

**TWO MODES OF THE DEVELOPMENT IN  
DESCRIPTIVENESS OF LANGUAGE  
- REFLECTION OF HETEROGENEITY AND  
HOMOGENEITY OF THE SOCIETY -**

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There exist at least two different modes of the development in descriptiveness of language. In each mode, more emphasis is found in the description on matters occurring, respectively, outside and inside the speaker's metal world. English has acquired high descriptiveness as can be realised in the argumentative function. This is a result of people's experience of cross-cultural communication with others along with their effort of objectifying themselves to encounter the heterogeneity in the society. In Japanese steady and homogeneous society, utterance with the first person expression tends to be useful, since there is less need of verbal communication. Linguistic expressions become situation-tied and culture-tied; presuppositions required by the society are embedded in, and thus limit people's metal world.

**Keywords:** Descriptiveness of language, Interactions among language, mind and society, Context-tied expression, Elaborated code, Restricted code, 'Inside' communication acts, Inner speech.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

All languages started from 'now-ness and here-ness' communication: where a speaker and a listener were together when they spoke about matters emerging in front of them. In this stage of language use, the priority of the expressive (speaker's inner conditions) function (F1) and the appealing function (F2) is high and that of the representational function(F3) is low. F1, F2 and F3 are defined by Buehler(Buehler, 1990). Some languages, however, eventually

acquired the argumentative function which is defined by Popper(Popper, 1972) on the basis of the representational function, while some other languages developed the representational function mainly to express a speaker's subjective world.

This paper discusses why and how this difference has been generated, and aims to get a clue to make all human languages able to incarnate their potential linguistic power.

## 2. DESCRIPTIVENESS OF LANGUAGE

### 2. 1 *Two directions of development*

From our study on spoken English and Japanese, we reached a conclusion that there exist at least two different modes of development in descriptiveness (Ujiie, 1997). One is context-free and is directed to describe matters/events which occur outside the speaker. Another is culture-bound and is directed mostly to describe things occurring in the speaker's mind. We can see an example of the former in English elaborated code, and one for the latter in a folded way of expression in Japanese. This has been demonstrated by the author's previous analysis on a group of Japanese adverbs and particles having a structure of word which enfolds the speaker's mental processes[SEMP] (Ujiie, 1986).

This difference appears to derive from the feature of society where people communicate by words.

### 2. 2 *Context-tied expressions and the elaborated code*

Bernstein divided English spoken language into two; the restricted and the elaborated codes and pointed out that the restricted code is used in homogeneous communities( Bernstein, 1973). This code may consists of abbreviated expressions which is context-tied. The use of the term homogeneity assumes that it is formed within several years or at most several decades.

This is in a contrast with homogeneity in Japanese society which lasts in a time scale of centuries. As a consequence, Japanese people developed and use condensed expressions such as SEMP, i.e. a folded way of expression which have a higher degree of mental integration, in a society with long-term homogeneity, while they also use abbreviated expressions in a society with short-term homogeneity. Such a folded way of expression should be called 'culture-bound'.

From the viewpoint of the function of spoken language, Brown dealt with the restricted code and the elaborated code by different terminology(Brown, 1982): the listener-oriented and the message-oriented functions. Tannen paid attention to the functions of women's language and men's language, and called the former rapport talk, and the latter report talk(Tannen, 1990). This is on the same line as Lakoff's interpretation, in which the former is regarded as the restricted code because of their frequent use at home and the latter is regarded as the elaborated code because of their primary use in business(Lakoff, 1993).

Concluding from these, the context-tied expression can exhibit many aspects, such as listener-oriented, rapport talk and women's language. The development of Japanese is viewed to be in

this line, up to an extent where the condensed expression has been developed as an extreme. English, on the other hand, has developed message-oriented, report talk and men's language.

### 3. THE ELABORATED CODE, MIND AND SOCIETY

#### *3. 1 Expressing culture and what it brought*

To know the reason why this difference is generated, we now look at communication acts. The elaborated code is an indication of that English has independence as a language. How did it appear? Speech is generated through sympractical use of language where independence of language is not sufficient. We will seek the basic reason why and how context-free expressions are generated.

The largest difference between English and Japanese communication acts is characterized as expressing for English, against guessing for Japanese. There are many misunderstandings between English speaking and Japanese speaking people in terms of verbal and non-verbal behaviors. The most important reason of misunderstanding is in the differences in expressing practices. "Expressing" is a feature of English communication acts. This is reflected in the way of speaking and developing words and also relates with how to evaluate the use of words in this society.

There are some origins of practice of communication. We can point out the followings; a) cross-cultural society, b) tradition of dialectic which Greek, as trade business people, established, c) Christianity in which people are regarded to be equal in front of God. In a), there are strong needs to express what people have in their mind to make themselves understood correctly. As a result of a), b) and c), expressing and also maintaining fairness must have been highly encouraged. The existence of word 'sincere' may prove this.

On the other hand, Japanese society has the following fundamental traditional features: First the basic feature of Japanese society is being highly homogenized for long period of time in isolated islands. Secondly, domiciliation has influenced the life style. Japanese people used to live and act within a familiar group of people, synchronously cooperate in farming, namely, rice cropping while living in small villages. People knew each other for many generations without any contact with 'outsiders'. In such a society, there was no need to express their mind. Instead, they could easily imagine what others had in their mind by getting only a small clue of situation or slight change of atmosphere. Thus guessing correctly has been encouraged in Japanese society.

Guessing itself has no perceptible form and occurs only in the mind of subject who guesses. However, when one (a speaker) expresses something which is perceptible to others, one can receive two things from this act: one is a reaction from its listener in a perceptible form and another is what occurred, as a feedback, within his/her mind. These things make one's mind conscious; one reflects oneself and can objectify one's words and thoughts, through looking from other's eyes. Thus one may know one's objective feature and also how to speak in an objectified way.

### 3. 2. Elaborated code, cross-cultural society and inner speech

Paying attention to the place/situation where words are used, Lakoff interpreted that women's language is used primarily at home and men's language in business. Tannen put them in another way by using a categorisation of private speaking and public speaking. Business language and public speaking have a common property; they should be communicable among heterogeneous people. This property is something which is acquired through communicating to people who have different cultural backgrounds. In this process one must receive unexpected reactions from foreigners, and also experiences a dialogue with oneself, i.e. uses inner speech and starts changing one's way of language use. This change must be more dynamic than the one which is done when one communicates to a person whose mother tongue is the same.

It is pointed out by Milroys that the elaborated code is closely associated with planned discourse and also written language (Milroy, J. and Milroy, L., 1985). Planned discourse and written language are produced through a process of thinking/examining for a certain duration of time. This means that both of them retain inner speech in their own procedures. Business language and public speaking have also this aspect, although it is almost hidden. Inner speech is a dialogue within a speaker's mind. Acquiring the elaborated code thus implies acquiring the argumentative function.

## 4. 'INSIDE' COMMUNICATION ACTS AND WHAT IT BROUGHT

From the sociolinguistic viewpoint, Japanese people lived basically in a village-like society. Their communication acts have been formed reflecting this feature. They mainly used the appealing and the expressing functions of language in situation-tied/culture-bound expressions. This fact relates with psychological aspects. People can easily inform each other what and how they feel. They are tied each other in this respect and easily perceive and understand what others feel/want. They thus may be too dependent on other person's kindness, as is called *Amae* (Doi, 1973), which is accepted and appreciated among members of community who were familiar with each other. Altruistic attitude is also expected by each other.

On the other hand, the fact that the society itself is homogeneous in a long term means that there is no 'others' within the society, and therefore people have no experiences to communicate to 'others'. They are fearful of being with unfamiliar people or being in the 'outside' world, and would be at a loss to find how to act. The world is divided into 'inside' and 'outside' for one person.

Such a tendency of Japanese communication act and psychology has been settled by political and ethical movements in 17-19th centuries. Under closed door policy and feudal class system, suppression was strong and Confucianism efficiently worked there. They are fearful of being in the 'outside' world and acted there in rather completely different manners; they obeyed formal manners and were not permitted to express strong emotions. Words were used in one direction; they were delivered from the authority to common people. Their mind is not liberated on confronting the 'outside' world. People had no experience to exchange opinions with others who had different opinions. This means that they scarcely had opportunity to look back their attitude including their own way of using words.

This is in a contrast with the fact that public speaking has been developed in English speaking society.

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