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DRAFT

INQUIRY FOR LANGUAGE MANAGEMENT

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What is the full range of language problems in Hong Kong, in India, or in Australia, and what is it going to be in 10 years from now? The same question can be asked for any country of the world, and the answer will be the same in all instances: we do not know. The discipline concerned with language problems - I shall refer to it as "language management" rather than "language planning" (cf. Jernudd and Neustupný 1986ms) - has so far paid little attention to a systematic inquiry into the full range of language problems which exist in any single language community. The aim of this paper is to explore ways in which the repertoire of language problems, present and future, can be established.

An important aspect of this issue is the right of speakers to have their language problems acknowledged. The question "language planning - for whom?" (cf. Jernudd and Neustupný 1986ms) is establishing itself as one of the most central questions of the discipline. At present, language problems dealt with in language management are usually problems of the more vocal and powerful sections of the communities: politicians, journalist and academics. Problems of the man in the street are supposed to be included. In fact they rarely are. One of the important tasks of language management is to investigate what these problems are and what they are likely to be in the future.

Before proceeding further a few basic concepts must be explained.

THE LANGUAGE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The term "language management" is proposed to cover all processes which have language as their target. Such processes commence with (1) issue identification (including evaluation), proceed to (2) action design, and close with (3) implementation. This three tier model has been in use in language planning

since its modern beginnings (Haugen 1966, Neustupný 1968, Rubin 1973) and has served the discipline well.

One of the areas in which the established framework areas needs further elaboration are positive attitudes to language, an area to which Dell Hymes turned our attention long time ago (Hymes 1972, 1974). In other words, language planners have concentrated so far too much on negative evaluations of language, from which language problems derive, at the expense of positive norms of interaction. It is of great interest and considerable importance to know not merely what language problems there are, but also which varieties and components of varieties are liked, and how such positive attitudes are and should be manipulated. Hymes' "norms of interaction" and "norms of interpretation" (1972) are concepts highly pertinent for the discipline of language management.

Another legitimate expansion of the traditional three tier theory concerns the types of acts which occur at each of the three stages. For example, at the stage of implementation (a) modelling acts (compilation of word lists, dictionaries, text-books, illustrative texts, etc.), (b) acquisition acts (memorization, drills, etc.), (c) application acts (production of correct messages) and possibly others take place (cf. Neustupný 1973ms).

For the purpose of this paper we shall be mainly concerned with the first stage, the issue identification stage, which on other occasions I have also called the "inquiry stage". At this stage at least two categories of acts are performed:

- (a) Noting (monitoring) - an act through which participants compare interaction acts with "norms" and acknowledge accordance with or deviation from norms, and
- (b) Evaluation - an act in which behaviour is evaluated (positively or negatively) by participants.

Depending on the character of the management process these acts can be very simple or fairly complicated. On one hand a speaker can simply raise his head when a deviation is noted; on the other hand a whole discussion can take place to establish whether or not the use of a particular word constitutes a deviation from a norm or an inadequacy which should be corrected.

Management systems are thus of varying extension and type (Neustupný 1978, Chapter 12 and 14). The basic system is one of "discourse management (correction)" which consists of largely unconscious processes aiming at the identification and solution of individual problems in discourse. Speakers identify issues in their selection of varieties, lexical selection, spelling and others in actual discourse and make decisions concerning

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the solution of such issues. All native speakers possess a variety of this system which enables them to perform operations such as "watching their tongues", changing sentence plans, or correcting lexical choices. Non-native speakers (unless their language acquisition is fossilized) employ discourse management copiously both for correction of discourse and for individual undirected language acquisition.¹

At the other end of the scale of complexity are management systems in which a large number of participants aim at the correction not of individual discourse but of whole subsystems or systems of rules. "Language treatment" (cf. Neustupný 1970) is one of such management systems: it represents language management in specialized networks (groups of people), usually claiming to act on behalf of the whole community. Such networks may be academies, centralized language commissions, large language associations, etc. Language teaching may be a part of language treatment, but in many communities it has established itself largely as a separate management system, with separate networks and idiom.

The term "language planning" has normally been applied to a certain historically constituted variety of "language treatment". This variety appeared with the rise of sociolinguistics in the 1960s and 1970s and has greatly contributed to the rigour of work in language management. Language planning was often thought of in the same way as economic planning (cf. Rubin 1979) and carried the connotation of being an "objective" and "value-free" system. It was concerned principally with the treatment of societal problems affecting grammatical rather than communicative or interactive competence. Also, it did not incorporate the "discourse management (correction)" and many other management systems. It may therefore be justifiable to restrict the term "language planning" to this particular historical variety of language management and use a different term to subsume language planning as well as those varieties which precede and follow it. The term suggested by Jernudd and Neustupný (1986ms) is "language management".

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A variety of language management which historically follows the language planning variety is currently being established (cf. Neustupný 1983, Jernudd 1983). It can be called the "correction paradigm" of language management. Unlike language planning it does not concentrate onesidedly on language treatment but tries to accommodate all known systems of language management, such as language teaching, management by other than societal organizations (e.g. women's groups), and of course the management of language by individual speakers in discourse. This variety of language management also pays great attention not merely to language, but also to communication and sociocultural problems, and to the interrelationship between these categories. It rejects the

notion of objectivity of language management and claims that one of the important duties of any language management process is to declare in whose interests it is carried out.

The question which I propose to ask in this paper is rather limited. I shall ask how inquiry acts can be structured within this "correction paradigm" of language management. Although the language situation in Hong Kong (cf. Lord and T'sou 1985, Cheung 1985) will be on my mind, I shall not necessarily refer to it while discussing individual issues.

THE INQUIRY COMPONENT IN DISCOURSE MANAGEMENT

In older systems of language management language problems were often thought of in terms of the component that received maximum attention: language treatment. For language managers of the period language problems were primarily issues which were discussed in language treatment networks. Typical language problems of this kind were the selection of a particular variety for a domain of use (e.g., administration, law, education, etc.), development of the lexicon, orthography or orthophony. However, the "correction theory" of language management claims that the primary locus of language problems are the actual processes of interaction. A language problem is primarily not what has come to be discussed as a language problem, but what a specific participant in an act of interaction perceives (consciously or unconsciously) as a language problem. Language problems primarily consist of the inability of a speaker to select the variety which is required by the norm, the inability of a particular speaker at a particular time to find a suitable lexical item, the inability to spell correctly a particular word in a particular act of writing. In other words, language problems can be described as the labelling (marking) of individual segments of communication acts as "inadequate". Notice that here the word "inadequate" refers to actual negative evaluation within a communication act by its participants, and not to a preconceived imperfection of language, whether imperfections of this kind exist or not.

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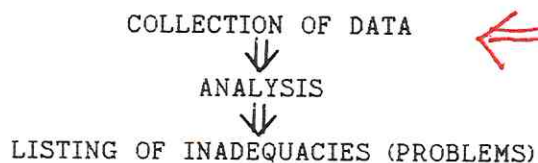
It must be admitted that there are language problems which are constructed by participants in language treatment on the analogy of other social problems and/or ideologies, without being based in actual discourse. However, when I underlined the word "primarily" above, I wanted to indicate that such cases are secondary, and that most language problems do have their basis in actual interaction. Even language problems of a very complicated character -such as problems of language rights- must be considered as structures composed of individual processes of language use.

However, if this is true, the process of problem identification, in other words, the process of inquiry, must primarily concern itself with the identification of inadequacies

in discourse (cf. already Neustupny 1983: 3-4). Macro-management must be systematically based on micro-management. How can this be achieved? The answer is in what can be called "language problem analysis".

Language problem analysis -a term based on so-called error analysis used in studies of language acquisition (cf. Corder 1973)- is concerned with the identification of deviations from norms, and the identification of labelling of such deviations by participants as inadequate. In addition, problem analysis is of course interested in the designs of corrective adjustments and their implementation, but these aspects will not concern us here.

What is the general structure of problem analysis in the area of discourse correction? The structure can be indicated as follows:



← NOTIONS
(res. strategy - focus
fatigue -)

I shall now discuss each of the steps separately.

1. Collection of data

A successful problem analysis must be based on data assembled in all situations of interaction within the community. It has become a general practice in language treatment that only varieties which enjoy maximum prestige -foreign or native- become the object of systematic management. However, the spoken language of the masses in which most speakers conduct the major part of their life also requires attention. In Hong Kong this is and will continue to be Cantonese. A problem analysis of communication in Hong Kong cannot ignore this important variety. It must also pay careful attention to all other varieties of Chinese and English.

Data for the establishment of language problems as experienced in actual discourse can be collected in a number of ways. The major methods are recording, observation, interaction interviews and follow-up interviews.

1.1. Recording

Recording of interaction represents the ideal method of the collection of data for the investigation of problems in discourse. It is applicable to a wide range of interaction problems: selection of a variety, lexical choice, spelling problems, non-verbal communication, selection of content of

communication, establishment of networks, problems in the cooccurrence of communicative and non-communicative behaviour, etc.

Audio-tape recording has become a very usual procedure in many situations and the equipment and techniques used need no special comment. Video-tape recording can be used for the study of language problems much more widely than has been the case so far. Marriott (1985) used video-tape recording for the study of language problems in business situations - an area which so far has been supposed to be a difficult ground for the collection of data in general.

1.2. Observation

Observation can be divided into unstructured (informal) and structured (formal). Unstructured observation is a traditional technique on which most of our knowledge on actual problems within interaction processes has relied.

The structuring of observation can be introduced in various ways. One is the selection of only particular segments of interaction for observation, for example concentrating on a particular situation or a segment of a situation. There are other ways of structuring observation, for instance through concentrating on a particular category of personnel only (e.g. a category of personnel which is expected to encounter particularly severe problems).

1.3. Interaction interviews

While normal interviews are usually directed to the investigation of knowledge and/or attitudes, interaction interviews aim at the establishment of what interaction took place. This type of interview is not a novelty in social science. Asaoka (1985) applied this type of interviews to the investigation of language problems experienced by Australian tourists in Japan. The first task is to establish what situations a subject participated in during a day. Subsequently each situation is subdivided into segments and sub-segments and the full range of behaviour which took place in the situation is recorded.

This method is suitable for the study of communication which can be neither recorded nor easily observed. It is important to conduct these interviews as soon as possible after the behaviour under investigation took place, and to make sure that subjects report about the actual behaviour which took place, rather than give their subjective summaries on what they think "normally happens".

Wherever possible, matched interviews should be conducted in order to obtain reports from all participants in the

encounter. This method was successfully employed by Murie, who interviewed 6 Japanese businessmen and subsequently 6 Australian businessmen concerning a similar (though not identical) set of interactions. The reports on communicative encounters communication problems varied. Asaoka (1987) studied communication problems at a party, using the method of interaction interviews. She interviewed 5 Japanese and 5 Australian participants. Reports were similar within each of the two groups but varied significantly between the groups.

1.4. Follow-up interviews

The methods of data collection discussed so far are restricted to the surface structure of interaction. Through recording, observing or obtaining reports on interaction we only learn what participants did. However, while behaving in a particular way, participants also undergo unconscious or conscious processes, which are only partially reflected or not reflected at all in overt behaviour. In the latter group there are for instance various interpretations and "meanings" assigned to surface behaviour by participants, attitudes and evaluations of interaction which are not surfaced and changes in plans for interaction (changing the structure of sentences, content, addressing a different participant than originally intended, etc.). Obviously, all these processes are of extreme importance for the study of language problems.

In traditional linguistics and social sciences these unsurfaced processes remained unrecorded. However, at least those processes of which participants in the interaction act were aware of can be retrieved, if the participants are interviewed (as soon as possible) after the interaction act took place. This is the basic aim of "follow-up interviews". Notice that a follow-up interview is not just simply any interview in which we ask participants questions about their behaviour. The specific aim of the interview is to establish what happened in a particular encounter.

The follow-up interview is ideally conducted immediately after the encounter to which it refers and consists in playing back the recording of the primary encounter (or presenting observed features of the encounter to the participants orally, if no recording exists) and asking questions about the consciousness of the subjects which occurred during the encounter. In the case of a follow-up interview directed at the study of communication problems, the three basic issues are:

- (a) have any deviations from norms been noted,
- (b) if noted, have they been negatively evaluated, and
- (c) have there been any positive evaluations connected either with compliance with or deviation from norms?

Of course, each participant is interviewed separately, so that reluctance to report deviations can be avoided. More

information on follow-up interviews is available in Neustupný 1981 and Neustupný, forthcoming.

2. Analysis of data

2.1. Analysis of surface data

How can the existence of problems in discourse be derived from the data obtained through recording, observation or interaction interviews? The basic procedure is to search in the data for traces of the noting of deviation, evaluation of features as inadequate, and evidence of corrective adjustment.

Grammatical or other deviance as decoded by the researcher is not in itself a proof of the occurrence of a language problem. Such deviance may be totally unnoted (remain covert) and as such carry no significance for participants in the encounter. This does in fact frequently happen, for instance when the participants are well known to each other, or when their attention is diverted from language and communication by a substantive factor which makes the situation one of urgency. In other words, only some deviances are actually noted and become a potential source of interaction problems. How then can we conclude that an "etic" deviance has actually been noted?

One kind of evidence is an obvious case of misunderstanding, i.e. the inability of one or several participants to formulate or comprehend a proposition. Deviation such as this may be identifiable because of non-verbal cues: a participant may for example look worried, may unconsciously move his body, change the direction of gaze, etc. Such cues of deviance may appear totally without any other evidence of negative evaluation or correction. The deviance can be noted unconsciously, and may not be reportable by the participants.

Another indication of the noting of a deviation may be the excessive time spent for the processing of a message, either for its production or for its reception. If the time is very long, we can justifiably hypothesize that the utterance might have been deviant in some way. This may again be so even if there is no further evidence of surface deviance or negative evaluation or correction. Non-verbal cues such as facial expression, body movements, etc., can cooccur and provide further evidence.

The identification of an act of evaluation of a noted deviance is again not very easy. Sometimes such evaluation may be verbalized, either in simple interjection, or in a full utterance (e.g. "I think I'll come when you are in a better mood"). When there is no verbalization, non-verbal cues are

again significant: facial expression, kinesic means, tone of the voice, etc.

Of course, a process of corrective adjustment usually provides an excellent proof that both noting and negative evaluation (hence "inadequacy", in other words communication problem) took place. For example, if a dialectal speaker corrects his non-standard pronunciation, the corrective adjustment clearly shows that a deviation was noted and negatively evaluated: otherwise correction would not have taken place.

2.2. Analysis of follow-up interviews

Follow-up interviews result in a wealth of data which traditionally escaped the attention of linguists and social scientists. However, each statement furnished by an interviewee cannot be automatically accepted as a fact. It is necessary to analyse the idiom of the interviewee to arrive at the real meaning of what he/she says. The process has not been studied in detail and I shall not elaborate on it in this paper.

3. Listing of problems

A comprehensive problem analysis will reveal a large number of problems. Only some of such problems are language problems in the narrow sense of the word. Others are communication problems. Apart from language problems they include problems which affect what Hymes (1962, 1972, 1974) called "factors" of communication: participants, message form, channel, code, topic and setting. Other factors must be considered, too. Third, the problem analysis should also reveal interaction (sociocultural) problems in general. We form sentences in order to communicate, and communicate in order to interact. There is a close relationship between these three areas. Non-communicative problems enter discourse management in various ways, for instance through the knowledge of social facts. For example, a pun is not understood if the relevant political situation is unknown to the speaker. Of course, some interaction problems are not language-related (problems in the use of chopsticks, problems in shifting the gears, etc.).

Traditionally only language problems in the narrow sense of the word have been listed and dealt with in language management systems. Problems in the acquisition of varieties were then considered as issues pertinent to traditional language teaching - while in fact a problem analysis of the use could have revealed that the problems are likely to be in the ability to establish communication networks, to handle the content of messages, their form, and lack of familiarity with sociocultural situations relevant for the discourse in question.

Another point that would require a separate paper must be mentioned here: the communicative (referential) function is not the only one which matters in discourse management. Language, communication and interaction fulfil more than the communicative function - they are also used as symbols, for entertainment, for esthetic fulfillment, and in a number of other ways. Accordingly, discourse is labelled as inadequate not merely because it fails to communicate a message, but also because it stands as a symbol of undesirable facts, is dull, or esthetically unacceptable.

The data and its analysis outlined above should include all types of problems and should lead to a comprehensive list of problems encountered by individual speakers. In a community such as Hong Kong inadequacies connected with the use of non-native varieties must be given special attention. This includes non-linguistic problems such as the control of the content of communication establishment of networks and the use of non-verbal channels. The sum of such individual speakers' problems represents the range of interaction problems of the community under investigation.

However, before we attempt any general statements on a community as a whole, we should realize that variation is omnipresent and usually sharp. The interaction problems of the average members of an immigrant community in Australia are of necessity different from those of the immigrant elite; similarly, the interaction problems of the Australian-born basic social classes and the leading classes are different, with the scales not being necessarily equal for both sections of the communities. Male and female speakers necessarily encounter different interaction problems. All this must be accounted for.

While undertaking the problem analysis for discourse management we must discard general categories such as "the population of Hong Kong", "the Indians", or "the Australians". In the contemporary period of social science the grid must be finer and social variation must be fully analyzed.

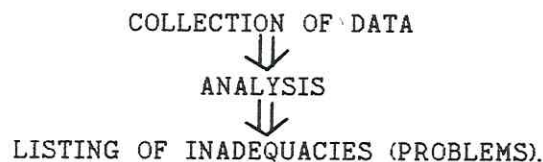
LT To conclude this section about problem analysis in discourse management I would like to emphasize that it is an absolute necessity for the consideration of language teaching in any rigorous language management system. In the absence of a methodological base, guesses have traditionally been made about the needs of students. Now it is time to find out what the problems facing learners actually are and what, accordingly, should be the content of language teaching. In the case of language, communication or sociocultural education in Hong Kong a systematic survey of language problems in discourse can potentially provide an entirely new vision of what should be done to remove the phenomenon of "semilingualism" and the production of "cultural eunuchs" which T'sou speaks about (1985).

THE INQUIRY COMPONENT IN THE SYSTEM OF LANGUAGE TREATMENT

As mentioned above, language treatment is a management system in networks that specialize in language management - language academies, committees, language associations etc. In communities in which language treatment has been well established such networks are usually related and although the range of problems perceived by individual bodies or individuals may differ to a considerable extent, along with variation there is also much interconnectedness. In order to understand the situation it is again necessary to proceed by investigating less extensive networks before considering generalizations valid for the whole community.

Unlike in discourse management, in the case of language treatment normally only the upper classes of the society participate. However, even if the vision of language problems of these participants is limited, they do represent different interests, and attend therefore to different problems.

My task in this paper will be not the whole system of language treatment but solely the way in which issues are identified - the inquiry component of the system. The structure of the investigation will again be



1. Collection of data

The first task for a systematic survey of language problems as they are reflected in the system of language treatment is the listing of all treatment networks. The next step is the collection of management acts in each of the networks.

At first sight it might appear that it will suffice to collect inquiry acts in language treatment, consisting of discourse which deals directly with the identification of problems. Such discourse includes descriptions of the norm, pronouncements concerning deviation from the norm, and the evaluation of such deviations. However, language problems which are the object of language treatment are not simply those problems that cross the boundary of consciousness and appear in discourse. Problems that are never or almost never specifically mentioned in language treatment discourse can provide an unconscious motivation for many language treatment decision and

implementation acts. For instance the discourse of Japanese language treatment in the post-war period concentrated on the problem of script. However, a deeper analysis reveals that other problems, such as problems of the lexicon, or problems of the accessibility of the written language were seriously considered - even though not discussed in the system. Problems connected with sociopolitical interests of sections of the society (e.g. the problem of the old establishment being deprived of its established language rights) rarely become a full-fledged topic of discussion. Even if we limit our target to the survey of problems in language treatment we must therefore collect data on a wide basis. The following components are of vital importance.

1.1. Collection and creation of records

All physical objects connected with language treatment process must be collected. This of course, includes all texts produced in the networks. Jernudd (forthcoming) has developed the use of newspaper reports as a source of identification of language problems. Some acts of language treatment, for example meeting of committees and associations, are particularly suited for (video-)tape recording. The old paradigm of social science emphasized artefacts (products, objects) at the expense of processes. Today we cannot proceed in the same way. What actually happens is more revealing than the sheer product of this happening.

1.2. Observation

Observation of the acts of language treatment must be performed. Observation is always observation of processes. In this sense it is particularly meaningful.

1.3. Interaction interviews

Interviews aiming at the reconstruction of immediately preceding processes are of great importance, in particular in situations in which we cannot conduct recording or observations. The method of interaction interviews was described above, and with necessary changes can be applied here.

1.4. Follow-up interviews

As outlined above, follow-up interviews aim at the establishment of conscious processes. It makes much sense to ask participants in language treatment discussions about their thoughts and attitudes which are not mirrored in the speech acts they produced.

1.5. Elicitation interviews

Elicitation interviews differ from follow-up interviews in not being tied to a particular preceding act of language treatment. These are the traditional interviews, generally conducted in the investigations of language policies, reforms, etc. Personnel in language treatment networks are confronted with stimuli in the form of interview questions and are required to respond.

Questionnaires directed to the wider public also belong to this category. While some well structured deep interviews with personnel can be quite successful, it must be said that questionnaires frequently remain close to the surface of reality and their wide application cannot be expected to yield highly significant results. Although questionnaires directed to the wide public have some potential of encompassing the position of the basic classes which normally remain excluded from the system of language treatment, I believe that they are not the universal solution to the problem of the democratization of language management.

2. Analysis of language treatment data

The analysis of language treatment data is more complicated than the analysis of discourse management. Of course, language treatment includes the three components described above:

1. Inquiry,
2. Design, and
3. Implementation.

However, these components are much more complicated than the corresponding components of discourse management. In addition there are two components which remain underdeveloped, if they are present at all, at the level of discourse management:

4. Social system, and
5. Idiom.

In other words, personnel in language treatment form social networks, a social system, which has its own power structure, its own decision making processes, physical environment (buildings, printing facilities, etc.), budgets, and a definite position within the general sociopolitical processes of the community. At the same time the use of discourse within this system has specific features: for example, one uses particular lexicon, talks of particular topics, addresses particular networks, etc. This means that messages encoded in the idiom cannot be decoded without its intimate knowledge. The situation is the same in other areas of discourse - political, legal, literary, etc.

As a result, the way participants (a) perceive language problems and (b) report about them is governed by a number of factors. Firstly, language treatment processes are based on the processes of discourse correction as experienced by the participants or their associates. For example, the experience of spelling problems of school children by teachers may lead to their participation in a language treatment association and result in a particular perception of problems.

Secondly, socioeconomic problems can directly or through associated ideologies influence perception and reporting. Even if the presence of language variation may hardly ever cause a problem in discourse, it may appear as a major issue in a system of language treatment because of the analogy of actually experienced problem in economic diversity. The matter is not so simple that we could say "disregard such problems". They have to be recorded as they are and attended to.

Thirdly, there is the idiom, which itself has complicated and varied roots. The idiom prescribes a whole array of features which characterize communication in an established area. Among them are conditions under which communication takes place (switch-on, or function rules), place and time of communication (setting rules), who and in what capacity participates in communication (participant rules), the type of language used (variety rules), what will be said (content rules), what form the messages will take (message form rules), what channels will be employed (channel rules), and in what way communication within the system will be monitored, evaluated and corrected (management rules). The existence of idiom rules is normally accepted by all participants, even though the idiom -not unlike everything else- constantly changes its shape. Speakers of the same idiom "understand each other". However, observers who are foreign to the system must first penetrate through the barriers of the idiom if they wish to understand what the actual input/output of the communication process is.

2.1. Analysis of surface data

How can we then identify in the data the problems which form input into a system of language treatment?

In the same way as in the case of discourse management, a clear indication of the reality of a problem is the existence (implementation) of a corrective adjustment. In other words, the safest and simplest way is to start from the end and work towards the start.

Imagine for instance that we wish to investigate what language problems underlied the system of language treatment in the immediate post-war period in Japan. As you may be aware, the system was very lively and resulted in a number of

implemented language reforms that radically simplified the Japanese language (cf. Daniels 1977, Neustupny 1983b). We can safely assume that reforms were implemented because deviations were noted and negatively evaluated (i.e. labelled as "inadequacies"). So, the (physical/surface) existence of the final phase of the management process testifies that preceding stages, such as noting of deviance and inadequacy marking, also took place. Even if we establish the existence of the problem, we do not, of course, still know all about it: for instance the issue of the sources of the problem (discourse management or ideology?) will need separate consideration.

However, similarly to the situation in discourse management, some management processes do not include the corrective adjustment stage. Management can stop at the level of noting or evaluation. In such cases, the direct testimony of participants, reported by them during the process of data on collecting, becomes the primary source of evidence.

2.2. Analysis using evidence from discourse management

An important indicator of what problems may have been present in a system of language treatment is the range of inadequacies identified in discourse management for participants in language treatment processes. If we possess evidence that the participants have themselves experienced the problems of communicating with a particular group of speakers and claim this to be a problem, we can normally conclude that the problem exists in the system of language treatment.

2.3. Analysis based on other than language inadequacies (communication and sociocultural problems)

~~As noted above, perception of and reporting about language problems in discourse within language treatment networks may be based on social factors and social ideologies.~~

One typical case is the problem of the absence of a native integrating variety. A foreign variety may perfectly serve all communicative functions involved, but the symbolic function is not performed. For this purpose a native variety is needed. We must note this source of the appearance of the problem, but this does not mean that we can simply assume that communicative function is the only legitimate source of language problems and that other sources should be disregarded. Problems connected with symbolic function must receive proper treatment in language management.

Another factor which must be thoroughly investigated are the socioeconomic interests of participants. They affect not merely designs for correction and implementation, but the initial identification of problems as well. For example, the

identification of the problem of stability of the literary language, so much emphasized in the Prague School (Mathesius - Havránek), seems to be an important requirement for the intellectual class. I wonder to what extent this issue exists for members of the basic (so called "working" or "lower") classes of the society.

2.4. Analysis and the idiom

The idiom must be familiar if we want to understand what personnel in language treatment mean. We must be able to "read between the lines". However, this "reading between the lines" is not necessarily a conscious process that would be easily reportable. The identification of language problems may be hidden "between the lines", and it may not be easy to recover them.

Some of the important questions are: why do language treatment idioms normally pose as impartial and objective; why do most idioms exclude speaking about the differential interests of participants; and how can we identify such differential interests which underlie language treatment discourse?

3. Listing of inadequacies

The analysis results in a list of language, communication and interaction problems within the system of language treatment, together with an indication of their sources. This means, that the issue of interrelationship between problems in discourse management and in language treatment is automatically attended to.

The development of an investigation such as suggested here for any particular community of the world -such as Hong Kong- would be of considerable interest. As a matter of fact, it should precede any rigorous work in language management, because only a full listing of types and sources of problems can lead to an efficient policy. "Efficient" policy here means not an "objective" or the "best" policy, but one that is based on the consideration of all facts and their determinants.

INQUIRY CONCERNING FUTURE PROBLEMS

One matter to be attended to still remains. This is the matter of problems which do not exist at present but which are and should be expected in the future. As a matter of fact, language management has always been based both on the consideration of problems which existed in the (immediate) past, exist at the moment (in-correction), or will occur in the future (pre-correction). This is true about discourse correction (pre-correction of dialectisms, etc.) as well as about whole systems such as language teaching, which normally aims at the

correction of inadequacies (lack of ability to employ a variety of language) which are anticipated to occur in the future.

The question is of course of great relevance for Hong Kong which will experience a radical change in its political, economic and social circumstances in 1997. Even if I cannot present a definite proposal here, it may be significant that the question of a systematic and theoretically informed inquiry into future language problems has for the first time been recorded at this conference.

The question at present is how to systematize this approach and how to extend the span of time for which predictions are made and solutions are sought. Of course, a major question is how to go about identifying potential future problems in a systematic way. In the present paper this problem has only been registered, without an answer being provided. Two matters are sure: firstly, this is not an optional addition to a rigorous system of language management but one of its basic components; second, the research strategies for the investigation of future problems will be based on strategies of the investigation of problems that are already present - such as those discussed in this paper.

Let me finally emphasize another point mentioned at the beginning of my paper: a full systematic analysis of language problems in any community - Hong Kong included - will not merely provide a better starting point for future policy designs and their implementation. It will also insure that the point of view of the whole population will be made visible - and some of the problems of the ordinary man will perhaps be taken into account when decisions are made.

NOTE

1. The distinction between native (internal) and foreign (contact) situations (cf. Neustupny 1985:44) is of basic importance for any discussion of language problems. Of course, it applies not merely to the contact of systems located on the opposite sides of international boundaries. Even within national systems of varieties there are some which are not native to all speakers: e.g. foreign varieties (the language of administration or religion), classical varieties, written varieties (are they native to anyone?), formal or standard varieties. Future research will show how many language problems are due to contact use.

T'sou's discussion of semilinguistics in Hong Kong (1985) seems to point to the importance of contact problems in Hong Kong for English and for Standard Chinese.

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