

THE ACTIONS OF SPEECH

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‘Language is as it is because of what it has to do. M A K Halliday in ‘Language as Social Semiotic.’ pg. 19

‘...we have to use discourse to render meaningful every aspect of our social, cultural, political environment...’ Jan Blommart in Discourse pg. 4

‘...*language symbolizes cultural reality*’ Claire Kramsch ‘Language and Culture’ pg.3

‘One of the principal uses of language is to communicate meaning, but it is also used to establish and maintain social relationships.’ Bernard Spolsky ‘Sociolinguistics’ pg. 3

INTRODUCTION

The above excerpts come from four authors involved in the issue of language and its relationship to societal structure and form the basis of what this paper endeavors to deal with. It is undeniable that the formation of children into social adults (fully-functioning members of a society) is what language is all about; indeed, it is the cardinal way in which various patterns of living are learned by a person. Through this process an individual learns the proper way of acting in diverse situations with differing purposes and with different conversational partners. In this process of interactions, people establish and make personal relationships with others that, in turn, form their basis towards becoming ‘social beings’ (See ‘Language as Social Semiotic’, Halliday 1992).

Let’s start with the term ‘*sociolinguist*’. A scholar of this bent is one who is greatly concerned with the manners in which members of any given ‘*speech community*’ respond to or identify with differences in language use because of economic/social/religious and/or political divisions and/or issues. They believe that any study of language *MUST* go beyond the sentence level. Dell Hymes has proposed that ‘*ANY*’ communicative act (building upon the model of Jacobsen) must necessarily consist of numerous (7) very distinct features: for example, the speaker/hearer and

writer/reader and also included herein are the emotive or expressive style employed, as well as referential or denotative functions that manifest themselves. Each of these features contains within it a plethora of meanings. Each *'MUST' be understood by both the user and the recipient in order for accurate communication to continue in an orderly and mutually understandable manner.*

Each exchange of communication further involves 'turn-taking' and designations of 'who has the floor'. Silence sometimes offers a door through which the other can 'take over command' of the conversation. However, even here, the speaker can hold onto his/her role (leader) through the use of so-called 'turn-holding' devices such as 'ummm..' which indicate that ones speaking 'turn' is not yet over.

Also of importance here are 'politeness' factors which, in their simplest form indicate (by the speaker) the 'rights' the listener has in a given verbal exchange. Through polite expressions also, requests are made. These differ from 'orders' in the sense that they are most often begun with polite expressions such as, 'Could/would you (do something). e.g. Could/would you please hand me that?

Another component to be considered is the use of 'formality' inherent in any given exchange. This is closely related to 'style' which implies the manner of speaking that is employed. Register and use of/avoidance of 'slang' dependant upon the participants in any form of discourse are involved herein. Choice of words that depend upon the age/gender/social position (e.g. boss or employee) group identifying features (e.g. word/expressions used by certain group members that indicate membership within a certain group, that is black, female, sport team members, or gay/straight persons. By simply employing terms that indicate position and/or group membership, conversations take a distinct form. Virtually all people use such devices when verbally interacting with another and the resulting conversation constructions reflect these.

It is widely known that children acquire language skills and social conventions through the use of language. 'One of the most revealing opportunities for studying language socialization is in the case of children growing up bilingually, for they manage not to just keep the two languages separate, but to learn quickly which language to use with each person.' (Spolsky: 44).

Related to *bilingualism* is the concept of competence in the languages employed. The term itself implies two (bi) languages (...lingual) All bilinguals have control over two languages. The choice of which language is used for a particular situation (or in a certain skill area) varies in all bilingual situations dependant upon many/numerous factors. (The reader is invited to look at the writings of Arimura and the present author in order to see summaries of the basic tenants involved in bilingualism).

An interesting fact among 'bilinguals' is the concept of 'code switching' where they use

a combination of their two languages when verbally interacting with another bilingual person possessing ability in the *same* tongues. This has been noted by a variety of researchers in the field of bilingualism. Simply put, bilinguals will verbally interact in one (1) way (using one of the two languages), switch to the other for a variety of reasons-linguistic or social, and the use a combination of the two codes, sometimes in the same sentence.

It must be noted at the outset that bilingual competence will vary according to the manner in which the two languages were acquired: the age of acquisition/learning; and the purpose for which the languages were learned. Some were acquired through birth (simultaneous bilingualism) and others learned in a formal way (language instruction).

Also, to be observed is the idea of so-called '*compound bilinguals*' (whose two languages were assumed to be closely related as one was learned *through* the other, thus having them in a more or less 'togetherness' and '*co-ordinate bilinguals*' who learned the two languages in separate contexts and thus, are hypothesized to keep the two separated from each other. 'Recent neurolinguistic research suggests that paired words are stored in the same place in the brains of those who are bilingual from infancy, but in non-overlapping places in those who develop bilingualism later.' (Spolsky: 48). These two divergent examples of '*language contact*' differ and in certain cases cause '*interference*'. This can manifest itself in many different forms subsumed under the rubric of '*code-switching*'. This is a very complex issue in and of itself and space considerations do not allow the luxury of in-depth discussion for the many, many factors involved in this. However, the interested reader should consult the wide variety of literature dealing with this issue.

Language shifting by bilinguals is dependant upon numerous factors ranging from competence to choice. It should also be noticed that language choice is also very much related not just to topic and place/situation but also to roles of the interlocutor(s) in any given situation. 'The selection of a language by a bilingual, especially when speaking to another bilingual, carries a wealth of social meaning. Each language becomes a virtual guise for the bilingual speaker, who can change identity as easily as changing a hat, and can use language choice as a way of negotiating social relations with an interlocutor.' (Spolsky: 50).

The bilingual person has a rich language ability that manifests itself in a wide number of ways, and offers an intriguing source of sociolinguistic study in terms of verbal interactions.

Monolingual (one language) countries are rare in today's world. Take for example, Japan, which occupies one of the cases wherein the population is homogeneous. Despite this reality, it still has linguistic minorities. However, Japanese language remains virtually the only medium in which people can advance. It should be noted however, that it is common, for most countries to have more than one language that is spoken by a significant number of its population. It remains

a fact that most nations today have a great number of speakers of divergent languages.

In these modern times, many are concerned about the extinction of, not animals, fish etc., but languages! Many spoken tongues are *NO LONGER* being taught to children by the parents who speak them in lieu of sole efforts being placed upon the ability of future generations to use the main vernacular of the land. Many practical reasons exist for this ever-growing trend-success in future endeavors wherein a native-like language ability need exists. It remains a fact that certain languages enjoy the prominent position in a country and the young definitely require the main language for success-and '*not some little used language*'. This can be readily seen in the virtual extinction of many native American (Indian) languages wherein the native language is not being taught because of the need for education (ability) in English as is seen in the USA.

Language death is also strongly related to political factors. For example, Turkey bans the use of Kurdish by one of its larger minorities. Other such examples can be seen in such places as Quebec, Canada (French); the Baltic states; Egyptian Arabic use and etc.

Sometimes the so-called '*rights of a language*' to survive are called into question by linguists. Because many languages face '*language loss*', fears of the loss of all native speakers is seen. Concerted efforts are being employed everywhere in effort to avoid language loss. This also is very prominent in the field of sociolinguistics.

'People who speak different languages who are forced into contact with each other must find some way of communicating, a *lingua Franca*.' (Wardbaugh: 59). This is a very interesting concept. The idea that some sort of language must exist when speakers must communicate with each other has led to some amazing realities about the existence of languages that have '*no native speakers*': *pidgin tongues*. A '*pidgin*' language is a tongue that is the mixture of two or more languages. Often the grammatical system employed by one of the languages is used in conjunction with vocabulary (lexicon) from the other(s). In all cases, the grammar takes on a simpler form. It is the result of multilingual situations wherein people communicate with each other through the creation of a '*simple language system*' that permits them to do so.

The earliest origins of a '*pidgen*' no matter what there beginnings are (and this is a complex theory with many divergent possible explanations) are complicated. However, one thing remains clear: '...a pidgin is almost always involved in the earliest stage of a '*creole*'. (Wardbaugh: 78). This occurs in an interracial marriage where *both* parents speak different native tongues BUT speak a pidgin language to each other. The children grow up speaking that pidgin as a native language. This leads to some basic changes. Children acquire the pidgin language as a '1st' language and research indicates that this process of language learning involves the same innate appeal as the activation of first language acquisition. Because it is now no longer just a

language that results from linguistic contact (as it must meet various more complex needs of socialization), it becomes a Creole language. The story becomes even more complex when the acquirers of this Creole (which was based upon a pidgin) come into contact with the language from which the pidgin evolved. This results in the formation of a so-called '*post Creole continuation*' that meets differing levels of stylistic variation. The resultant language is very complex and differs from both the pidgin & Creole tongues of which it was formed and yet, contains many of the features of those languages.

Another topic of great interest in sociolinguistics is involved with the speech of Afro-Americans: Black English. The mode of speaking this way by Black people was, in the beginning, thought to be a non-standardized social dialect that resulted from the time of slavery showing a reflection of social isolation. However, linguists began showing how some 'standard' languages (e.g. Russian & Hebrew) demonstrated many of the same features of Black English (e.g. double negatives; different methods/rules of verb agreement; missing copula and etc.) and made scholars look at it as evidence of coming from an original Creole. This has led to many theories about '*Black English, Afro-American vernacular or Ebonics* for over a quarter of a century.

It is now widely accepted that persons think of and identify themselves as belonging to a given social group (e.g. ethnic/professional/nation/tribe/family etc.) and have acquired very similar ways of looking at the world and evaluating 'things' as a result of their dealings with fellow members of the same groups.

A very interesting aspect of language types that is related to sociolinguistic theory is that of '*diglossia*'. This refers to the fact sometimes with some languages, two very distinct and different forms of the tongue exist. This situation '...exists in a society when it has two distinct codes which show clear functional separation; that is one code is employed in one set of circumstances and the other in a completely different set.' (Wardbaugh: 89). Simply put, this is the contrast between the '*Classical language*' and regional dialectal varieties. Well-known examples include High German (as opposed to so-called Low German); Haiti with French and Haitian Creole; and Greek with a literary variety and a vernacular.

The prestige factor is immense between H & L varieties. *H* (which stands for '*higher*') languages are those used in higher education, formal usage, public use; official usages and any other 'upper' use to which the language is put to. It carries with it a greater prestige of tradition or religion. This type of language is more constant (less subject to change) because of its use in written texts. Generally speaking, the L (lower) varieties are more localized varieties that are more subject to variation and are unwritten. Diglossia refers to societies wherein two distinct varieties of language clearly exist...' using linguistic differences to demarcate the boundaries, and offering

two clear identities to members of the community.’ (Spolsky: 64)

It must be noted that the H varieties are associated with power. The members of a community who *cannot* use them occupy a socially ‘inferior’ section of the nation. L varieties, on the other hand, serve as indicators of a social class/peer or ethnic group.

The use of either variety contains within it vast sociolinguistic information.

All languages are alive and they change in response to alterations in society. Learning/using varieties in language pass on social structure as they are the main way in which socialization takes place. Study of society and language reveal interesting components in the manner in which they influence culture.

As a result, sociolinguistic theory has added the idea of *discourse community* with *speech community*. The former is made up of individuals that employ the exact same linguistic code; while the latter refers to universal ways in which language is utilized by a group to meet the wide variety of social needs that exist. Many scholars involved in this field wonder how it could be any other way; indeed, it is thought that the profound work of formal linguists such as Chomsky (some of whose work concerned itself with the so-called *Ideal speaker/hearer* of the monolingual speech community), can be seen here. This work, like that of Bloomfield, although vital in monolingual studies, has now been assessed by many as NOT taking into account the fact that very few (if any) truly monolingual communities exist at the present time, except for, maybe, some tribal organizations.

In fact, as pointed out in this work, how can anyone actively pursuing a study of language, in reality, ignore the concept of social factors in language as being the main manner in which people interact with one another? Surely, such realities must be investigated: the numerous manners in which they occur and the various methods of expression utilized demand investigation. Indeed, *THAT* is what social use of language use is really all about (*sociolinguistics*).

Psychologically speaking, numerous theories about the development of language in human beings have been put forward. Two of the most prominent ones are the *Nativist* and *environmentalist* propositions. Simply put, the ‘Nativist’ stance holds that there exists a special ‘*language learning*’ faculty (distinct from other learning faculties) in humans. Learning the mother language is ‘something’ that is natural to people and all infants cannot help (barring some physical problem) but to learn the language(s) heard about him. The environmentalist position, on the other hand, contends that *language learning* is really not any different from any of the other manners in which learning (anything) occurs.

Arguments for and against both positions exist but it is generally considered by most linguists/language teachers (the author included) that the ‘*Nativist*’ theory seems most apparent.

Humans, after all, are the only organisms that truly possess the ability to use language. Certainly, however, other manners of communication do exist among some creatures (whales & dolphins). However, the fact remains that even though chimps and/or other members of the ape family, can be *taught* the meaning of various words/signs, only human beings are able to spontaneously produce (and understand) them.

Language must *interpret and express certain elementary relations concerning the roles we take and impose on others* in various situations *AT THE SAME TIME*.

An important prerequisite for even beginning to look at speech interaction is the concept of a ‘*CO-OPERATIVE*’ principle at work in verbal interactions between participants. It is common practice for persons involved in conversations to (not only exchange information) but to say everything (when that is possible) necessary for the successful exchange of information. In addition, the idea of ‘*TRUTHFULNESS*’ is involved. Not only do participants co-operate with each other in information exchanges, but there is also an implied sense of trust in that people (in most cases) speak truthfully. Of course, there are some cases wherein ‘untruths’ are spoken, but humans have laws concerned with ‘fraud’. Consequently, the concept of ‘truth’ on both (all) participants involved is assumed to be conveyed in interactions and it is an important feature of verbal (and written) exchanges.

Language manifests itself in a variety of ways: speaking, listening, reading and writing. Each manner of expression contains a plethora of attempts to explain its theoretical nuances as well as the best means of teaching it to would-be students. However, it is the contention of numerous teachers that the beginnings of language commence with speech. It is, after all, the basis of language. This perhaps cannot be denied and it is the contention of this writer that any work on discourse must start with this premise.

This paper will next deal with a number of both Anthropological and Sociolinguistic elements and the academics involved that are fundamental in the understanding of, and development of, what discourse really entails. It will go on to stress the importance of power in the use of speech.

I

Franz Boas is best remembered in academic circles as an anthropological scholar who, with numerous colleagues, began scientific study of the so-called ‘Native point of view’, that is, culture as experienced by its members and how language was affected by that perspective. The work started by Boas was a result of the criticism that interpretations of differing points of view among cultures was, indeed, the way in which the ‘real world’ operated. It stressed the necessity

of alternative views centering on each individual culture without recourse to the ‘correctness’ of the American mainstream interpretation of virtually all Native American cultures. Prior to Boas’ work all Native Indian cultures were, more or less, looked down upon as being ‘inferior’ to that of mainline American (white dominated) culture. Boas and his colleagues would NOT pass an evaluation on any observed culture maintaining that they were completely able to operate in effective ways and that any differences observed were merely manners of points of view. Therefore, thoughts about other cultures and means of expression utilized within them (language) MUST NOT be presumed to rely upon the ‘needs’ of all cultures (based upon one, single culture’s values). There were vital, crucial, differences in the manners in which, and the values of, each culture. (See Darnell 2001: 113).

This led to the realization that there was a difference in each culture. In short, that there was NO ‘ONE’ CORRECT STANDARD based upon a self-claimed ‘correctness’ of American society: Anthropological realities were equally valid for ALL cultures (see work on the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis).

With regard to this hypothesis, let us take a look at the basic tenants of this idea. ‘The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis makes the claim that the structure of the language one habitually uses influences the manner in which one thinks and behaves.’ (Kramsch, 2008: 11). Whorf contends that English-language based societies (the speakers within them) see the world in a Newtonian sense—that is, governed by a linear time sequence wherein all events are seen as belonging to an objective sequence of events ruled by a system of past, present and future events. In contrast to this, the Hopi people do not see events in a measurable length except in terms of lateness. That is, everything is in terms of some sort of continuation. Consequently, it is difficult for native speakers of the two languages to converse with each other.

The strong version of this hypothesis contends that language strictly determines the manner in which people ‘view’ the world and has lost strength. However, a weaker version of it seems plausible. It is now clearly recognized that among different societies there are cultural differences that are expressed through various semantic associations.

Kramsch, 2008: 14 notes that the Sapir-Whorf led to two vital insights about languages and their relationship to culture:

1. There is nowadays recognition that language, as code, reflects cultural preoccupations and constrains the way people think.
2. More than in Whorf’s days, however, we recognize how important context is in complementing the meanings encoded in the language.

Another reality concerned with interaction between persons has to do with the idea that

signs (things that relate between human organisms and their environment) are ONLY important when they appear together and convey some sort of shared meaning. In short, a *sign* is neither the word itself nor the object but the two are necessarily linked together. However, all parties *MUST SHARE* language and an understanding of the meaning the combination of the word & object have.

One thing that *MUST BE STRESSED* is the reality that ONLY the things held to be important by the ones in power gain '*real*' credence in any given society. History is rife with examples that demonstrate how the 'voice' of the ones in power is heard by society while that of the 'powerless' (classes holding a lower position) are NOT. Thus, values are determined completely by the group at the head of every society.

'1) Culture is always the result of human intervention in the biological processes of nature.

2) Culture both liberates and constrains. It liberates by investing the randomness of nature with meaning, order, and rationality and by providing safeguards against chaos; it constrains by imposing a structure on nature and by limiting the range of possible meanings created by the individual.

3) Culture is the product of socially and historically situated discourse communities, that are to a large extent imagined communities, created and shaped by language.

4) A community's language and its material achievement represent a social patrimony and a symbolic capital that serve to perpetuate relationships of power and domination; they distinguish insiders from outsiders.

5) But because cultures are fundamentally heterogeneous and changing, they are a constant site of struggle for recognition...' (Kramsch, 2008: 10)

Also, of cardinal importance is the view that all cultures possessed validity in the sense that they were really equivalent, and led to advances in the field of sociolinguistics. Discoveries and advances were made by many. They showed that, although there were some differences, virtually ALL cultures employed language in attaining similar ends. That is to say that speech was used for the attainment of congruent and similar goals.

The work of Searle, in his epic, groundbreaking work, '*SPEECH ACTS*' (1969), stands out in the sense of what it mentioned. He discussed a wide variety of purposes in which language was used, drawing upon concepts proposed by Austin, who had dubbed these expressions as 'illocutionary' acts. Examples such as, "state", "describe", "assert", "warn", "remark", "comment", "command", "order", "request", "criticize", "apologize", "censure", "approve", "welcome", "promise", "object", "demand", and "argue".' (Searle, *SPEECH ACTS* pg. 23).

Along these lines, Searle mentions that, in addition to the above listed ways in which languages are employed, there were over a thousand such expressions to be found in English,

alone. The implications of which propose the possibility of other uses (besides those found in English) do exist in other tongues (in theory). After starting with philosophy of language, his work dealt with expressions, meaning & speech acts; the structure of illocutionary acts; reference as a speech act; and prediction. However, the best portion of this work (in this author's opinion) dealt with some problems of fallacies subsumed under the rubric of possible applications: namely, naturalistic; speech act; assertion; meaning & use; problems of reference and deriving "ought" from "is". The reader is heartily encouraged to read Searle's *SPEECH ACTS*. The insights found within this 'philosophy of language' have a great number of implications for speech act theory today. Indeed, this is a 'must read' for all students of the true nature of speech.

Many other scholars have done work in the area of sociolinguistics. Gumperz, Hymes, and Halliday lead the list of the numerous other researchers who have made great discoveries in speech act theory. They are perhaps the most famous but in no way exhaust the many others who have worked in and proposed theories. All languages contain the following, and any study must deal with the following: 1) style-formal vs. informal, jokes, casual chat, language used in the media; 2) language used in varying situations and among certain types of persons, e.g. Doctor/patient; police/complaining person; lawyer/client; store clerk/customer and etc. Socially identified varieties of language that identify persons as a member of a certain group; dialectal varieties of a language; differing 'levels' of class ranking-i.e. words/expressions or manners of speaking or writing; and direct or indirect speech-to name just the major different ways of language expression.

Advances in sociolinguistic theory have also greatly contributed to a deeper understanding of the multifarious factors involved in speech. People are deeply influenced by, not only linguistic-anthropological traditions (as evidenced by the work of Boas mentioned above) but also by scholarly work carried out by Gumperz & Hymes 1972; as well as Bauman and Sherzer 1974; who focused on small communities and certain types of social encounters. Another vein of research concerned itself with the relationship between linguistic and social variables like gender, class and/or racial differences (Dittmar 1996; Sankof 1980, 1988; Labov 1972).

Sociolinguistics has demonstrated that every portion of 'real' language (that is its use) has the following factors inherent within it: 1) situation varieties of use such as when language is employed in various interactions between a lawyer and client; a police person and a citizen; a suspected criminal and law enforcement personnel; talk among peers; doctor/patient interaction and etc. 2) styles-formal as opposed to informal speech; storytelling; jokes and joking exchanges; public speeches; language used in the media, etc. 3) geographical (dialectal) differences that manifest themselves in regional accents; 4) social varieties of language use that indicate class difference and

racial differences and 5) various differences in the chosen mode of communication, e.g. spoken/-written; and direct/indirect. In short, ALL productions of speech will contain all of the above mentioned factors. They will be ‘unavoidably’ produced with a certain accent; gender bias; indicate the age of the speaker as well as the social position held; be bound to a specific domain/situation; possess definite stylistic forms and, most importantly, not only contain linguistic differences and characteristics but ‘social’ ones as well. It is evident that virtually every statement uttered by a speaker indicates something about the person, i.e. male/female/age/level of education/from a certain geographical area/ and membership to a specific racial group. Persons constantly make judgments about interactional exchanges and these lead to descriptions such as ‘humorous’, ‘serious’, and ‘arrogant’, to describe the one that a person is verbally interacting with. In addition, speech acts also show something about themselves. That is, is it serious? A joke? An order? A request? Or what?

The actual kind of relationship between speakers is always indicated by word choice and intonation. Also, one can tell if the speaker is serious, sincere, confident or unsure. Are social rules being followed or broken? Such indexical meanings gleaned from speech interactions are the things that firmly tie usage of language with social/cultural patterns. Such interpretations made in speech interactions that are ‘picked up’ and point to ‘real’ meaning as opposed to mere linguistic exchange. This is the very deep meaning of what language exchanges between people really accomplish and mean. It demonstrates that verbal exchanges are not merely reflections of linguistic factors but also contain within them distinct contextual meanings.

Another factor dealing with the topic of ‘*sociolinguistics*’ is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). From the above, concerned about some of the ‘basic’ conditions/factors that play a vital part in verbal communication, it was clearly shown that linguistic/grammatical issues are not the only things involved in discourse. It has been argued by many, amongst which Halliday & Hymes are perhaps the most well-known, that discourse is very much influenced by societal concerns and is, indeed, conditioned by them. In addition, ‘power’ plays an important part in contemporary societies.

It is an important characteristic of the economic, social and cultural changes of late modernity that they exist as discourses as well as processes that are taking place outside discourse, and that the processes that are taking place outside discourse are substantively shaped by these discourse. (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999: 4)

CDA is investigating the multifarious ways in which society influences discourse- How the two cannot be separated from each other. CDA focuses itself on the points upon which society and language interact with each other. Indeed, much of modern-day research on CDA focuses

itself on the following:

EDUCATION: (See Kress 1996 & Chouliaraki 1998).

GENDER: mainly on women in the media (Talbot 1992)

ADVERTISEMENTS and PROMOTIONAL CULTURE (Fairclough 1995).

RACISM

DISCOURSE OF ECONOMICS

INSTITUTIONAL DISCOURSE

(The above represent only some of the more interesting areas for discourse study. The reader is cordially invited to exam many of the other similar areas noted in

(Blommaert: 26.)

It has been pointed out by many authors that CDA must look at context. Indeed, the conditions under which a conversation (or any linguistic action takes place) must of necessity deal with the many factors that are involved in context, e.g. the relationship between the participants (e.g. teacher/pupil; doctor/patient; lawyer/accused etc.); and the situational setting (what is being requested-thing or advice);

Gumperz has noted how the context in which a verbal exchange takes place is of vital importance. He stresses that this is absolutely essential and influences the manner in which persons 'understand the essentials of verbal exchanges' with each other. Everyone can attest to the fact that they glean 'unspoken' cues from any verbal exchange situation. People can 'tell' how 'things are going' in any exchange. The reason for this is because people give off (provide) verbal as well as non-verbal behavioral indications that are directly related to meaning. This is very directly related to an accurate interpretation and the resultant analysis of speech acts carried on by people verbally interacting with each other. In order for ANY accurate analysis of verbal interaction to take place, context MUST be involved. Indeed, it gives meaning(s) to what transpires. Of course, many would assume that this is a 'given'. But often it is not. Gumperz, noted that people glean quite a number of 'unspoken' meanings according to the context in which they transpire. He has written that '...the recognition of what these [contextual] cues are, how they relate to grammatical signs, how they draw on socio-cultural knowledge and how they affect understanding, is ESSENTIAL (emphasis mine) for creating and sustaining conversational involvement and therefore to communication as such.' (Gumperz, 1992: 42).

All verbal interactions must be investigated from the point of 'power'. It can be seen from a careful study of sociolinguistic factors that the party holding some sort of HIGHER position from a sociolinguistic point of view virtually dictates how/why/and in what degree the various

things that verbally transpire are weighted. Power takes its form in terms of the social positions held by interlocutors. Any and all verbal exchanges, no matter what the *code* employed MUST take this into consideration. The manner in which a power relationship manifests itself is one of vital importance in accurate appraisal of what 'really did transpire' in any given exchange: for example, doctor/patient; lawyer/client; law enforcement/criminal end etc. exchanges will manifest themselves in a wide variety of ways that include a variety of meanings crucial towards the understanding of how/why these exchanges occurred and an accurate meaning of WHY which will impart very important reasons necessary for understanding and how to 'USE' them.

CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to illustrate some of the most important aspects involved in the relationship that exists between language and culture. It has, hopefully, given the reader some insight into the complexity of the inter-relationship existing between society and modes of verbal expression. Any discussion of society *MUST* include of the types of languages employed as well as the relationships that exist between participants between people, their relationship, group membership, purpose of the conversation and etc. Another factor which must be kept in mind is that of *power*. It has tremendous influence on verbal interchanges and must also be borne in mind.

It has discussed very common, vital components: a knowledge of which require an acknowledgement of, in order for a 'TRUE' understanding of speech to be achieved. Language use is subject to differing factors of a diverse nature that are absolutely essential towards understanding WHAT EXACTLY is meant by a certain expression/word use/ style and etc. in a given exchange. Such an understanding is absolutely crucial in accurate interpretation of verbal exchanges in numerous situations.

This paper has only scratched the surface of social language exchange and the reader must remember that much more could have said about each factor involved and that, because of space limitations, selective choice was involved in the selection of the factors discussed in this paper. Indeed, many, many additional items could have been included, and those selected could have been more extensively discussed. Indeed, there are complete volumes that exist which deal with them. With this reality kept in mind, it is the author's sincere hope that the reader will look into the many factors involved, and endeavor to investigate them.

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