuition (lectures and discussion classes) in the students' first language apart from Japanese. When a committee was established at a national university in the second half of the 1990s to establish programs for short-term foreign students, the present author's suggestion that some of the classes should be offered by academics from the students' countries and conducted in Korean or Chinese, was rejected. Instead, courses by Japanese teachers taught in English were established but they gained a negative evaluation of the foreign students, because the lack of competence of the lecturers in English resulted in the pidginization of content. The classes should be specifically geared to counter the pressure for linguistic assimilation (students should be trained to communicate about their field in their native language).

(3) If classes are held for foreign students by academics from their own countries, this will also contribute to the foreign students becoming associate members of the professions in their own countries, and acquiring rules of academic communication and interaction that differ from those of the host society (i.e. Japan).

(4) Providing expert guidance to teachers how to deal with the interaction problems of their students.

(5) The implementation of management policies such as (1), (2), (3) and (4) can be achieved within the budgets of national universities. Joint ventures may be necessary to finance these policies in the private sector.

5.3. Empowerment toward assimilation

The case of foreign students in Japan reveals a situation similar to that of many other advanced countries: foreign students already arrive with the intention to assimilate, or develop such a policy later. Teachers should be prepared to reinforce individual adjustment strategies that support it. Here are some individual strategies that can assist speakers in

assimilation.

(1) There will be no need to accept processes based on all forms of power that lead to assimilation. I have in mind the fact that, for example, assimilation based on coercion (Lukes 1974) may be challenged while that based on authority, status, or ability to implement plans may be more acceptable. We should be searching for forms of assimilation that carry the minimum of negative connotations for those concerned.

(2) Providing a high level language tuition is essential. At present such tuition has either not been developed or its administration to foreign students has been unsuccessful. For example, Korean students who face difficulties in pronunciation do not often realize that contemporary phonetics can provide effective help; or such help is not available within academic networks accessible to the student.

(3) Foreign students from Asia 'naturally' acquire much non-grammatical communicative and sociocultural competence. However, such natural acquisition is of necessity unsystematic and a more systematic teaching and learning program is needed.

(4) One of the basic problems of foreign students can be seen in their limited access to Japanese social networks. Any program that aims at empowering foreign students for assimilation must turn to this issue.

Understandably, the interests of the individual learner, which were the focus of the present paper, are not the only interests in the assimilation processes. Future work in this area must list all other agents and attempt to establish whether and in what way their goals with regard to assimilation can coincide. This is not an easy task but it is one that will have to be approached soon.

5.4. Is there acquisition without assimilation?

Whether there is acquisition without assimilation is an empirical question. It will be necessary to inspect individual processes of acquisition on the basis of discourse data to determine in what way and in what amounts power is present. As I noted above (2.1), I believe that in individual processes norms of assimilation (i.e. power-related norms) mix with other kinds of norms, for example norms of maximizing the speaker's interest (learning in order to gain personal profit). In our model of assimilation it will be necessary to further develop this feature of acquisition in order to achieve a more realistic understanding of assimilation.

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