ON THE FEASIBILITY OF PEDAGOGICAL CONTRASTIVE SOCIOLINGUISTICS

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The following considerations originate from the recent upsurge of interest in pedagogical implications of sociolinguistic research. Although the number and quality of the articles on the subject to date are by no means impressive, the general lack of cohesion in the line of research undertaken can be detected.

The underlying claim of the present paper is that no systematic and effective teaching of sociolinguistic facts can be undertaken before a sound methodological basis is worked out.

Generally, the present article is an attempt at pointing out ways of systematic application of sociolinguistic data to the foreign language learning-teaching process. In particular, our aim here is to define the framework within which sociolinguistic contrastive analyses for pedagogical purposes could evolve.

Such a framework would imply the existence of or need for the isolation of pedagogical sociolinguistics from sociolinguistics proper.

The term *pedagogical* can refer to both first and foreign language phenomena (Hartmann and Stork 1972:167). We suggest, however, that in the present article the term *pedagogical* apply only to the learning and teaching of a foreign language.

The term *pedagogical sociolinguistics* (PS) has been proposed, obviously, as an analog to the already widely used pedagogical linguistics. However, extensive modifications should be made as to the range of concerns possibly dictated by the analogy. We suggest that objective of pedagogical sociolinguistics (at least at the present stage of research in the field) should be the circumscribing of the sociolinguistics areas, topics, issues, and phenomena which will be foci of the foreign language material compiler.

It follows that some sociolinguistic facts which may be of utmost significance to sociolinguistics proper are not relevant to the preparation of foreign language materials for teaching purposes.

We will now try to exemplify both pedagogically-relevant and pedagogically irrelevant sociolinguistic facts. For example, the origin of Black English Vernacular (Trudgill 1974) is by no means pedagogically relevant, although it remains a central problem of present-day American sociolinguistics. The methods of isolating contextual styles (Labov 1972) will not be of interest to pedagogical sociolinguistics although the styles isolated and their linguistic correlates obviously will. Deep categories underlying the use of pronous (Brown and Gilman 1972) will have no bearing to foreign language teaching but the surface pronoun system in a particular language and its application will be relevant. Likewise, rules of address, that can be explicitly formulated, (Ervin-Tripp 1973) and those pertinent to other forms of social interaction will be valid.

Thus, PS will aim at selecting only those sociolinguistic facts that can potentially contribute to the native-like mastery of the foreign language. Moreover, this skill seems to be much facilitated when sociolinguistic data is presented to both the teacher and the student in a systematic and explicit way. This, in turn, will be plausible when *sociolinguistic grammars* are constructed.

The estrangement of PS from sociolinguistics proper, as defined above, may be taken to mean the possible emergence of a new discipline. For the time being, however, the term does not claim such a status; it has been tentatively used as a convenient tool for the handling of sociolinguistic data relevant to foreign language instruction.

The relation of PS data to the entirety of sociolinguistic data might be graphically illustrated as follows:
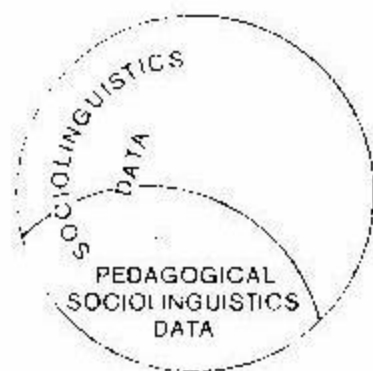
The relation of sociolinguistics to PS, however, will be entirely different since PS is not meant to be a subdiscipline of sociolinguistics but rather an independent domain which gets information from sociolinguistics and applies it in the foreign language learning-teaching process. Graphically the relation might be presented as follows:

The shaded area, which circumscribes the limits of PS, refers to those sociolinguistic facts which are relevant to foreign language teaching (FLT), and to those aspects of pedagogical linguistics which turn out to be relevant to the teaching of the mentioned sociolinguistic facts.

Having defined the term *pedagogical sociolinguistics*, we now turn to the discussion of *pedagogical contrastive sociolinguistics* (PCS). If it is assumed that any study of L_2 involving concern about differences and similarities between L_2 and L_1 is of a contrastive nature, then PCS seems to be a corollary of the existence of PS. This will be true unless we posit the operation of PS with no references to L_1 sociolinguistic structure. In view of the present advances in language didactics such a procedure in turn, would have to ignore, among other things, the inter-language sociolinguistic interference which definitely exists but which has not yet been systematically explored.

In my opinion, which is based to a large extent on impressionistic judgments a study of sociolinguistic interference (both inter- and intra-) would most probably reveal a number of interference categories possibly parallel to those isolated by Richards (1974).[1]

At this point we might tentatively say that PCS is possible, but still a great many questions remain to be raised before the potential student of PCS knows what his field actually is, and what are some of the tasks he is confronted with. If contrastive analysis is to be taken to mean systematic juxtaposition of equivalent and different structures, elaboration on the notions mentioned so far becomes necessary.

As has already been mentioned one of the goals of PS is the isolation of sociolinguistic data relevant to its (PS's) operation. Another target of PS will, however, be systematic application of this sociolinguistic data in the FL learning-teaching process. Such a procedure will be the easiest to pursue once sociolinguistic grammars have been constructed.

A sociolinguistic grammar might be arrived at by means of matching two grammar systems:

1. a linguistic grammar

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[1] Among other categories Richards lists overgeneralization, markers of transitional competence, errors due to strategies of communication and assimilation, etc.

2. a grammar of social interaction (GSI).

A grammar of social interaction would be a finite set of rules on the basis of which an infinite number of social behaviours would be generated, e.g., the grammar of social interaction for language community X might include a rule stating that when two people see each other for the first time during the day they greet each other (it is a categorical rule for Polish and English, and possibly a universal) one. A lower level variable rule would, in turn, prescribe either a verbal realization of the greeting, a non-verbal one, or a combination of the two (in each of the cases a number of options being possible). Grimshaw (1973:104) corroborates the validity of 2.: "I... 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".

Recapitulating, in order for PCS to exist the following line of reasoning has to be accepted:

1. Alongside a linguistic grammar, a grammar of social interaction has to be constructed for each language

2. These two grammars have to be combined to yield a sociolinguistic grammar of, say, language X

3. After individual sociolinguistic grammars for languages X and Y have been formulated, *contrastive sociolinguistics* (CS) singles out equivalent and different relationships

4. PS comes in and utilizes grammatical[2] information for FLT purposes

5. If PS uses data collected by CS then it naturally becomes PCS.

We now turn to the feasibility of Steps 1 through 5. It seems that steps 1 and 2 involve a methodological alternative with regard to the process of combining linguistic grammars and those of social interaction. If we accept the view that legitimate sociolinguistic grammars can be constructed by means of matching linguistic grammars with those pertaining to the social structure, then in a number of languages (those for which relatively complete linguistic grammars have been written) our task is reduced to the construction of grammars of social interaction and then combining the two. Such an approach brings us to define the underlying categories and surface structure relationships of a potential GSI of a language.

Even in a highly heterogeneous society whose overall pattern of language use is extensively diversified regularities can be arrived at. "One may not need to know all the contexts and categories of a community to discern the essentials of its patterns in these regards, but one must know the dimensions on which contexts and categories contrast" (Hymes 1974:158). Countless

situations "in which language activity takes place can be grouped into situations types to which correspond the various uses of language" (Halliday et al 1964:95).

We follow Grimshaw in assuming that a GSI endemic to an individual society would be derived from an underlying universal grammar of social interaction. "I have become increasingly convinced that the varieties of behavior described by scholars who 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" (Grimshaw 1973:107).

The writer of a GSI for a particular social group would thus have to take into account such relationships (which we assume to be universals) as subordination-superordination; possibly universal dimensions such as social distance; criteria for categorizing settings, topics, personnel; and content[3] of actual interaction, i.e., social behavior commonly labeled as deference, compliance, effrontery, acquiescence, etc.

Following Simmel's (1950) model, a sociolinguistic grammar within the approach adumbrated above would involve a three level analysis:

1. Identifying the forms which can be viewed as abstract, e. g. the accomodative relationship of subordination-superordination

2. Matching, in a particular language, the occurring content categories, e. g. compliance, deference, respect demand, etc., with the PS underlying abstract labels

3. Assigning the occurring linguistic forms to the observed social behavior, i.e. identified content categories.

Whatever the outcome of such a behaviour in a sociolinguistic description, the approach outlined above toward the development of a general method or theory in sociolinguistics is found by some scholars to be erroneous since it does not imply natural integration, from the very beginning, of sociological and linguistic facts.

The alternative view stresses that "there must develop a partially independent body of method and theory — what might be termed — ... an integrated theory of sociolinguistic description" (Hymes 1974:74) where no post-

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[2] Grammatical here means "pertaining to sociolinguistic grammar".

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[3] Simmel (1950) differentiates between the forms which interaction takes and the content of an interaction. Grimshaw (1973 : 108) refers to Simmel's model: "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, accomodation, and assimilation". Content, in turn, refers to the actual social behaviour.

descriptive matching but outright integration would be attempted. The integrated theory of sociolinguistic description would account for the "creative language use [which] is often not a matter of a novel sentence, or a novel context either, but a novel relation. Sentences and context may be familiar, the use of one in the other may be what is new" (Hymes 1974:156).

Provided sociolinguistic grammars have been constructed for any two languages (whatever the underlying methodology) CS can commence to function. Having selected the sociolinguistic information relevant to FLT (cf. p. 18), PS, in turn, introduces the collected data into the learning-teaching process.

Before PCS is clearly defined in terms of its immediate goals we have to refer to CS which has not emerged yet, and which we need in the form of a systematic analysis of different sociolinguistic systems. As Higa (1971) points out, information on the use of relational utterances[4] is indispensable for successful FLT. Since gross differences in the use of these utterances can be detected among languages, for FLT the juxtaposition of the two systems pertaining to L_1 and L_2 is found to be of paramount importance. With regard to relational utterances Higa says: "Contrastive sociolinguistic studies can determine how universal or culture-specific these factors of relational utterances are that are found in one language" (Higa 1971:216).

The question that has to be asked at this point is whether the scope of CS would go beyond the sociolinguistic facts that are of interest to PS. If we define CS's goal as discovery and explicit elicitation of differences and similarities between two sociolinguistic grammars, then the answer to the above question would be negative. If, however, CS extends its concerns to exogrammatical (cf. note 2) phenomena the answer would be positive. In other words, if CS is concerned with the entirety of sociolinguistic data, then, a large part of CS data will be irrelevant to PS, and by extension, to PCS.

If the former concept of CS is accepted then PCS can come into being only after CS juxtaposes two sociolinguistic systems (with the descriptive limits mentioned) and points to entities of equivalence or those exhibiting differences.

Thus we are getting to the final definition of PCS in terms of its objectives. PCS is meant to be an approach within PS which would aim at effective utilization in the FLT process of the systematically presented data included in the field of CS (the scope of CS's concern not going beyond sociolinguistic grammars). The existence of CS will be possible if the conditions pertaining to the ordering of data collection and rule formulation, listed above, are met.

Throughout this paper we have been referring to linguistic, socio-interactional, sociolinguistic, and contrastive sociolinguistic grammars. Although the implications may have been those of a necessity of first completing the grammatical[5] description at a particular level of operation, and only later passing on to the next level, the author is fully aware of the present futility of such endeavor. How could we possibly think of complete sociolinguistic grammars if linguistic grammars are incomplete let alone grammars of social interaction, which do not exist at all?

Does it mean, then, that the field of central interest to us — PCS, cannot come into being untill those complete source grammars have been constructed? Obviously not.

As is known, contrastive studies have been taken up although no complete grammatical information on the languages contrasted has been provided. Likewise PCS can start operating on the fragmentary sociolinguistic data whose collection is being encouraged or which, in some isolated cases, has already been gathered.

A note must be made of the relationship of PCS to *language didactics*, a label assigned to the general theory of language teaching. Unlike pedagogical linguistics, which does not concern itself with the exolinguistic aspects of human communication but only implements theoretical linguistic descriptions in the FLT process, language didactics collects linguistic, psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic and pedagogical information, and incorporates all of these kinds of information in its working procedures.

In this way, it can be seen that PCS along with pedagogical psycholinguistics (?), psychology of learning, and other disciplines relevant to FLT are complementary to one another and thus subordinate to the more general and allinclusive language didactics.

Being aware of the hindrances and difficulties that PCS faces we should not get discouraged, however. On the contrary, we should follow Bickerton (1973:18) who, while being cognizant of the difficulties underlying the construction of polylectal grammars, says: "One could, like some linguists..., spend forever discussing where and how to start, it seems more useful simply to get started".

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[4] Higa differentiates between *factual statements* and *relational utterances*. The former are those by means of which the speaker does not particularly attempt to relate himself to any other person, e. g., *The sun rises in the east; The lion is a mammal*, etc. The latter "are utterances which assume that there is a listener and the speaker is relating himself to the listener" (Higa 1971 : 211), e. g., *Good morning, hi, so long*, etc.

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[5] Here *grammatical* is an overall term which may pertain to linguistic, socio-interactional, or contrastive sociolinguistic grammar.

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