

## Part 2: Theory

### The fifth lecture

#### INDIVIDUAL DISCOURSE MANAGEMENT

The theoretical foundation for the study of language management, and therefore also for the study of planning because it is a type of management, must be based on discourse. This is to be understood in the sense of noting deviations from norms, and in the sense of evaluating potential or actual inadequacies of language and implementing adjustments to remove these inadequacies in individual acts of talking and writing.

People can claim allegiance to languages as symbols of the nation, of a Great Revelation or of Truth. People may expend considerable energy in debating the appropriateness of these symbols. But the problems that such debates broach are not necessarily noted in communication in the use of these languages, rather, they are produced by and evaluated in terms of ideologies. The ideological and symbolic foundations for these problems are therefore best studied according to the rules of disciplines that are equipped to dissect ideology and the role of ideological rhetoric in communal life. Although great benefit can come from uniting or bridging disciplinary discourses, for purposes of constructing this disciplinary discourse about management of language in discourse, boundaries shall have to be defined between disciplines.

It is the purpose of this lecture to delimit a discipline that studies language management from other discourses that respond to other needs for knowledge and for guidance to action. This lecture shall seek to construct one theoretical foundation among several possible ones for the study of language management. A first assumption in this theoretical search is that students in this field of enquiry shall have to demonstrate how a language

deviance occurs in an individual's speech or writing or in comprehending of someone's speech or writing, how this inadequacy may be evaluated, and how either the evaluation of the inadequacy or the selection and/or action of adjustment may become subject to organized attention. When language inadequacies become subject to conscious (deliberate) discourse and management, then these could be named *language problems*. And problems are there to be solved.

The entire discipline may simply continue to be called *linguistics*. Workers in the discipline of linguistics as it is presently constituted normally contribute a knowledge base either about particular languages or about language in general on which users of language can build to write better dictionaries and more efficient grammars, and to bring about a greater degree of inter-translatability between languages. Linguistics in this form is one necessary component of description and analysis together with the study of rules and norms that generate language. Together with *language management* which attends to individual and group noting, evaluating and adjusting of language, linguistics becomes enabled as a discipline to explain production (and reproduction) of language.

Each individual speaker possesses rules and norms of language use in the sense of ability to generate expressions and the knowledge and ability to use expressions appropriately in different communicative contexts. This use could not be cooperatively productive in interaction unless one also assumes that speakers have available to themselves the ability to

- (1) produce messages
- (2) monitor the language that constitutes these messages and compare it with norms, thus noting deviations
- (3) evaluate these deviations, thus defining inadequacies
- (4) decide on means of adjustment and
- (5) implement potential adjustments.

The first ability (1) is referred to as the individual's generative competency in the field of linguistics, and the latter (2-5) are referred to as the individual's corrective competency in the study of language management. (Two recent presentations of this model are Neustupný 1985, and, Jernudd and Neustupný 1986). The former cannot be consummated without the latter and the latter lacks meaning without the former. The two together define human communication and the individual's communicative

competency. Languages (varieties) are created in their interaction (Schegloff 1979).

Interaction can be viewed as mostly a means towards conventionally recognized ends, but while most of life is routine, it is at the same time a potential battle-zone of competing versions of reality<sup>23</sup>. Speakers do assert their own identity, assert their view of the situation, direct others to their own ends. Speakers do capitulate to others, modify goals and expectations, placate, even abandon interaction. Correction in discourse, *i.e.*, the repair of utterances, is goal-directed, value-laden and subject to formulation through adjustment rules, and are designed to allow speakers to cooperatively continue communication. The interactants could be said to negotiate continuity of interaction. An example may help:

"When the ten-count is completed, It, keeping his eyes shut, attempts to locate and tag one of the Not-Its by a 'sounding' technique: It yells Marco! and the Not-Its are obliged to respond Polo! When one of the Not-Its is tagged he becomes It, and the cycle is repeated. The report picks up at a point where Steven has been tagged and thereby becomes It:

As he begins to count to ten, Sudan and Nancy move to about halfway across the pool.

STEVEN: One, two, three, ((pause)) four, five, six, ((pause))

eleven, eight, nine, ten.

SUSAN: 'Eleven?' -eight, nine, ten?

STEVEN: Eleven, eight, nine, ten.

NANCY: 'Eleven?'

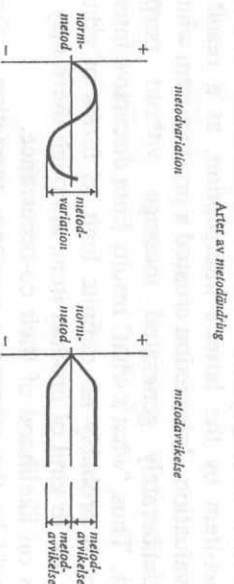
STEVEN: Seven, eight, nine, ten.

SUSAN: That's better.

Whereupon the game resumes (Jefferson 1972:295)."

Both production and management rules are normally conventional and therefore reduce the risk of conflict as well as facilitate the developing course of interaction. One force operates to allow discourse to proceed appropriately. The other force will tend to get the whole affair out of hand unless termination is desired--and to that end, norms of negotiation [of norms] may be used destructively!

Linguists may accept that infants and foreign-language learners struggle to learn language but they do not normally think it problematical that adult individuals are normally able to speak with apparent ease. People speak because interaction follows protocols that shield the speaker so as to allow her the opportunity to use her corrective resources. Some communicative situations involve a greater risk than others and in such situations the risk is alleviated by codification and even automation of the expression and structure of interaction (such as, *e.g.*, in the established forms of a lecture). Other resources available to the speaker lie within the generative system: at more than one point within this system, structures appear to be unitized, thus reducing the labour of sentence formulation. The expectation of certain kinds of speaking and writing and the regularity of speaking and writing have created effective interrelationships between the potentially inexhaustible combinations of linguistic units of the first articulation (of syntax and discourse) with considerable predictability and stability. This characteristic of language is most simply demonstrated in the naming of objects, creating stability by convention, *i.e.*, words mean what people agree they mean, on the whole. The demonstration of the validity of this point of view lies in the fact that sometimes greater predictability is required and when that is so, people get together to standardize vocabulary, turning words into technical terms for the specific group of users who recognized and acted on this felt requirement. This is an extract from a glossary (TNC 49, 1971, page 56) which presents standardized technical terms of production engineering:



Figur 3.9. metodändring  
3.10 metodavvikelse  
3.11 metodavvikelse

Individual management of discourse could adjust the wrong word choice given the situation, e.g., starting to call a police officer a *cop* rather than *officer* in front of the judge in traffic court in the United States:

"PTC Materials: I: 49]

Bassett: 'En I didn't read that [description of violation the officer wrote on the ticket].

When thuh ku-officer came up I s -'

Judge: 'Red traffic signal approximately

thirty feet east of the crosswalk, when signal changed tuh red.'

While an occurrence like '...thuh ku-officer...' may not be subject to the court's sanction, it appears that the judge is making his unhappiness with it manifest in an alternative way; i.e. by interrupting the defendant mid-word in her correction (Jefferson 1974: 193)."

Bassett's adjustment illustrates an adjustment format of interrupting the word *cop*, to mark it as the product-item by the glottal catch and then to immediately utter the correct word *officer*. Bassett's repair routine was probably meant to cover up the intentional use of *cop*! That would explain why the Judge interrupts--Bassett's clever use of an adjustment routine blocks the Judge from sanctioning him in any other way than by interrupting him. The speaker generated a message the expression form of which included what our analysis refers to as a repair routine (the realization of an adjustment strategy). The speaker's utterance as a whole is then noted by the other interactant and is made into the product-item by the latter's interruption, as a result of his negative evaluation. Interaction created a product-item which itself was as deliberately generated message without purport of adjustment. Thus, "what's what" results from discursive interaction. Also, there is probably no definite limit to forms of adjustment strategies, nor to kind of product-item, although there may well be constraints on likelihood of their co-occurrence.

Or it could be the attorney's secretary correcting a client who asks over the phone where Grosvenor Center in downtown Honolulu is located by repeating back [grouven cent] because the client said [grosvenr cent]. The secretary deemed the latter sufficiently wrong to correct a potential client, perhaps because

direction-giving was involved and then the precise form of a name is important and ultimately in the client's interest.

The grossest correction act is the utterance "what did you say?" The most subtle correction act is the weaving of a different pronunciation into a spoken response, without overt comment. Editing uses a red or blue pencil for correction. A service-oriented civil servant simply strikes out what the citizen-suppliant put on the form accompanying this by a confirming question, and scribbles the properly bureaucratic expression above.

In self-correction, pausing and the use of [thuh...uh...] is a common signaling device that can be put to use to foreground what's being corrected because that, too, serves a communicative purpose; and in correcting another person, repetition with question intonation, or repetition in contrasting language garb can be used.

However, another's adjustment of someone else's inadequacy is risky because it does call the other person's competency into question. That is perhaps the main reason why there are teachers and pupils. By virtue of their relationship, pupils are those who are incompetent and who therefore are allowed to practice corrigible behaviors (within limits) without sanction in case of deviation and teacher intervention. If one doesn't know to speak (a language), one is potentially a child regardless of one's age. And parents are known to repeat their infants' utterances not as the infants said them but as they should be said.

Native language teaching can be regarded as the systematic adjustment of inadequacies put into mass practice: in the case of teacher-pupil relationships, to socialize young people through the institution of schooling into her and his individual place in society so that proficient communicative behaviour is congruent with social role. Schools provide norms and remove norm deviations for the pupils who succeed in benefiting from school communication, in order for their speaking, reading and later writing to be evaluated as fluent in manners acceptable to society. Those pupils are already or become privileged participants in social communication. Those unprivileged pupils who failed in benefiting from their schooling and who do not seek help with systematic adjustment by their own initiative later in life no doubt learn to expect norm conflict or norm malfunction after leaving school, or to assume a humbler place in society than that to which they might have wished to aspire (thus minimizing such conflict) because they don't "speak correctly" or because they don't "write clearly."



Since skills are involved, anyone's expression can become jumbled. Schoolteachers also teach evaluation of communicative behaviour, and appropriate correction behaviours. Should school fail to do so, the young person will inevitably experience the harsh realities of social judgment on straying outside his/her network or group **due** to inability to handle the differences in language evaluations and appropriate management through correction adjustments. Teachers are individuals who have a mandate to legitimately correct without threatening the integrity of the person being corrected. Such is the student's privilege. This very much applies to language learning. To systematically emit "wrong" utterances with a straight face and to accept correction cheerfully when it is forthcoming clearly marks one as a child regardless of one's age! Of course, another reason for the teacher's role is the need for specialists in correction who know how to effectively apply systematic correction in aid of the individual learner.

An individual speaker's inability to evaluate and adjust inadequacies may cause evaluation and more or less explicit adjustment by a hearer/reader or delayed comment by an editor, although neither has to occur, or the inability may cause the person to seek help from other members of the speech community. Monitoring, noting, evaluating and adjusting are part and parcel of language production, and, indeed, are integral to the structure of all communicative acts. Individuals' resources include the ability to make use of such inbuilt management devices; a discourse management system that permits them to avoid, repair and/or clarify utterances; and variable access to a more rigorous system of management through which people get together to deliberately and systematically note, evaluate and adjust language.

Individual speakers/writers may support language management by demanding authoritative judgement (and what one person deems authoritative might not be so evaluated by another) with respect to appropriateness of expression and word choice, criticism of efficiency or the esthetic quality of texts. S/he may refer to manuals of various kind, such as the grammars, dictionaries and phraseological handbooks, or may call up the grammar hotline, take "effective writing" and "public speaking" courses, etc. Support of authority engenders authority and minimizes uncertainty and dispute, thus creating a feeling of stable predictability<sup>24</sup>.

Thus, the fundamental aspect of language management is problem-solving that removes inadequacies in individual discourse.

## The sixth lecture

### PUBLIC LANGUAGE MANAGEMENT

A new Webster's dictionary for the English of the United States or the publication of just about any major, national reference work on the "words" of a language will normally engage people in debate. Many English language dictionaries are continuously updated and sell in mass editions. The several Swedish dictionaries are best-sellers and their new editions excite both scholarly and popular scrutiny. Making dictionaries and discussing them make sense because they are the logical outcomes of a chain of events set in motion when people get together to discuss the choice of word or the formulation of a sentence or the shape of a document. Language is the inevitable subject of overt noting, overt evaluation, and publicly implemented adjustment. This may be so simply for reasons of intellectual curiosity, but a rationalization for the interest can be found. In this way, individuals help each other maintain a language system by forming and upholding normative judgements of language. Language professionals will specialize in pronouncing language verdicts, in doing linguistic research, in writing dictionaries, and so on. In societies organized along other lines, the equivalent practices will be executed by erudite people in their appropriate roles; and some individuals take as their roles in society the in-depth study of how language is formed and what is good and bad language usage. The experts among them who ask the fundamental question, "what is language?", are the scientific linguists; literary critics are among those who evaluate literary language; orators evaluate skill of speech-making; teachers of the native language are experts of usage. All people engage in comment, critique, and correction, and some people assume specialist roles in *organized* language management.

Because matters of language use are deliberated and adjudicated, also interpretations made in the course of debate themselves become topics of discussion. People will generalize or defend

# LECTURES on Language Problems

BJÖRN JERNUDD  
*National University of Singapore  
Singapore*

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