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**LANGUAGE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS IN SOCIETY: WITH REFERENCE TO LANGUAGE
AND POWER PART 2**

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ABSTRACT



This paper discusses language and its implications in society. It presents the principles underlying language in society, and it relates to the critical agenda of how language and power influence the adherent cultures and their literary views. If it is held in the ablaze of language theories and its acumen is seen through some of the dominant classes' eyes. The theoretical frameworks for abreast literary works arise from anachronistic anticipation processes, anachronistic literary frameworks, and abnormally angled perspectives on marginal literature and need to be assessed in the modern literary scenario because the relationship between literature and the critical comment that develops about it is never static. Any new literature or literary movement is not only subject to complete critical approaches, but it can also be a powerful tool for modifying new critical methods.

Key words: Language, Power, Society and Literature

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Powerful or dominant people have access to wide range of discourse, styles, content and genres, and control the formal discourse in the meetings with subordinates, issue orders, commands, write reports and various other media discourses. In verbal discourse dominant people make the initiative, set the style of talk, and decide on the topics and recipients of their discourse.

Importantly, power is not only demonstrated in and through the discourse, but it is also a relevant social force behind discourse. More than manifestation of power of class, status, position and group of their members, there is a close relation between power and discourse (Bernstein, 1971-1975; Mueller, 1973; Schatzman & Strauss, 1972).

Power is exercised and expressed through unequal access to styles of discourse, contents and different genres. Control over discourse is exercised in the terms of production of discourse i.e. material production, distribution, articulation and influence. In media organizations, financial and technology aspects in production of discourse is controlled by the owners of newspaper, printing business, television, technology and telecommunication industries (Becker, Hedebro, & Paldán, 1986; Mattelart, 1979; Schiller, 1973). Through budget control, selective investment, recruitment and instructions which can influence the content. And indirect

control over privately operated media is exercised by the corporate companies that help them in advertising and even by the news agents that regularly give them information.

Especially in the mass media, researchers say “symbolic elites” i.e. small group of members such as writer, journalists, artists and academics, exercise exclusive control over the production of discourse (Bourdieu, 1977, 1984; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). They have relative power and freedom in deciding the genre, topics and style of discourse within their domain. They influence the relevance of topic, set agenda for public discourse and manage the type of information to influence who is being portrayed in what way. They create norms, values, morals, beliefs, ideologies and manufacture public knowledge.

However, they operate under constraints by those who manage the organization and often articulate the voice of their masters. Their interests, opinions and ideologies are not much different from those who pay them. Therefore, small groups also exercise exclusive control over production of discourse (Altheide, 1985; Boyd-Barrett & Braham, 1987; Davis & Walton, 1983; Downing, 1980; Fishman, 1980; Gans, 1979; Golding & Murdock, 1979; Hall, Hobson, Lowe, & Willis, 1980).

Control of reproduction of discourse and communication specifically affects properties of discourse such as style, topics and conversational turn taking. It is clear that speakers and social inequality introduce differences in power or control over dialogue discourse. These differences can be noticed in conversation between men and women, educated and less educated, adults and children.

Power differences are more apparent in the case of parents and children discourse in many ways and in most of the cultures. Parent control is expressed in parent-child talk. In stratified societies, low status of children stops them from initiating or discussing certain subjects and also from interrupting conversation with their parents (Ervin-Tripp & Strage, 1985, p. 68).

Authors show that parents directly control the behavior of child through threatening, scolding or directing children in talk. Parents enact indirect control through requests, advice or promises. These differences in parent-child talk are related to power of class (Cook-Gumperz, 1973). Similarly, social demonstrations of power are depicted through various forms of discursive deference (Ervin-Tripp, O'Connor, & Rosenberg, 1984).

In men and women conversation, differences in control over dialogue discourse may be subtle and depend on the situation (Leet-Pellegrini, 1980). When it comes to social position, women work more by showing interest, give topical support or by withdrawing in conflicting situations. Several studies state that men often interrupt women and dominate not only in private conversations at home but also in public conversations such as talk shows on television (Tromel-Plotz, 1984). Men tend to talk more using long and complicated sentences than women who don't get to talk much. Differences displayed in such conversations in social situations are termed as powerless and powerful speech (Bradac & Street, 1986).

In racist talk, what is said about women in talk also holds good for discourse about minority group in many countries (Smitherman-Donaldson & van Dijk, 1987). Dominant people exercise power through verbal abuse and denigration of minority group members (Allport, 1954). In the last decade though there is a decline of verbal racism because of the changing laws and norms, still racist talk exists even today. Different styles of speech that leads to stereotyping and misinterpretation may also manifest racial conflict in the society (Kochman, 1981). Several recent studies on racism show that racist talk, and opinions have become more subtle and indirect but there is not much change to basic racist attitudes (Barker, 1981; Essed, 1984).

Often racist opinions and stories are legitimized by the news media, for instance in reporting minority crime. Choice of words and use of pronouns to identify people such as “them” “those” demonstrate social disparity.

Conversations or dialogues within institutions or with organizations are forms of interaction, and they exercise, expresses or legitimate different power relations (Pettigrew, 1973). Often in such interactions, members will follow norms and rules depending on the context and apparent differences in control different positions such as hierarchy, status or expertise. Another difference commonly shown in daily informal dialogue is that members are generally professionals, experts at their work. Other subgenres of institutional dialogue are Job interviews discourse, organizational discourse and courtroom discourse.

In Job interview discourse, differences in control over dialogue discourse are displayed as metatalk, digressions or side sequences (Ragan 1983). Interviewers often control the pace and progress of conversation, metatalk and digressions through alternative strategies. On the other hand, Job applicants often engage in explaining or justifying their behavior through qualifiers, accounts and unnecessary words. Study on effects of language in job interviews shows that identical applicants are victimized or discriminated because of language accent (Kalin & Rayko, 1980). Studies on women's language style, tag questions and hesitations is characterized as powerless style. Similar results are found in courtroom discourse.

Power or control exercised in court is thoroughly governed by procedures and rules of verbal interaction between participants in the courtroom such as the judge, the defendant and the prosecution (Atkinson & Drew, 1979). Often the use of high technical terminology style of language may be well adjusted among the courtroom professionals but such style of language makes the defendant more subordinate. Power exercised by the prosecution, courtroom control and judgement may show dominance toward the suspect, the defense counsel and the witnesses.

The stylistic power of highly technical jargon shared by the participating legal representatives may be internally balanced among these professionals, but ultimately further subordinates the defendant. The combined powers of indictment by the prosecution, judicial courtroom control, and final judgment may be expected to show in what court officials say and imply dominance toward the defendant, toward witnesses, and even toward the defense counsel. On the other hand, it adds burden on the subordinates such as defendants on their discourse irrespective of the charges levelled against them. Mostly, in courtroom dialogue interaction, defendants have the compulsion to talk when requested to do so and sometimes they have to answer certain questions with yes and or no (Walker, 1982). Defendant cannot refuse to answer or talk because it would be treated as disrespect to court. According to Harris (1984), often questions are used to control the accused or witnesses and importantly, question syntax is found to be helpful in determine appropriate responses. Control over information is enacted by questioning instead of lengthy accounts, which also show control exercised by the questioner.

Conclusion

Hence, questioning procedures and legal power both control the choice of limited speech acts. Clearly, methods of discursive control differ from according to the procedure used for examination. Moreover, in addition to information control, speech acts, sequencing and turn taking, style is an important feature of presentation for defendants (Walker, 1986). Several authors have studied the influence of powerless and powerful styles on strategies of interaction in court and found that powerless style of is marked by use of hesitation, qualifiers, intensifiers and question tags and where as powerful style is characterized by the less use of such features.

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