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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to underline the importance of at least acknowledging the existence of a complex set of rules in a grammar of social interaction--and the further reality that while there may be a grammar of social interaction, there are also grammars of social interaction for different groups. It should be possible to find that apparently dissimilar social behaviors identified in different social groups can be derived from identical deep social structure underlying representations which have been subjected to culturally or group-specific social interactional transformations. The shape such analyses might take is sketched in broad outline in this paper. (Author/VM)

Sociology, Sociolinguistics, and Language Teaching*

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It's not always nice to be a guest -- doing guesting (to borrow a construction from the ethnomethodologists) frequently places the guest in the position of being obligated to his host -- and therefore under quite specifically articulated constraints. It can be even less pleasant to be a guest under duress; under some circumstances a guest is little more than a prisoner, and the constraints upon his behavior may even include limitations upon the "guest's" physical mobility. (In fact, a prisoner may have certain advantages, including the right to attempt to escape confinement.) Similarly, if I read correctly certain norms about social interaction, the guest under duress is, by the very fact of that duress, released from some of the usual constraints concerning politeness, accommodating behaviors, and so on.

I've chosen to begin with these observations because I am, in at least one sense, a guest under duress. I therefore intend to take advantage of my "right" to break certain rules. I will presume upon your enforced hospitality to tell you some things I think you ought to be doing; to suggest that some of my fellow speakers may be guilty of hyperbole in the service of your organization's goals; and to lecture you about some possibly dysfunctional unintended consequences of your intended good-doing.

It's not unusual for a sociologist to be rude, but it may seem somewhat unusual for a sociologist to tell you, in contrast to the interpretations suggested by Mr. Wardhaugh, that you should be paying more rather than less attention to linguists and what they are doing in linguist theory. This may be particularly the case since I've been billed as someone who can tell you some things to what sociology can do for language teachers. I hope the reasons for these apparent contradictions will become clear in the course of my remarks.

My paper has four principle themes. First, I want to take up the themes suggested in my opening preamble and talk to you about how I came to be a guest -- in that way violating the courtesies of Professor Paulston (who originally invited me) and one of my colleagues (who shall remain nameless - but did introduce me) who prevailed upon me to change my mind about attending after an initial refusal. I'll suggest how an analysis of "doing requests" might be made, and demonstrate that this behavior (like other social and speech behavior) is rule governed.[1]

I'll turn then to a more general discussion of rules, and try to demonstrate the possibility of a "universal grammar" of social interaction; with analogues to the linguists' perspective of the grammar of a language and the grammar of language. I'll suggest that there are universals in the deep structure of social interaction, (for a fuller discussion of the character of such universals, see Grimshaw: 1972a and 1972b) and that we're in danger of making pedagogically unsound decisions if we attend only to the surface structure of social behavior within collectivities (or even across sub-cultural units -- as is the case with the work many of you are trying to do in teaching Standard English as a second language or dialect).

The third topic I'll touch upon relates to the problematic aspects of communication inherent in working across surface structures of syntaxes of social interaction. To do this I'll work from my notions about rules, to some observations about rule violations in situations of bi-culturalism (using the term essentially as Jacobivits [1971] does), and finally to a broader discussion of the normative and linguistic aspects of communicative failure. In doing this I'll use some earlier observations I've made on cross-category communication and attempt to place those observations more clearly in the teaching-learning context.

In the final part of my paper, I'll discuss several different topics which are related in rather loose ways to questions of professional ethics and responsibility as well as to the problems that professionals face in working across disciplinary boundaries. As I've noted, I'll submit that there are dangers in solving technical problems of instruction (through application of either linguistic or other social science knowledge) since, sometimes, the solutions themselves make possible the injury of the very populations we wish to serve.

On doing requests: When I agreed to talk to this group, I told Professor Paulston that one thing I would talk about was the rule-governed character of social interaction as well as the particular variety of social behavior we label speech. For example, consider "deference behavior." There is a diversity of ways in which social rules about deference are manifested in different social groups; but there are important universals that make behavior in such social relationships predictable and interpretable in all societies. As I was thinking about how I might express this, it occurred to me that my presence here is, itself, the outcome of the interaction of a rich set of rules and variables constraining those rules. What I want to talk about first then, once again following the convention of the ethnomethodologists, is doing requests. We know that request behavior can be complicated in other societies (Albert: 1964), we may fail to see the richness of such behavior in our own society simply because of familiarity. Let me start by telling what happened from a common sense perspective and then try to suggest the richness of analysis which is possible.

Late last summer I received a flattering letter from Professor Paulston, telling me a little about plans for this meeting and asking me to participate in this session as a sociologist talking about what inputs sociologists

could offer in the solutions of the tasks confronting you. Some weeks later I responded, stating that I felt that I could not participate, largely because of prior obligations. I thought this would close the matter; however, within a few weeks I met one of my Indiana colleagues at a meeting. At the end of the meeting he said that he wanted to talk with me. I said, "Fine, how about right now." He insisted, however, that he wanted to talk with me by telephone. A few days later we did talk on the phone, and he attempted to persuade me to reconsider my decision on the joint grounds that I had things to say which might be of interest and that I had an implicit moral obligation because of the kinds of things you are trying to do. I agreed to reconsider, but stated that I was not sure about the first ground, viz., that what I had to say would be particularly useful, and I asked my colleague to look at some related papers to see whether they would be of value. A few weeks later I received a letter from the Indiana colleague reiterating the earlier arguments and stating that the papers were about issues which are of interest to you. A few days after that he called me again and I agreed to come; he then conveyed my agreement to Professor Paulston who in turn called for confirmation and to give me initial instructions about my responsibilities; some days later I received a letter from Professor Paulston with formal confirmation about dates and other arrangements. If this narrative description sounds complicated -- it is. I submit, however, that the variables operating in such a negotiation are far more complicated.

In starting to organize my thoughts about what happened, I first rediscovered a principle on which all of us operate in everyday life, viz., that in requesting behavior there are different levels of ease of refusal of requests. Generally, (at least for middle-class white professionals in our society) written requests are easier to refuse than telephone requests and

the latter are easier to refuse than those made in face-to-face interaction. However, it immediately occurred to me that the order of the last two (telephone and face-to-face) can be reversed if the requestor is either: (1) embarrassed about making the request (this can get quite sticky - so we have rules for "remedial interchanges," see Goffman: 1971) or; (2) apprehensive about engaging in a direct encounter and possible exposure to kinesic or other cues given off by the requestee which may validate the requestee's claim that the request is too demanding. Moreover, the use of an intermediary requestor may require reordering as may (possibly) the nature of the request itself. As I considered what had happened further, it seemed to me that it can happen that a requestor may be willing to give up communicative clarity in order to be spared the embarrassment of making a direct request. There are at least two reasons for ambiguity in requesting: (1) sometimes requests are ambiguous so that refusals need not be defined as rebuffs; (2) the requestor may himself perceive the legitimacy of the request as low and therefore be willing to leave the questions of disambiguation and acquiescence or refusal up to the requestee.

Most of us in this room could continue this kind of discursive use of ourselves as informants on the dimensions of this kind of requesting at considerable length; we need no more than the introspective skills of linguists who use themselves as the principal informants for learned studies of the rules of grammar of a language. However, Dell Hymes has provided us with an organizing acronym in SPEAKING (1967), and I suggest that his paradigm can illustrate that the kind of intuitive observations I have been making can be so ordered as to demonstrate something else we all know -- but too often take for granted -- the non-random and highly patterned nature of social intercourse. In a paper of this length, and with other topics to

cover, my discussion can be only tentative. I'll spend quite a bit of time in outlining the possible application of the acronym; the analysis will not be exhaustive. Teaching and learning are much more complicated behaviors than requesting; within the confines of a paper of this length it would not be possible to cover those behaviors even in broad outline. Hence, the choice of requests for my analysis.

Setting: I use "setting" here in a somewhat distorted way, referring to whether the request occurs in writing, in a telephone conversation or in face-to-face interaction. There are endless elaborations which can be made on the last setting, at the very least one might expect quite different responses to the same request made in a professional's office or to the same person at a causal social encounter (or, for that matter, in situations defined as dangerous).

Participants: It is important here to learn whether or not there is a prior relation between the requestor and the requestee (the history of relationships either between interacting individuals themselves or between the groups which they "represent" is an important determinant of the character of all encounters, particularly with regard to the success or failure of communication, see Grimshaw: 1969-70). Status differences between the two, or other social distance-inducing characteristics will effect the requestor's selection of strategies. Moreover, it's difficult to ask for new favors from status equal non-intimates when substantial debits have already been accumulated, thus a prior exchange balance between requestor and requestee can be critical.[2] Finally, some request behavior is done through intermediaries and some in the context of audiences ("Mommy, why don't you ask Daddy if we . . ." "When will you learn not to ask for . . . in front of . . ."). All of these variations can be important in determining not

only the form but the very occurrence of doing requests.

Ends: Presumably, the requestor expects some benefit from making a request. In most instances there will also be costs, but a requestor sometimes does a request simply in order to flatter a requestee, e.g., "Would you please autograph my copy of your book?" addressed to a first-time author. In making these assessments the initiator will possibly keep in mind possible benefits accruing to the requestee for request fulfillment. Among such benefits are: deference, a promised quid pro quo; altruistic satisfaction; honor; or more material rewards. In many instances, however, there will be greater costs than benefits for the requestee, in such cases requestor will attempt to assess both actual cost to the requestee (as well as to himself) and the requestee's assessments of those costs. Life is complicated.

Art characteristics:[3] Hymes uses this term to include form and content of what is said (message-form and topic). The content obviously refers in this case to what is actually asked for; the form is somewhat difficult to distinguish from the later category of genre. Some kind of distinction is implied between, for example, casual requests which take the form "Would you mind doing...?" and more formal ones, "Sir! May I have the Colonel's permission..." or "I pray your Lordship to look with favor upon..." I think that what Hymes means here is that, whatever the mode (genre?) chosen, each speech community will have rules for performing that kind of speech act, and that failure to perform according to those rules makes one less than a competent member (obviously the rules for doing requests are more explicit in some societies than in others). It may be that solidarity appeals or polite reminders of normative obligations are forms for doing requests in our own society.

Key: Hymes defines key as the component introduced to "distinguish the

tone, manner or spirit in which an act is done" -- the significance of key is found in the fact that, "where the two are in conflict, the manner of an act overrides the content in determining its true significance." Among variations in key, all represented through paralinguistic variation are: obsequious-condescending; mock-playful-serious; insulting-complimentary, and; perfunctory-painstaking. In the case of doing requests, some such distinction as peremptory-deferential may be important, particularly when the variation is situated in a fuller context of variations in participant characteristics and the like. Nonetheless, there are dangers in taking even key at face value and additional rules must sometimes be invoked in order to fully comprehend the meaning of variations in key. I'll suggest below, for example, that there may be speech communities (or cultural groups) in which a deferential tone is used even by superiors in making requests of subordinates (even though the deep structural relationship of power institutionalized into superordination-subordination obtains). Woe betide the subordinate who fails to correctly interpret the deep structural relationship which underlies the surface representation following the application of the "politeness transformation" in such an instance!

Instrumentalities: This dimension includes both channel and code. In our example we have already referred to channel in discussing setting, observing that the requestor may choose to send a request in writing, make it on the telephone, or directly address it to the requestee in face-to-face interaction. In this case there is, of course, no variation in code (although there are clearly different degrees of adherence to formal usage in written as contrasted to spoken use of elaborated code). Where both requestor and requestee share a common code, however, whether that be a private language in the case of lovers or a regional dialect in the case of

a constituent appealing to his parliamentary representative or a bureaucrat; code-shifting can become an important part of doing a request.

Norms of interaction and of interpretation: In the next section I'll discuss the notion of shared norms and shared understanding as contrasted to specific rules in a syntax of social interaction. Hymes has in mind here two things: (1) specific proprieties for speech acts (requestors don't shout when they request the use of someone's bathroom -- but mumblers are also sometimes told to "Speak up!"); (2) the belief systems which underlie interpretations of speech acts. In any discussion of doing requests one would certainly want to know what kinds of requests are perceived as legitimate and, specifically, the perception of a request's legitimacy by the requestor as well as the requestor's perception of the requestee's likely perception of the legitimacy of his request. Clearly some further distinctions are needed to make this a meaningful dimension of analysis.

Genres: As I noted earlier, there is some overlap of genre, as Hymes has used the term, with that of art characteristics. He lists as genres such types of speech acts and events as conversation, curse, blessing, prayer, lecture, imprecation, and so on. It may very well be that requests are themselves a genre -- nonetheless, we can see differences among casual inquiries, formal applications, ritual forms, and so on, in the accomplishment of requests.

I'm sure that few of you have ever heard an invited speaker talk at such length about being invited. Perhaps some of you hope that you'll never hear such a recital again. I want to emphasize two points. First, I have sketched only the most rudimentary beginnings of how an anlaysis of doing requests might be undertaken; I have said nothing in detail, for example, about how the history of relationships between the groups of which requestor

and requestee are members might influence doing a request -- nor have I talked about other background knowledge (Kjolseth: 1972) which would be necessary for a full analysis. Second, I have taken a familiar and, in relative terms, fairly simple and straightforward speech event as an example. Professor Paulston, my Indiana colleague and I all share a common code, including common jargon. We also share a somewhat amorphous set of notions about academic proprieties and some views about obligations and priorities in areas of social policy. You, in contrast, are engaged in teaching English to people who come from different speech communities. Doing teaching (or doing learning) is self-evidently a far more complex social activity than doing requests (as, e.g., note Jacobovits: 1971). When this social activity is being attempted across cultural and linguistic boundaries (ignoring, for the moment, how these boundaries are established) the task assumes a frightening magnitude -- but I hardly need tell you that, if you didn't share that characterization most of you wouldn't be here. I simply want to underline for you the importance of at least acknowledging the existence of a complex set of rules in a grammar of social interaction -- and the further reality that while there may be a grammar of social interaction there are also grammars (plural) of social interaction for different groups. I very much doubt that the goals of members of this association will be attained without such acknowledgement.

Before considering what a universal grammar of social interaction might look like, I want to consider, briefly, some broader dimensions which must be included in a fuller analysis of either the doing of requests or of the doing of teaching. There are three different sources of problems in communication in addition to the complexities already cutlined: (1) historical; (2) normative expectations about language, and; (3) those

inherent in language itself. I have discussed elsewhere (1969b; 1969-70) the obstacles to communication introduced by lexical, phonological and semantic variation -- I want here to simply indicate some problems arising from the first two, somewhat more sociological, facets of language interaction.

The first set of problems, which might be labelled as inter-personal or inter-group specific, concerns the history of relationships between persons or groups prior to a particuler attempt at communication. Either outright hostility or simply the absence of trust between parties in an encounter can prevent successful communication. There need not be sharp discrepancies of status or power among those interacting; hostility among those of equivalent status and power can cause distortions. We all know people who others seem to understand but who never say anything intelligent -- to us. To paraphrase, "None is so deaf as he who will not hear." The relevance of this dimension must be seen as particularly important in the teaching situations in which many of you operate (although it can also have a substantial impact on probable outcomes in request situations -- "Don't you dare ever ask me to do anything for you again!"); this is true both because the teacher-pupil relationship is usually one of sharp discrepancies in status and power and because, in many instances, as in the case of dominant group teacher and minority member pupils, there is a long history of conflictful relations between the groups represented.

A second major source of difficulties in communication is the normative expectations about language held by speakers and listeners. I have touched upon some of these in outlining Hymes' paradigm; there are perspectives which treat with the interaction of more general cultural values (including specific attention to disparate values held by different groups involved in

the educational process, (e.g., Leacock: 1968, several of Labov's publications [1970a; 1970b; Labov, et al: 1968] and several of the papers in Williams: 1970); I want to speak here primarily about general evaluative norms about language use. Sub-cultures and societies may place different values of speech skills and speech performance. While all of us here like to talk, and while we may sometimes talk about how others talk, I submit that talking and evaluation of talk are not as important for middle-class white Americans as they are for other groups in the American population, or for members of other societies (Albert: op.cit.). I believe, for example, that Black Americans are far more interested in speech than white Americans, far more aware of subtle differentiations in speech skills, and far more likely to use speech both in maintaining group solidarity and boundaries as well as in intra- and inter-group conflict.[4] There appears to be more covert content in Black speech as addressed to whites than vice versa, there appear to be more subtleties (and rewards for skills) in speech within the community itself. There are, moreover, some groups within our society which value adherence to styles of discourse more than they value effectiveness of communication (I have even heard that there are some sociologists who would rather say something elegantly read "professionally" than to say it clearly). There are, I have been told, teachers who value proper grammar (i.e., usage) and "good English" more than the skilled use of a trenchant metaphor. There are also groups whose members will use in-group codes for reasons of loyalty, even though this may bar effective communication with outsiders.

There may also be normative expectations specific to particular kinds of interaction -- like doing requests or doing teaching or learning. I have time for only one example, from the content of classroom teaching. I was surprised, a few years ago, to discover that most English language teaching

books in the lower grades had nothing to say about talking and listening. One of the better books, however, had a number of index entries on listening. In checking these entries I found the following instructions for listening to a story (Sartain, et al: 1966, Teacher's ed.: 105):

1. Sit quietly and look at the speaker
2. Listen for interesting words.
3. Follow the story carefully so that you can ask questions about anything in the story you do not understand.

It occurs to me, in contemplating this list, that it may include injunctions to violate different norms which members of some groups have viz., in some groups looking directly at a speaker, particularly one of higher status, is considered rude; in some groups enjoyment of a story (or any other presentation) is expected to be shown by expressive behavior (including, e.g., laughter, verbal affirmation, kinesic activity) and clarifications can be sought as the presentation is being made rather than afterwards. Each of you, I am sure, could further elaborate my point.

A universal grammar of social interaction:[5] I hope that the discussion above has shown that while social interaction is indeed complex and variable, it is also ordered and subject to specifiable constraints and rules. It is clear that these rules and constraints can be specified for interaction within societies -- I suspect that this is what ethnomethodologists do when they analyse doing conversation or doing talk; I think this is implied when anthropologists and sociolinguists gather to do conferences on the ethnography of communication; I believe this to be the direction that Erving Goffman is moving in as he becomes more and more precise in his delineations of Strategic Interaction or Relations in Public Places. In this paper I have suggested what the shape of a final description of doing

requests might look like in our society and have commented in passing on some elements of similar descriptions of doing teaching and doing learning. Ethel Albert (op.cit.) has given us the beginnings of such descriptions for doing requests (and other activities) amongst the Burunda, indeed many social scientists from a variety of disciplines have been providing data for such descriptions for many years. I am interested in the possibilities of a universal syntax of social interaction. In recent years I have become increasingly convinced that the varieties of behavior described by scholars who have studied questioning, or teaching, or learning in different societies may obscure -- in their richness -- the probable existence of a set of underlying principles and relations which hold for all such behavior -- however different surface manifestations may be.

I suspect, in short, that there are interactional universals for all societies and interactional rules for individual societies in a fairly precise analog to linguists' rules for languages and rules for language. Yet, I seem to observe that ethnomethodologists and students of educational practices get themselves so involved in working with surface structural representations of social interaction (including pedagogic techniques) in American society (or some social dialectical equivalent) that they have failed to look for social interactional universals and for the transformations which, in different societies, generate different surface manifestations. I find much of the work of Garfinkel and Sacks and their colleagues persuasive for the social categories which they study. I am not persuaded that similar manifestations would be found in other societies although I am persuaded that there are similar underlying representations.[6]

Let me suggest another brief example. The sociologist Georg Simmel (1950) asserted that it is possible to make an analytical distinction

between the forms which interaction takes and the content of any given interaction. The forms can be discussed and understood in the abstract, without regard to the personalities or other characteristics of the particular incumbents in the particular roles involved. Simmel identified four such forms: competition, conflict, accommodation, and assimilation. I want here to say something only about one particular mode of accommodative relationship (for a fuller discussion, see Grimshaw: 1969a; 1970).

Accommodation, which is the characteristic form of interaction between potentially conflicting parties (or groups or individuals) in all societies in periods when there is no open conflict, can, like all forms of interaction, be discussed and analyzed without reference to characteristics of the parties involved. The classic accommodative relationship of superordination - subordination -- which can be exemplified on the group level by such relationships as nobility and vassals and on the individual level by such role pairs as master and slave, officer and enlisted man -- or teacher and pupil, is one in which it typically is expected that demands and directives flow in one direction and deference and compliance in the other (there are exceptions, I have discussed these elsewhere (loc.cit.)).

I think that Simmel probably identified a social interactional universal when he named the relationship of superordination-subordination. I also think, however, that the content of the relationship (viz., that social behavior which we label as compliance and deference or as directives and respect demands) may be, on the surface, quite different in societies and/or cultures other than those of mainstream, middle-class, White America. There may be, for example, societies in which superordinates manifest politeness behavior and formulate demands in deferential request formats but where outcomes in complying behavior are quite similar. There are societies in

which subordinates always agree to requests and respond affirmatively to certain kinds of queries -- even if they know they cannot accomplish the performance requested or do not know the answer. There may be social groups in which silence is always read as acquiescence if there is reason to believe that the requestee has heard the request. I submit that very frequently school teachers in our society, confronted with polite children who say "Yes'm" and then don't do what they have apparently agreed to do, or with other children who don't answer at all but then go ahead to do as asked -- may be dealing with members responding to cadences of differently orchestrated rules and constraints (social transformations?). If this is true, and there is considerable evidence that it is, the intriguing question then becomes, what are the different transformational rules which modify the similar underlying structures of power (or whatever) into quite different observed social behaviors.

The kinds of things being done by ethnomethodologists and ethnographers of the classroom (in our own society) are interesting and taxonomically useful. Only when we do the necessary comparative work in other societies and in subgroups within our own society can we begin to tell whether or not we are moving toward the statement of universals of any sort.[7] Only when we realize the possibility of different sets of transformations working on the same underlying structures, and all of the potentialities for interference which such a perspective implies, can we begin to answer the kinds of questions which bring us together. I might note, moreover, that this is not a counsel of despair. I find Labov's work (1969) on the rules of NNS as simply additions to Standard a positive encouragement. I think that in interaction we may also find that there are similar supplementary rules and simple deletions.

Rules, rule violations, bi-culturalism, cultural deprivation and all that: There is neither time nor need for me to review the rise and fall of theories of cultural deprivation; as is frequently the case, William Labov has provided us with a trenchant critique in his 1970 paper, "The logic of Nonstandard English." In his demonstration in that paper and his earlier treatment (1969) of the rule-governed character of copula deletion, Labov has emphasized the nature of differences and similarities in language use, emphasizing the importance of social context primarily to demonstrate: (1) that in natural settings black children are fluent and capable of generating well-formed English sentences, and; (2) that the utterances used by deficit theorists to demonstrate lack of language skills are themselves logical and well-formed sentences. While Labov has mentioned social structural constraints (including relations of superordination-subordination) in explaining the inability or unwillingness of these children to produce fluent speech for white investigators in school settings, he has not undertaken the specification of the analagous and equally systemic sets of social interactional rules which govern other aspects of these children's behavior in school and outside of it. I am proposing attention to these grammars of social interactional rules -- which must also be identified and explicated before we can expect success in attaining the goals of TESOL and other well-intending organizations working in the field of education.

To put it bluntly, if you will accept my argument that doing teaching and doing learning are governed by systems of rules and that these rules differ for different social groups, and if you will agree that we do not at this time know what the systems of rules are and the ways in which they differ; then you must also tentatively accept my hypothesis that one of the reasons for consistent pedagogic failure lies in the fact that we are

continually putting children in situations where they are being asked to violate one set of rules in order to fulfill the demands of another. We find this even within the white middle class, when children visiting across families are confronted with situations in which they are encouraged to eat dessert by families which don't have "meal finishing rules" or where there are variations of "children should be seen and not heard" or in other more general rules about permissiveness or its lack. If we observe this about our own children, some of whom at least are unafraid enough to speak up and point out the contradictions to us, how can we fail to recognize that similar and more fundamental contradictions may exist where children who have not grown up learning our rules are placed under our supervision. The problematic character of the learning situation for black children has, because of its saliency and because of the growing articulateness of complaints from within the black community itself, become a part of the consciousness of many teachers. But, if we have failed even with this incipient awareness, how much more tragic may the situation be with Chicano or American Indian children.

I won't belabor the point. I hinted in my opening remarks that you should be wary about injunctions not to pay too much attention to linguists, working in their ivory towers. I'll come back in a moment to the question about ivory towers. My point here is that it is in their attention to the rule-governed character of human speech, and the implications that such a perspective has for sending us on a search for other sets of rules, that linguists may be making their most important contribution to your pedagogic concerns.

A concluding miscellany: The issues that you people have gathered to discuss, and the unanswered research questions which can be generated out of an examination of these issues, are so interesting that I feel a sense of

frustration at having to come to a close before I have inflicted more of my views on you. I'm sure that some of the many fascinating aspects of definitions of and research into problems of pluralism, bi-culturalism, bilingualism -- and ethics -- will have been discussed by other panelists before I read this paper. But, in closing, I will once again presume upon your enforced hospitality to deliver myself of some reactions to the one paper I had seen before writing my paper and to speak, ex cathedra, about some possible ethical implications of some of the kinds of work which is going on in your field.

I suppose academic tradition requires that papers opening plenary series should be exhortatory and that positive counter-trends can be overlooked in order to make the point that everyone should work harder and with more rigor. As an outsider, I was grateful for Professor Wardhaugh's brief review of the history of TESOL and of the various currents which must have made this an exciting organization (1972). As a sociologist I was interested in what he had to say about what linguists, both pure and applied, and social scientists more generally, could contribute to solution of the problems with which you are concerned. Finally, as a citizen interested in social policy I was interested by what he had to say about the necessity of directly confronting the political character of those same problems.

With regard to Professor Wardhaugh's somewhat hyperbolic characterization of linguistics -- hyperbolic because he had a point to make -- I find myself in the curious position of wanting to defend what at least some linguists are doing as being critically important in your search for solutions. Curious because I myself have been critical of some linguists for failing to be sufficiently attuned to the importance of social context in language behavior -- not so curious when I reflect on the tremendous influence

which the work of several sociolinguists (and even "pure" linguists) has had on my own thinking.

First, in my own view, as contrasted to Wardhaugh's, it seems likely that theoretical perspectives which incorporate notions such as deep and surface structure, transformations, and competence and performance are critically relevant in "deciding how to teach a Puerto Rican child in New York how to speak English." I have tried to indicate above that it is critical that we think in these ways about the social interactional rules for doing teaching and doing learning; I believe there is ample evidence that those who Professor Wardhaugh has characterized as "theoretical linguists" have, by their continuing insistence that we can't take positions on how language is to be taught without knowing that language is, kept your field from being in an even more disastrous state than it is. What would have happened if "theoretical linguists" had not produced evidence to counter the naive misconceptions of language which are part of the so-called "deficit theories"? What would have been the practical implications of accepting Bereiter and his colleagues' characterization (Bereiter-Engelman: 1966; Bereiter, et al: 1966) of "They mine" and "Me got juice" as if those speaking "had no language at all"? It has, in fact, been the work of theoretical linguists doing research on actual language which has kept the field from turning into one where some of the best ideas might have seemed to come from "Popular Mechanics, True Confessions and Reader's Digest."

Similar dramatizations and over-simplifications run through Professor Wardhaugh's presentation, devaluing many important points that he does make. Thus, it is simply not the case that linguist's solution to reading and speaking problems is to teach children in non-standard dialect or through some transition from some nonstandard to standard English.[8] Again, it is simply

not the case that learning theory has made negligible contributions to what goes on in the classroom. Without taking sides in the Chomsky-Skinner debate (it is probably safer to watch from the sidelines in any event), we must at least acknowledge the kind of imaginative work which has been done, for example, by Hamblin and his associates (1971). Their work suffers, unfortunately, from the sorts of defects which are concomitant with just the kind of uninformed rejection of, or lack of knowledge of, the work of theoretical linguists that Wardhaugh seems to recommend. Finally, in defense of another group which serves as a reference group for me, I simply cannot accept Professor Wardhaugh's characterization of anthropologists as studying "primitive" peoples as being anything other than hopelessly outdated -- if it was ever true.[9] Statements such as his seem only to validate his own sense of too little communication.

Finally, I do agree with Professor Wardhaugh that members of TESOL, like social scientists and others sharing interests in issues of public policy, must not retreat from making political responses to political issues. Politicization <u>is</u> a cost (or a reward) which must be paid for relevance. The stakes are so great, however, that we must base our arguments or counter-arguments on <u>data</u> (and on empirically testable theoretical formulations) -- not on impressions, and not on some simplistic ethic either pro or con pluralism or assimilation. It would behoove us to remember that the costs of wrong decisions are likely to be paid by the populations we purport to be helping and defending -- not by us or by our children (except in the longer run in which all pay).

With regard to my last homily, I'll conclude with one final example. About a year ago I attended a workshop on student-teacher communication sponsored by a research organization developing a training curriculum for

teachers involved in working with children who come from homes where standard English is not routinely spoken. Those designing the project started from the correct assumptions: (1) that the classroom situation is one (generally) dominated by the teacher and; (2) that most of these teachers have pretty well internalized a set of expectations about how that control is to be used in doing teaching and doing learning. The training curriculum which was being designed by those on the project was intended to discover ways of possibly reducing the gulf between teachers and their pupils. Among the many techniques which were to be examined was to have teachers take classes which would be taught in NNS or in Puerto Rican "dialects" and in which they would be "corrected" for lapsing into Standard (and, presumably, for violating social interactional norms as well). These, and other techniques, were intended to make teachers more sensitive to some of the different kinds of rules (linguistic and social interactional) to which I have been referring throughout this paper.

And here I come full circle. Those planning the project explicitly stated that their program was not designed to provide "tools for more effectively teaching children to fit the teacher's norms (e.g., teaching Standard English)." Yet, it must be obvious to anyone who gives serious consideration to possible outcomes that it is much easier to change the behavior of others if you understand the values which support the behavior you want to change. Those in the project assumed that the teachers they wanted to train would share their goal of enhancing communicative effectiveness; they did not stop to consider that at least some teachers might simply use the new techniques taught them to further a different set of goals -- the extirpation of undesirable and uneconomic ethic speech and ethic social patterns. Let us be sure that we understand our own values and the implications of applying our new learning.

Thank you!

FOOTNOTES

*I am grateful to Charles Bird, Hugh Mehan, and Owen Thomas for their critical readings of an earlier draft of this paper and for intellectual stimulation in continuing discussion of the issues under consideration. They are not to be held responsible for my opaquenesses and obstinacies (they would not accept such responsibility in any event!).

1. To say that behavior is rule governed can mean several different things. It can mean that there are statistical regularities in behavior which can be captured in "if . . . then" propositions. It can mean that there are normative implications; that rules say how people "ought" to behave. It can mean that "natively competent" members of a social group don't behave randomly; that their behavior is derived from shared understandings which simultaneously govern their own behavior and their interpretations of the behavior of other members. In this paper I use the term in the last of these senses. For relevant references see Footnote 5.

2. Blau (1964) believes that doing requests occurs within an exchange nexus and that the cost in deference (for the requestor) interacts with satiation with deference (for the requestee) to reduce the likelihood of extended patterns of intra-dyadic one-way requesting. Because of the costs in deference he believes that status superiors are not likely to ask for advice or help from those junior to them. My own experience in asking for expert assistance wherever and from whomever I can get it suggests that Blau's perspective is culturally or subculturally bound. See also, Homans (1950) and, for a more complete analysis of certain kinds of requests, and refusals, Goffman (1971).

3. Hymes, in a personal communication, notes that original copy for the 1967 article read aCt, not aRt, characteristics -- but that misprint makes sense. A tribute, perhaps, to aesthetic richness of Hymes' thought -- or the convergence of the universe of sociolinguistic considerations?

4. "In Black society we not only have a unique means of communicating with one another, but also a means of alienating those to whom we do not wish to speak. Our language is filled with rich abstract metaphors which when taken from their proper cultural context are destroyed. Example: Uptight originated in the Black community and came from a musical context.

It meant one soulfully had his things together. Since then, uptight has been usurped by white society and made to mean something like nervous and psychologically unstable."
(From a freshman examination answer in introductory sociology, 1968, cited in Grimshaw: 1969-70.)

5. For some years I have been attempting to comprehend what such a grammar (or what Hymes has called a "unified theory of sociolinguistic description") might ultimately look like. Over the years I have been profoundly influenced in this work by the pioneering efforts of John Gumperz, Dell Hymes and William Labov -- both through the extensive corpus of their published and unpublished work and through exposure to their penetrating insights in many exciting conversations and rich educational correspondence. I have also found the work of Erving Goffman to be a highly valuable source of new ways of looking at patterned social behavior. While I have not always agreed with their conclusions, I have found in the work of the ethnomethodologists a rich collection of data and some extremely perceptive insights. Amongst the latter group I should perhaps single out Aaron Cicoural, with whom I have had a number of interesting conversations in recent years, and Hugh Mehan, who as a colleague and co-teacher this year has forced me to bend my mind in new ways.

I would need to write a separate essay to even suggest the richness of the activity in which these several scholars are engaged. It will not be possible here to provide even a representative sampling of their work. The following citations can, however, provide a beginner's introduction to this timely and important topic (I have not included references to an equally interesting and relevant literature in linguistics proper): Churchill: n.d., Ciccurel: 1967; 1969; 1970a; 1970b, Douglas: 1970, Garfinkel: 1964; 1967, Goffman: 1956a; 1956b; 1959; 1963; 1969; 1971, Grimshaw: 1967; 1969b; 1969c; 1969-70; 1972a; 1972b, Gumperz: 1964; 1970; 1971, Gumperz and Hymes: 1964; 1972, Hill and Crittenden: 1968, Hymes: 1964; 1966; 1967, Kjolseth: 1972, La Barre: 1964, Labov: 1968; 1970a; 1971, Labov, et al: 1968, Mehan: 1971; 1972, Ostwald: 1964, Potter: 1947; 1950, Sacks: 1966; 1967, Schegloff: 1968, Simmel: 1950.

6. It can be argued that this is not a fair characterization of the intent of the ethnomethodologists; several of them, particularly Cicourel

(see citations in Footnote 5, supra.) are attempting to identify underlying rules defining members' competence in all societies. Not all have been as successful as Cicourel; some seem to have become entangled in the fun task of unravelling the richness of surface behavior. For an interesting discussion of the difference between surface and deep structural rules in social grammar see Mehan: 1972. In a forthcoming paper (1972a) I have attempted to explore more fully some of the similarities and dissimilarities among linguistic, sociological, and sociolinguistic rules - both universal (extrasystemic) and categorical (intrasystemic).

7. It is possible that Goffman is moving in just such a direction as he gets deeper and deeper into micro-interaction (as in the Strategic Interaction book) -- I will not be surprised at all if he comes to the point where he begins to devise a formal notation and starts to look for transformational rules. My more immediate concern is that there is a danger that sociologists who start to work with speech (particularly extended speech events) may get hung up in the same taxonomic bind that entrapped historical and structural linguists. I am hopeful that we (sociologists) can avoid that trap by learning how linguists themselves have overcome their long tradition (I continue to be struck by the differences in linguistic work of only two decades ago -- this will be true even if much of the Chomskian revolution succumbs to revision. I am sure that some kind of formal activity will continue -- whatever the outcome of disputation over whether transformations can change meaning.).

8. In addition to the work of Labov there is that of, inter alia, Baratz (see especially 1972), Shuy, and Stewart. I do not include references to this work which will be well known to readers. The controversial nature of the discussion is nicely captured in articles by O'Neil (1972) and Sledd (1972) which I recommend to all readers of this article.

9. Note, for example, the papers listed in the 1971 program of the American Anthropological Association.

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