CONTRASTIVE PRAGMATICS

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While the direct introduction of contrastive studies into the classroom is generally recognized as folly, and it is agreed that a contrastive study must undergo amplification before it can be applied (cf. Fisiak 1980 : 11), there seems to be a gray area between the contrastive study of the linguist and the practical materials of the teacher. Work with two completely unrelated languages spoken by people of widely divergent cultures can highten awareness of divergent language usage. It then becomes obvious that, with the production of a contrastive study, the linguist's job is not finished.

When Hall (1973 : 38) refers to language as "one of the dominant threads in all cultures", this implies that language is a part of culture, not a separate entity. In the field of language teaching, the consequences of this are seldom dealt with openly. On the one hand, children soon learn that what they say is less important than how they say it in the language class. On the other hand, under the pretext that the sentences of the lesson serve only to demonstrate grammatical rules. German children are given the expression "die guten Eltern" to practice German declension (cf. Roehler 1970 : 81). Obviously the culture is being taught along with the language.

When a foreign language is the subject of study, culture will be taught as well, but which culture? In "Sally, Dick, and Jane at Lukachukai" (Evvàrd et al. (1974 : 25–28)), the inappropriateness of the transfer of urban middle class cultural content to the Navajo Indian Reservation is shown clearly. Problems stem not only from the fact that many of the objects (such as street lights and skyscrapers) are outside of the children's experience, but that the whole culture, along with its unspoken assumptions. is completely different from what the child knows. Dealing with a foreign culture in a foreign language, the child is doubly disadvantaged, because he often has no way to find out what it is that he doesn't know, and sometimes doesn't even suspect that

there *is* something he doesn't know. An Apache child dealing with the sentence "the dog jumped on the sofa" (presuming he can understand the words) would have a completely different picture in his mind than the non-Apache writers of the materials — for the child, since dogs do not belong in houses, but sofas are often put outside, the scene takes place out of doors. Thus it would seem that the culture of the producer of the materials is the basis, but it is not quite so simple. If the producer knows something of the culture of those who are to use the materials, he may be willing to incorporate this knowledge into the materials — perhaps, for example, by providing the sentence above with an illustration of a dog on a sofa in front of a typical house. The result, unfortunately, is a tutti-frutti culture—true neither to the one nor to the other, for when cultural differences are not known, the producer will fall back on what he knows best, his own culture.

A solution is possible if, instead of ignoring or avoiding these problems, they are made part of the content of the course. If the learners are made aware of the differences between the cultures, if they learn to compare the meanings as well as the grammatical forms, they will understand both better.

The proposed solution is not new — Lado included the comparison of cultures as an important part of cross-cultural linguistics in 1957. But as he and others have pointed out, this is not easy, and will take time. The examples he then gave seemed to point to culture as something related only indirectly to language (e.g. bull fights or patterns of sleeping habits). If, however, language is seen as a part of culture, it becomes obvious that the linguist cannot compare languages without comparing the cultures in which they are spoken.

Experience gained while working with the White Mountain Apache Indians to develop a bilingual bicultural program[1] illustrates some important categories in the analysis of cross-cultural communication. For the purposes of this paper, it must suffice to trace some examples of divergent language usage (including the use of silence) as part of the socialization patterns of the culture, along with those organizational features that are important in the classroom. The following categories are neither exhaustive nor postulates for communication analysis in all cultures, but they offer themselves as a starting point for a better understanding of Apache methods of communication.

Greetings, including introductions, and leave-takings, present among the Apache a very different picture than that which is often used in the first lessons of language text-books. As Basso (1971 : 151—161) has pointed out, in many cases greetings are expressed by silence, and there is no Apache equivalent of "hello" that is used in the same fashion. Even telephone conversations are often begun with silence, to allow the person called to adjust to the new activity. Furthermore, since names are regarded as terms of reference and there are many rules regarding their use, a person is not greeted by calling him by name (cf. Kluckhohn 1962 : 114 ff), though a relative may be addressed as such: "my sister", "my uncle". In a small group such as the Apaches (there are about 8200 members of the White Mountain Apache Tribe), it is not surprising that people know who even their distant relatives are, and such people, if introduced at all, will be introduced by the term of relationship: "He's my uncle", "She's my sister". But even this is rare, since most people know who the others are unless they have been away for a long time. Whereas introductions are possible, they are infrequent, since it is presumed that those who come together will get to know each other in their own way and will begin to talk to each other if they so desire (cf. Basso 1971 : 153 f). Leave-taking has no specific form, either linguistic or non-linguistic. The greeting, silent though it may be, is a greeting, but when someone decides to leave, he just leaves. He may say something about when he will return, or where he is going, but it is neither necessary nor formalized.

The relationships between people determine in many cases the possibilities and the forms of communication between them. There is a custom of avoidance (for example between mother-in-law and son-in-law), and those who practice this may not talk to each other or even be present in the same room together. In other cases it requires a particularly polite form of speech and the showing of respect. Another example is the joking relationship, which is begun by cross-cousins about the age of puberty (cf. Goodwin 1969 : 205).

Some forms of Apache language usage appear on the surface to be equivalent to the same form in English, and only further observation makes it clear that they are not equivalent. A command in Apache could be better equated with a polite request in English (cf. Liebe-Harkort (1983a) and Liebe-Harkort (1983b)). (There is also an elaborate request ritual which includes the use of the person's name and completely obligates the person thus approached). Another example is the compliment to another person regarding one of their possessions, which must be equated to a request for that object. The other person is under a rather strong obligation to give up the object unless it was given to him by someone else, in which case he will reply "my sister gave it to me".

Other forms are practically missing, such as the use of indirect speech. It may be partly due to the oral tradition of the people that they repeat word for word what another person has said (even if it requires language

switching (cf. Osborn (1974) and Liebe-Harkort (1980))) and partly to their rules of politeness (cf. Liebe-Harkort 1983b). They are also reluctant to advise others of feared negative consequences of that person's intended actions or to ask direct personal questions. And, in fact, conversations are conducted along very different lines of participation and silence.

An analysis of communication within a culture must go beyond this sort of example to make obvious those patterns that must be taken into account in the classroom. The socialization patterns have already taught a child much about what he may or may not talk about and how and with whom he may talk before he enters the classroom, and these rules will operate until he learns new ones. An Apache child, for example, learns patterns of cooperation along lines of kinship — he is taught that he must help his relatives, so seating arrangements in the classroom take on a new meaning. He is taught to avoid eye contact to show respect (which leads frantic non-Apache teachers to think that the children staring out the window are not paying attention).

But much of the socialization of the child can have a more direct effect on how he learns and what strategies can help him to learn more effectively. An Apache child learns that he must not stand out in a group, but must fit in, co-operate. Thus, a teacher who publicly praises a child will find the child anxious never to repeat whatever it was he did that brought about this embarrassing praise. The child has also learned not to try something until he has watched it being done and learned to copy it without making mistakes in public — a very different approach than the "everyone makes mistakes at first, don't worry about it" idea he often finds in the school.

The way information and instruction are presented to an Apache child is also very different from non-Apache methods. Stories form an important part of the Apache teaching process, and the same story is patiently repeated word for word by the parents or elders until the child has understood its meaning and corrected his behaviour. Both the role of repetition and the lack of direct criticism or correction contrast with the normal non-Apache classroom approach.

Work with a minority group that has, in the past, been forced to adopt the language as well as the methods of the dominant society differs in many respects from the more frequent case of learning a foreign language using the mother tongue in local schools taught by members of the same culture. But perhaps the comparison of the organizational categories important in the two cultures of the languages involved can offer a basis that is useful for all contrastive work.

The methods and categories of organization among the White Mountain Apaches are quite different from those of the dominant society around them. They organize feasts lasting four days, in the course of which, without the aid of lists or a supervisor, over four thousand people are fed by one family group.

They organize the teaching of their children so that one thing is taught at a time in great detail and prefer not to cover a variety of similar things briefly. Thus, for example, a book should tell all about one kind of animal, not cover a variety of animals. But comparisons are made along the categories they are accustomed to make. Animals, for example, are organized into groups according to the method of locomotion, not the method of giving birth. Thus, frogs and birds both move through the air and are classed together, while snakes, worms and bugs form another group.

A successful program has been started by some Apaches that is geared towards teaching the children about the differences in the categories and behaviour patterns before the children even begin to learn English. They sort objects according to the Apache category (for example, knives, forks, knitting needles and pencils all belong to a group of objects referred to by one verb (cf. Basso 1968); a book, a ball of yarn, or a piece of cloth would each require a different verb to express the handling of it), and they are then showed how such objects would be grouped in English: Eating implements, handicraft tools and writing instruments, for example. They also discuss how to show respect and politeness in both cultures, and are told that it is all right if they ask questions in the classroom, that it is not impolite when they do it there.

Another feature of such a comparison of categories would include introduction into the native language of certain features that are possible but not traditional. This would help the children understand and be prepared for new activities. For example, while the Apache language has numbers, the idea of repeating the numbers in sequence without reference to specific objects is new. Some things, however, must not be counted (e.g. stars), and the illustrations in the beginning numbers books must take this into account.

While it is very difficult to analyze a culture and recognize in it those differences in categories that are basic, it is often possible to employ an alternate approach. People speak a foreign language with many of the habits of language usage from their native language. This often leads to cross-cultural misunderstanding when the people communicating do not share the same native language. The study of such cross-cultural communication, which N. Enkvist has termed "interactive ethnolinguistics", can provide examples of such transfers as well as a cross check for hypotheses about communication in both cultures.

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