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PIERRE BOURDIEU

## The economics of linguistic exchanges \*

"Perhaps from force of occupational habit, perhaps by virtue of the calm that is acquired by every important man who is consulted for his advice and who, knowing that he will keep control over the situation, sits back and lets his interlocutor flap and fluster, perhaps also in order to show off to advantage the character of his head (which he believed to be Grecian, in spite of his whiskers), while something was being explained to him, M. de Norpois maintained an immobility of expression as absolute as if you had been speaking in front of some classical — and deaf — bust in a museum."

Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu*.

It may be wondered what business a sociologist has to be meddling nowadays with language and linguistics. The fact is that sociology cannot free itself from all the more or less subtle forms of domination which linguistics and its concepts still exert over the social sciences, except by taking linguistics as the object of a sort of genealogy, both internal and external. This would seek above all to bring to light simultaneously the theoretical presuppositions of the object-constructing operations by which linguistics was founded (cf. Bourdieu, 1977, pp. 23-25) and the social conditions of the production and, especially, the *circulation* of its fundamental concepts. What are the *sociological* effects which the concepts of *langue* and *parole*, or competence and performance, produce when they are applied to the terrain of discourse or, a fortiori, outside that terrain? What is the sociological theory of social relations implied by the use of these concepts? A whole sociological analysis is needed<sup>1</sup> of the reasons why the intellectualist philosophy which makes language an object of understanding rather than an instrument of action (or power) has been so readily accepted by anthropologists and sociologists. What did they have to concede to linguistics in order to be able to carry out their mechanical transcriptions of the principles of linguistics?

The social genealogy (studying the social conditions of possibility) and the intellectual genealogy (studying the logical conditions of possibility) both

point to the same conclusions. The transfers were so easy because linguistics was conceded the essential point, namely that language is made for communicating, so it is made for understanding, deciphering; the social world is a system of symbolic exchanges (*cf.*, in the USA, interactionism and ethnomethodology, the product of the union of cultural anthropology and phenomenology) and social action is an act of communication. Philologism, a particular form of the intellectualism and objectivism which pervade the social sciences, is the theory of language which foists itself on people who have nothing to do with language except study it.

Briefly, we can say that a sociological critique subjects the concepts of linguistics to a threefold displacement. In place of *grammaticalness* it puts the notion of *acceptability*, or, to put it another way, in place of "the" language (*langue*), the notion of the *legitimate* language. In place of *relations of communication* (or symbolic interaction) it puts *relations of symbolic power*, and so replaces the question of the *meaning* of speech with the question of the *value* and *power* of speech. Lastly, in place of specifically linguistic competence, it puts *symbolic capital*, which is inseparable from the speaker's position in the social structure.

### Expanded competence

To move from linguistic competence to linguistic capital means refusing the *abstraction* inherent in the concept of competence, *i.e.* the autonomization of the capacity for specifically linguistic production. By competence, linguistics implicitly means a specifically linguistic competence in the sense of the capacity for infinite generation of grammatically regular discourse. In reality, this competence can be autonomized neither *de facto* nor *de jure*, neither genetically nor structurally — neither in the social conditions of its constitution nor in the social conditions of its operation — with respect to another competence, the capacity to produce sentences judiciously and appropriately (*cf.* the linguists' difficulties in moving from syntax to semantics and pragmatics). Language is a *praxis*: it is *made for saying*, *i.e.* for use in strategies which are invested with all possible functions and not only communication functions. It is made to be *spoken appropriately*. Chomsky's notion of competence is an abstraction that does not include the competence that enables the adequate *use* of competence (when to speak, keep silent, speak in this or that style, etc.). What is problematic is not the possibility of producing an infinite number of grammatically coherent sentences but the possibility of using an infinite number of sentences in an infinite number of situations, coherently and pertinently. Practical mastery of grammar is nothing without mastery of the conditions for adequate use of the infinite possibilities offered by grammar. This is the problem of *kairos*, of doing the right thing at the right time, which the Sophists raised. But only by a further abstraction can one distinguish between com-

petence and the situation, and so between competence and situation competence. Practical competence is learnt *in situations*, in practice: what is learnt is, inextricably, the practical mastery of language and the practical mastery of situations which enable one to produce the adequate speech in a given situation<sup>2</sup>. The expressive intent, the way of actualizing it, and the conditions of its actualization are indissociable. It follows, *inter alia*, that the different meanings of the same word are not perceived as such: only the learned awareness which breaks the organic relation between competence and the field brings out the plurality of meanings, which are ungraspable in practice because, in practice, production is always embedded in the field of reception.

### Relations of linguistic production

The most visible manifestation of philologism is the primacy linguistics gives to competence over the market. A theory of linguistic production which boils down to a theory of the apparatus of production brackets the market on which the products of linguistic competence are offered. In place of the Saussurian question of the conditions of the possibility of understanding (*i.e. langue*), a rigorous science of language substitutes the question of the social conditions of the possibility of linguistic production and circulation. Discourse always owes its most important characteristics to the *linguistic production relations* within which it is produced. The sign has no existence (except abstractly, in dictionaries) outside a concrete mode of linguistic production. All particular linguistic transactions depend on the structure of the linguistic field, which is itself a particular expression of the structure of the power relations between the groups possessing the corresponding competences (*e.g.* “genteel” language and the vernacular, or, in a situation of multilingualism, the dominant language and the dominated language).

Understanding is not a matter of recognizing an invariable meaning, but of grasping the singularity of a form which only exists in a particular context. The all-purpose dictionary word, produced by neutralizing the practical social relations in which it functions, has no social existence: in practice, it only exists immersed in situations, so much so that the identity of the form through different situations may go unnoticed. As Vendryès (1950, p. 208) points out, if all words received all their meanings at once, speech would be an endless series of puns; but if (as in the case of French *louer*, to hire — from Latin *locare* — and *louer*, to praise — from *laudare*), all the meanings it can take on were completely independent of the basic meaning (the kernel of meaning which remains relatively invariable through the various markets and which the “feeling for language” masters practically), then all puns (of which ideological puns are a particular case) would become impossible. This is because the different values of a word are defined in the relationship between the invariable kernel and the objective mechanisms characteristic of the various mar-

kets. For example, the different meanings of the word *group* refer us to specific fields, themselves objectively situated in relation to the field in which the ordinary meaning is defined ("a number of persons or things assembled in one place"): (1) the field of painting and sculpture: "an assemblage of figures forming together a complete design, or a distinct portion of one"; (2) the field of music: a small ensemble, a trio or quartet; (3) the field of literature: a coterie, a school (the Pléiade group); (4) the field of economics: a set of firms linked in various ways (a financial group, an industrial group); (5) the field of biology: a blood group; (6) the field of mathematics: group theory, etc. One can only speak of the different meanings of a word so long as one bears in mind that their juxtaposition in the simultaneity of learned discourse (the page of the dictionary) is a scholarly artefact and that they never exist *simultaneously* in practice (except in puns). If, to take another example from Vendryès, we say of a child, a field, or a dog, "*il rapporte*" (*i.e.* tells tales/ yields a profit/ retrieves), that is because in practice there are as many verbs *rapporter* as there are contexts for its use, and because the meaning actually realized by the context (*i.e.* by the logic of the field) relegates all the others to the background<sup>3</sup>.

### Authorized language

The structure of the linguistic production relation depends on the symbolic power relation between the two speakers, *i.e.* on the size of their respective capitals of authority (which is not reducible to specifically linguistic capital). Thus, competence is also the capacity to command a listener. Language is not only an instrument of communication or even of knowledge, but also an instrument of power. A person speaks not only to be understood but also to be believed, obeyed, respected, distinguished. Hence the full definition of competence as the right to speech, *i.e.* to the legitimate language, the authorized language which is also the language of authority. Competence implies the power to impose reception. Here again one sees the abstractness of the linguistic definition of competence: the linguist regards the *conditions for the establishment of communication* as already secured, whereas, in real situations, that is the essential question. He takes for granted the crucial point, namely that people talk and talk to each other, are "on speaking terms", that those who speak regard those who listen as worthy to listen and those who listen regard those who speak as worthy to speak.

An adequate science of discourse must establish the laws which determine who (*de facto* and *de jure*) may speak, to whom, and how (for example, in a seminar, a man is infinitely more likely to speak than a woman). Among the most radical, surest, and best hidden censorships are those which exclude certain individuals from communication (*e.g.* by not inviting them to places where people speak with authority, or by putting them in places without

speech). One does not speak to any Tom, Dick or Harry; any Tom, Dick or Harry does not take the floor. Speech presupposes a legitimate transmitter addressing a legitimate receiver, one who is recognized and recognizing. In assuming the fact of communication, the linguist brackets the social conditions of the possibility of establishing discourse, which come to light, for example, in the case of prophetic discourse — as opposed to institutionalized discourse, the lecture or sermon, which presupposes pedagogic or sacerdotal authority and *only preaches to the converted*.

Linguistics reduces to an intellectual encoding-decoding operation what is in fact a symbolic power relation, that is, an encoding-decoding relation founded on an *authority-belief relation*. Listening is believing. As is clearly seen in the case of orders and watchwords, the power of words is never anything other than the power to mobilize the authority accumulated within a field (a power which obviously presupposes specifically linguistic competence — *cf.* mastery of liturgy). The science of discourse has to take account of the conditions for the establishment of communication because the anticipated conditions of reception are part of the conditions of production. Production is governed by the structure of the market or, more precisely, by competence (in the full sense) in its relationship with a particular market, *i.e.* by linguistic authority as the power over the linguistic production relations that is given by another form of power. This authority, in the case of the Homeric orator, is symbolized by the *skeptron*, which reminds the audience that they are in the presence of a discourse which merits belief and obedience. In other cases — and this is what causes the difficulty — it may be symbolized by the language itself; the orator's *skeptron* then consists precisely of his eloquence. Competence in the restricted sense of linguistics becomes the condition and sign of competence in the sense of the right to speech, the right to power through speech, whether orders or watchwords. A whole aspect of the language of authority has no other function than to underline this authority and to dispose the audience to accord the belief that is required (*cf.* the language of importance). In this case, the stylistics of language is a component of the imposing paraphernalia which serves to produce or maintain faith in language. The language of authority owes a large proportion of its properties to the fact that it has to contribute to its own credibility — *e.g.* the stylistic elaborations of literary writers, the references and apparatus of scholars, the statistics of sociologists, etc.

The specific effect of authority (one ought to say *auctoritas*), a necessary element in every communicative relation, is most clearly seen in those extreme and therefore quasi-experimental situations in which the listeners grant the discourse (a lecture, sermon, political speech, etc.) sufficient legitimacy to listen even if they do not understand (*cf.* in Bourdieu and Passeron 1977, Part II, the analysis of the reception of the professorial lecture). Analysis of the crisis of liturgical language (*cf.* Bourdieu, 1975a) shows that a ritual language can only function so long as the social conditions for the pro-

duction of the legitimate transmitters and receivers are secured; and that this language breaks down when the set of mechanisms ensuring the operation and reproduction of the religious field ceases to function. The whole truth of the communicative relation is never fully present in the discourse, nor even in the communicative relation itself; a genuine science of discourse must seek that truth within discourse but also outside it, in the social conditions of the production and reproduction of the producers and receivers and of their relationship (for example, in order for the philosopher's *language of importance* to be received, the conditions which enable it to get its recipients to grant it the importance it grants itself must all be present).

Among the *presuppositions* of linguistic communication which most completely escape the attention of linguists, are the conditions of its establishment and the social context in which it is established, particularly the structure of the group within which it takes place. To give an account of discourse, we need to know the conditions governing the constitution of the group within which it functions: the science of discourse must take into account not only the symbolic power relations within the group concerned, which mean that some persons are *not in a position to speak* (e.g. women) or must *win* their audience, whereas others effortlessly command attention, but also the laws of production of the group itself, which cause certain categories to be absent (or represented only by a spokesman). These hidden conditions are decisive for understanding what can and cannot be said in a group.

Thus we can state the characteristics which legitimate discourse must fulfil, the tacit presuppositions of its efficacy: it is uttered by a legitimate speaker, *i.e.* by the appropriate person, as opposed to the imposter (religious language/priest, poetry/poet, etc.); it is uttered in a legitimate situation, *i.e.* on the appropriate market (as opposed to insane discourse, e.g. a surrealist poem read in the Stock Exchange) and addressed to legitimate receivers; it is formulated in the legitimate phonological and syntactic forms (what linguists call grammaticalness), except when transgressing these norms is part of the legitimate definition of the legitimate producer. The search for the presuppositions, in which the most clear-sighted linguists are now engaged, inevitably leads outside linguistics as this science is usually defined. Logically it ought to lead to the reintroduction of the whole social world into the science of language, starting with the school, which imposes the legitimate forms of discourse and the idea that a discourse should be recognized if and only if it conforms to the legitimate norms; or the literary field, the site of the production and circulation of the legitimate language par excellence, that of "authors", and so on.

Thus we are able to give its full meaning to the notion of "acceptability" which linguists sometimes bring in to escape the abstractness of the notion of "grammaticalness"<sup>4</sup>: the science of language aims to analyse the conditions for the production of a discourse that is not only grammatically normal, not only adapted to the situation, but also, and especially, acceptable, cred-

ible, admissible, efficacious, or quite simply listened to, in a given state of the relations of production and circulation (*i.e.* of the relationship between a certain competence and a certain market). There are as many acceptabilities as there are forms of relationship between competence (in the full sense) and a field (or market), and it is a question of establishing the laws defining the social conditions of acceptability, *i.e.* the laws of compatibility between certain discourses and certain situations, the social laws of the sayable (which include the linguistic laws of the grammatical).

Discourse is a compromise formation emerging from the negotiation between the expressive interest and the censorship inherent in particular linguistic production relations (the structure of the linguistic interaction or a specialized field of production and circulation) which is imposed on a speaker equipped with a determinate competence, *i.e.* a greater or lesser symbolic power over those production relations (*cf.* Bourdieu, 1975b). Abstract objectivism tends to lump all communication relations together in the same class and so ignores the variations in the structure of the linguistic production relations between, for example, a speaker and a receiver, which depend on the interlocutors' positions in the symbolic power relations. The specific characteristics of the work of linguistic production depend on the linguistic production relation inasmuch as the latter is the actualisation of the objective power relations (*e.g.* class relations) between two speakers (or the groups to which they belong <sup>5</sup>).

### Capital and the market

Discourse is a symbolic asset which can receive different values depending on the market on which it is offered. Linguistic competence (like any other cultural competence) functions as linguistic capital in relationship with a certain market. This is demonstrated by generalized linguistic devaluations, which may occur suddenly (as a result of political revolution) or gradually (as a result of a slow transformation of material and symbolic power relations, *e.g.* the steady devaluation of French on the world market, relative to English). Those who seek to defend a threatened capital, be it Latin or any other component of traditional humanistic culture, are forced to conduct a total struggle (like religious traditionalists, in another field), because they cannot save the competence without saving the market, *i.e.* all the social conditions of the production and reproduction of producers and consumers. The conservatives carry on as if the language were worth something independently of its market, as if it possessed intrinsic virtues (mental gymnastics, logical training, etc.); but, in practice, they defend the market, *i.e.* control over the instruments of reproduction and competence, over the market <sup>6</sup>. Analogous phenomena can be observed in formerly colonized countries: the future of the language is governed by what happens to the instruments of the repro-



duction of linguistic capital (e.g. French or Arabic), that is to say, *inter alia*, the school system. The educational system is a crucial object of struggle because it has a monopoly over the production of the mass of producers and consumers, and hence over the reproduction of the market on which the value of linguistic competence depends, in other words its capacity to function as linguistic capital <sup>7</sup>.

It follows from the expanded definition of competence that a language is worth what those who speak it are worth, *i.e.* the power and authority in the economic and cultural power relations of the holders of the corresponding competence. (Arguments about the relative value of different languages cannot be settled in linguistic terms: linguists are right in saying that all languages are linguistically equal; they are wrong in thinking they are socially equal.) The social effect of authorized usage or heretical usage presupposes speakers having a common recognition of the authorized usage and unequal skill in that usage. (This is seen clearly in multilingual situations: linguistic crisis and revolution come *via* political crisis and revolution.) In order for one form of speech among others (a language in the case of a situation of bilingualism, a usage in the case of a class society) to impose itself as the only legitimate one, in short, in order for there to be a recognized (*i.e.* mis-recognized) domination, the linguistic market has to be unified and the different class or regional dialects have to be measured practically against the legitimate language. The integration into the same "linguistic community" (equipped with the coercive instruments to impose universal recognition of the dominant language — schools, grammarians, etc.) of hierarchized groups having different interests, is the precondition for the establishment of relations of linguistic domination. When one language dominates the market, it becomes the norm against which the prices of the other modes of expression, and with them the values of the various competences, are defined. The language of grammarians is an artefact, but, being universally imposed by the agencies of linguistic coercion, it has a social efficacy inasmuch as it functions as the norm, through which is exerted the domination of those groups which have both the means of imposing it as legitimate and the monopoly of the means of appropriating it.

Just as, at the level of the relations between groups, a language is worth what those who speak it are worth, so too, at the level of interactions between individuals, speech always owes a major part of its value to the value of the person who utters it (*cf.* the "gibberish" of Proust's Guermantes, which was authoritative at least for the pronunciation of aristocratic names). The structure of the symbolic power relation is *never defined solely by the structure of the specifically linguistic competences in play* and the specifically linguistic dimension of linguistic productions cannot be autonomized. The belief that one has to be a "master of language" in order to dominate linguistically is the illusion of a grammarian still dominated by the dominant definition of language: to say that the dominant language is the language of the domi-

nant class (like the dominant taste, etc.), does not mean that the dominant class are masters of language in the sense in which linguists understand mastery<sup>8</sup>. Language cannot be autonomized with respect to the speaker's social properties: the evaluation of competence takes into account the relationship between the speaker's social properties and the specifically linguistic properties of his discourse, *i.e.* the match or mismatch between language and speaker (which can take on very different meanings depending on whether one is dealing with an illegitimate and illegal use of the legitimate language — a valet who speaks the language of the gentleman, the ward orderly that of the doctor, etc. — or with the strategic under-correctness of those who affect the "common touch", extracting an additional profit from the distance they maintain from strict correctness)<sup>9</sup>. The dominant class can make deliberately or accidentally lax use of language without their discourse ever being invested with the same social *value* as that of the dominated. What speaks is not the utterance, the language, but the whole social person (this is what those who look for the "illocutionary force" of language in language forget).

Social psychology draws attention to all the signs which, like the *skeptron*, modify the social value of the linguistic product which itself plays a part in defining the speaker's social value. Thus we know that properties such as voice setting (nasal, pharyngeal) and pronunciation ("accent") offer better indices than syntax for identifying a speaker's social class; we learn that the efficacy of a discourse, its power to convince, depends on the authority of the person who utters it, or, what amounts to the same thing, on his "accent", functioning as an index of authority. Thus the whole social structure is present in the interaction (and therefore in the discourse): the material conditions of existence determine discourse through the linguistic production relations which they make possible and which they structure. For they govern not only the places and times of communication (determining the chances of meeting and communicating, through the social mechanisms of elimination and selection) but the form of the communication, through the structure of the production relation in which discourse is generated (the distribution of authority between the speakers, of the specific competence, etc.) and which enables certain agents to impose their own linguistic products and exclude other products.

### Price formation and the anticipation of profit

price to zero

Having established the mechanisms by which the values of the different types of discourse are determined on the different markets, we can begin to understand one of the most important factors bearing on linguistic production, the anticipation of profit which is durably inscribed in the language habitus, in the form of an anticipatory adjustment (without conscious anticipation) to the objective value of one's discourse.

The social value of linguistic products is only placed on them in their relationship to the market, *i.e.* in and by the objective relationship of competition opposing them to all other products (and not only those with which they are directly compared in the concrete transaction), in which their *distinctive value* is determined. Social value, like linguistic value as analysed by Saussure, is linked to variation, distinctive deviation, the position of the variant in question within the system of variants. However, the products of certain competences only yield a *profit of distinctiveness* inasmuch as, by virtue of the relationship between the system of linguistic differences and the system of economic and social differences<sup>10</sup>, we are dealing not with a relativistic universe of differences that are capable of relativizing one another, but with a hierarchized universe of deviations from a form of discourse that is recognized as legitimate. In other words, the dominant competence functions as a linguistic capital securing a profit of distinctiveness in its relationship with other competences (*cf.* Bourdieu and Boltanski, 1975) only insofar as the groups who possess it are capable of imposing it as the sole legitimate competence on the legitimate linguistic markets (education, administration, high society, etc.). The objective chances of linguistic profit depend on (1) the degree of unification of the linguistic market, *i.e.* the degree to which the competence of the dominant group or class is recognized as legitimate, *i.e.* as the standard of the value of linguistic products; and (2) the differential chances of access to the instruments for producing the legitimate competence (*i.e.* the chances of embodying objectified linguistic capital) and to the legitimate sites of expression<sup>11</sup>.

Situations in which linguistic productions are explicitly sanctioned and evaluated, such as examinations or interviews, draw our attention to the existence of mechanisms determining the price of discourse which operate in every linguistic interaction (*e.g.* the doctor-patient or lawyer-client relation) and more generally in all social relations<sup>12</sup>. It follows that agents continuously subjected to the sanctions of the linguistic market, functioning as a system of positive or negative reinforcements, acquire durable dispositions which are the basis of their perception and appreciation of the state of the linguistic market and consequently of their strategies for expression.

A speaker's linguistic strategies (tension or relaxation, vigilance or condescension, etc.) are oriented (except in rare cases) not so much by the chances of being understood or misunderstood (communicative efficiency or the chances of communicating), but rather by the chances of being listened to, believed, obeyed, even at the cost of misunderstanding (political efficiency or the chances of domination and profit<sup>13</sup>); not by the average chances of profit (*e.g.* the likelihood of securing a certain price at a certain moment for old style professorial language with imperfect subjunctives, long periods, etc., or for a genre, poetry as opposed to the novel), but rather by the chances of profit for that particular speaker, occupying a particular position in the structure of the distribution of capital: because competence is not reducible to the spe-

cifically linguistic capacity to generate a certain type of discourse but involves all the properties constituting the speaker's *social personality* (particularly all the forms of capital with which he is invested), the same linguistic productions may obtain radically different profits depending on the transmitter (e.g. deliberate under-correctness). It is not the particular speaker's personal chances of profit, but those chances as evaluated by him in terms of a particular habitus, which govern his perception and appreciation of average or individual chances. Concretely, it is the practical expectation (which can hardly be called subjective, since it is the product of the interrelating of an objectivity — the objective chances — and an embodied objectivity — the disposition to estimate those chances) of receiving a high or low price for one's discourse, an expectation which can run to certainty, and therefore to *certitudo sui*, or surrender, to assurance, which is at the basis of "self-assurance" or "indecisiveness" and "timidity"<sup>14</sup>. Thus, very concretely, the specific manifestations of the objective truth of the production relation, e.g. the receiver's more or less deliberate attitude, his kinesic behaviour, attentive or indifferent, haughty or familiar, his verbal or gestural encouragements or disapproval, are that much more efficacious when there is greater sensitivity to feedback, and it is therefore through the dispositions of the habitus that the conjunctural configuration of the linguistic production relation modifies practice<sup>15</sup>.

It would be a mistake to reduce the anticipation of chances to simple conscious calculation and to imagine that the expressive strategy (which can range from formal elaboration to outspokenness) is determined by conscious assessment of the chances immediately inscribed in the directly perceived situation. In fact, strategies originate from the language habitus, a permanent disposition towards language and interactions which is objectively adjusted to a given level of acceptability. The habitus integrates all the dispositions which constitute expanded competence, defining for a determinate agent the linguistic strategy that is adapted to his particular chances of profit, given his specific competence and his authority<sup>16</sup>. At the basis of self-censorship is the sense of the acceptable — one dimension of that sense of limits which is the internalization of class position — which makes it possible to evaluate the degree of formality of situations and to decide whether it is appropriate to speak and what sort of language to speak on a social occasion at a determinate point on the scale of formality. People do not learn on the one hand grammar and on the other hand the art of the opportune moment. The system of selective reinforcements has constituted in each of us a sort of sense of linguistic usages which defines the degree of constraint that a given field brings to bear on our speech (so that, in a given situation, some will be reduced to silence, others to hyper-controlled language, whereas still others will feel able to use free, relaxed language). The definition of acceptability is not in the situation but in the relation between a situation and a habitus which is itself the product of the whole history of its relationship with a particular system of selective

reinforcements. The disposition which leads one to “watch one’s tongue”, to “mind one’s p’s and q’s”, to pursue “correctness” through constant self-corrections, is nothing other than the product of the introjection of supervision and of corrections which inculcate, if not practical mastery of the linguistic norm, then at least recognition of it. Through this durable disposition, which, in some cases, is the root of a sort of permanent linguistic insecurity, the supervision and censorship of the dominant language exert a constant pressure on those who recognize it more than they can use it. By “watching their tongues”, the dominated groups recognize in practice, if not the supervision of the dominant (though they “watch themselves” most closely in their presence), then at least the legitimacy of the dominant language. This disposition towards language is, at all events, one of the mediations through which the dominance of the dominant language is exerted.

### **Censorship and formality**

Thus language owes part of its properties to practical anticipation of the reaction which it is likely to excite, a reaction which depends on the language itself and on the whole social person of its user. The form and content of what can be and is said depend on the relationship between a language habitus — which has been constituted in relationship to a field with a determinate acceptability level (*i.e.* a system of objective chances of positive or negative sanctions for linguistic performances) — and a language market defined by a high or low acceptability level, and hence by a high or low pressure towards correctness (“formal” situations impose a “formal” use of language; more generally, forms of expression are inscribed in the form of the linguistic production relation which calls them forth).

Through the intermediary of practical estimation of the chances of profit, the field imposes a selective reinforcement upon production, applying censorship or giving authorization and even incitement, and governing the agents’ linguistic investments. For example, the basis of the search for linguistic correctness which characterizes the petty bourgeoisie is the recognition of the value of the dominant usage, particularly in the educational market. Thus, the propensity to acquire the dominant usage is a function of the chances of access to the markets on which that usage has a value, and the chances succeeding in them. But in addition, the relations of linguistic production govern the content and form of the production by imposing a more or less high degree of linguistic tension and containment, or, to put it another way, by imposing a more or less high level of censorship which more or less imperatively demands the formalization of discourse (as opposed to outspokenness). The particular form of the linguistic production relationship governs the particular content and form of the expression, whether “colloquial” or “correct”, “public” or “formal”, imposes moderation, euphemism and prudence (*e.g.* the

use of stereotyped formulae to avoid the risk of improvisation), and distributes speaking times and therefore the rhythm and range of discourse.

Plurilingual situations enable one to observe quasi-experimentally the variations in the language used, depending on the relationship between the speakers. Thus, in one of the interactions observed, in a Béarn market town, the same person (an old woman living in the hamlets of a village in the area) at one moment used "provincialised French" to address a shopkeeper's wife, a young woman originating from another large market town in Béarn (who might not know Béarnais or could pretend not to); the next moment, she spoke in Béarnais to a woman who lived in the town but who was originally from the hamlets and more or less of her own age; then she used a French that if not "correct" was at least strongly "corrected" to address a minor official in the town; and finally she spoke in Béarnais to a roadmender in the town, originally from the hamlets, aged about fifty. It can be seen that what determines discourse is not the spuriously concrete relationship between an ideal competence and an all-purpose situation, but the objective relationship, different each time, between a competence and a market, actualized practically through the mediation of the spontaneous semiology that gives practical mastery of the social level of the interaction. Speakers change their linguistic register — and their room for manoeuvre depends on the extent of their command of all the linguistic resources available — as a function of the objective relationship between their own position and their interlocutors' positions in the structure of the distribution of specifically linguistic capital and, even more, the other forms of capital.

Thus, what can be said and the way of saying it on a given occasion depend on the structure of the objective relationship between the positions of the sender and the receiver in the structure of the distribution of linguistic capital and the other kinds of capital. Every verbal expression — chatter between two friends, the "official" statement of an "authorized" spokesman, a scientific report — bears, in its form and content, the mark of the conditions which the field in question provides for the person who produces it, depending on the position he or she occupies in that field. The *raison d'être* of a discourse is never to be found entirely in the speaker's specifically linguistic competence; it is to be found in the socially defined site from which it is uttered, *i.e.* in the relevant properties of a position within the field of class relations or within a particular field, such as the intellectual field or the scientific field. Through the positive or negative sanctions it applies to the occupants of the various positions, the authority it grants or denies to their discourse, each field draws the dividing line between the sayable and the unsayable (or unnameable) which defines its specificity. In other words, the form and content of discourse depend on the capacity to express the expressive interests attached to a position within the limits of the constraints of the censorship that is imposed on the occupant of that position, *i.e.* with the required *formality*<sup>17</sup>.

The principle at the basis of the variations in form (*i.e.* of the degree of “tension” of the discourse) lies in the structure of the social relationship between the speakers (which cannot be autonomized with respect to the structure of the objective relations between the languages or usages concerned and their bearers, a dominant group and a dominated group in the case of colonial plurilingualism, a dominant class and a dominated class in the case of a class society), and also in the speaker’s capacity to assess the situation and respond to high degree of tension by an appropriately euphemized expression<sup>18</sup>.

It becomes clear how artificial it is to oppose external linguistics to internal linguistics, analysis of the *form* of discourse to analysis of the social *function* it performs. The objective relation between speaker and receiver operates as a market which applies a censorship by conferring very unequal values on different linguistic products. Each market is defined by different entry conditions and the stricter the censorship, the more the form adapts itself and thereby modifies the expressive content<sup>19</sup>.

### **Skill and recognition**

A speech situation is defined by the relationship between a degree of average (objective) tension — the degree of formality — and a language habitus characterized by a particular degree of tension which is a function of the gap between recognition and practical mastery, between the recognized norm and the capacity to produce. The greater the average objective tension (the degree of formality of the occasion or the interlocutor’s authority), the greater the restraint, the linguistic self-supervision and the censorship; the greater the gap between recognition and mastery, the more imperative the need for the self-corrections aimed at ensuring the *revaluing of the linguistic product* by a particularly intensive mobilization of the linguistic resources, and the greater the tension and containment which they demand.

The (subjective) tension corresponding to a substantial gap between recognition and skill, between the level objectively and subjectively demanded and the capacity for realization, manifests itself in a severe linguistic insecurity which is at its highest point in formal situations, giving rise to the solecisms of over-correctness one hears in the speeches delivered at agricultural shows and firemen’s galas — when, that is, the dominated usage does not simply collapse<sup>20</sup>. Insecurity and the corresponding high level of self-surveillance and censorship are most acute in the upper strata of the working class and in the lower middle class<sup>21</sup>. For, whereas the working classes are forced to choose between negatively sanctioned *outspokenness* and silence, and the ruling class, whose linguistic habitus is the *realization of the norm*, can manifest the ease given by self-assurance (the exact opposite of insecurity) and by the real competence that is usually associated with it, petty-bourgeois speakers are condemned to an anxious striving for correctness which may

lead them to outdo bourgeois speakers in their tendency to use the most correct and the most recondite forms<sup>22</sup>.

We must pause for a moment to look at the relation to language which characterizes the members of the dominant class (or at least those of them who originate from this class). In addition to their *certitudo sui* which suffices to endow their linguistic performances with a casualness and ease that are precisely recognized as the hallmark of distinction in such matters, they are capable of what is acknowledged as the supreme form of linguistic process, *i.e.* ease in accomplishing the perilous, *relaxation in tension*. Having acquired the dominant usage by early familiarization, the only pedagogy capable of infusing that manner of using language which constitutes the most inimitable aspect of linguistic performance, and having reinforced this practical training by a theoretical training organized by the school, aimed at transforming practical mastery into explicit, self-conscious mastery and extending its range while ensuring the internalization of the scholarly norm in the form of a bodily disposition, they are able to produce, continuously and apparently without effort, the most correct language, not only as regards syntax but also pronunciation and diction, which provide the surest indices for social placing. It is they who, in the certainty that they incarnate the linguistic norm, can permit themselves transgressions which are a way of affirming their mastery of the norm and their distance from those who blindly adhere to it. In short, the dominant usage is the usage of the dominant class, the one which presupposes appropriation of the means of acquisition which that class monopolizes. The virtuosity and ease which figure in the social image of linguistic excellence require that the practical mastery of language which is only acquired in a home environment having a relation to language very close to that demanded and inculcated by the school be reinforced but also transformed by the secondary pedagogy which provides the instruments (grammar, etc.) of a *reflexive mastery* of language. It follows from this that accomplished mastery is opposed both to the simple dispossession of those who have not benefited from the appropriate pedagogic actions (primary, at home, and secondary, at school) and to the subtly imperfect mastery obtained by entirely scholastic acquisition, which is always marked by the conditions in which it was formed (the same triadic structure is to be found in the field of taste).

Thus the differences which separate the classes on the plane of language are not reducible to a quantity of social markers but constitute a system of congruent signs of differentiation or, better, distinction, which arise from socially distinct and distinctive *modes of acquisition*. In a person's speech habits — particularly those that are most unconscious, at any rate least amenable to conscious control, such as pronunciation — the memory of his or her origins, which may be otherwise abjured, is preserved and exposed. The biological support into which language is incorporated confers on the linguistic disposition and its products the general properties that the body receives from the sum of the trainings it undergoes (not only specifically linguistic



training). The body is an instrument which records its own previous uses and which, although continuously modified by them, gives greater weight to the earliest of them; it contains, in form of lasting automatisms, the trace and the memory of the social events, especially the early ones, of which these automatisms are the product. The effects of any new experience on the formation of the habitus depend on the relationship between that experience and the experiences already integrated into the habitus in the form of classifying and generative schemes; and in this relationship, which takes the form of a dialectical process of selective reinterpretation, the informative efficiency of every new experience tends to decline as the number of experiences already integrated into the structure of the habitus increases.

The language habitus, the generative, unifying principle at the basis of all linguistic practices — *e.g.* the particularly tense relation to objective tension which underlies petty-bourgeois hyper-correctness — is a dimension of class habitus, *i.e.* an expression of (synchronically and diachronically defined) position in the social structure (which explains why linguistic dispositions have an immediately visible affinity with dispositions towards child-bearing or taste). The sense of the value of one's own linguistic products (felt for example in the form of an unhappy relation to a disparaged accent) is one of the fundamental dimensions of the sense of class position. One's initial relation to the language market and the discovery of the value accorded to one's linguistic productions, along with the discovery of the value accorded to one's body, are doubtless one of the mediations which shape the practical representation of one's social person, the self-image which governs the behaviours of sociability ("timidity", "poise", "self-assurance", etc.) and, more generally, one's whole manner of conducting oneself in the social world.

### **Linguistic capital and the body**

But we still have to bring out all the consequences of the fact that linguistic capital is an embodied capital and that language learning is one dimension of the learning of a total body schema which is itself adjusted to a system of objective chances of acceptability. Language is a body technique and specifically linguistic, especially phonetic, competence is a dimension of the body *hexis* in which one's whole relation to the social world is expressed. This means that the body *hexis* which is characteristic of a class carries out a systematic slanting of the phonological aspect of speech, through the intermediary of what Pierre Guiraud calls "articulatory style", a dimension of the body schema which is one of the most important mediations between social class and language. Thus the working class articulatory style is inseparable from a whole relation to the body that is dominated by the refusal of "airs and graces" and the valorization of virility (Labov explains the resistance of New York male working class speakers to the pressure of the legitimate

language by the fact that they associate the concept of manliness with their speech). The "preferred" shape of the buccal aperture, *i.e.* the most frequent articulatory position, is a component of the *global use of the mouth* (and therefore a component of body hexis) and constitutes the true basis of "accent", a systematic deformation which has to be understood as a system<sup>23</sup>. In other words, the phonetic features proper to each class must be treated as a whole inasmuch as they are the product of a systematic *informing* which derives its principle from the habitus (and body hexis) and which expresses a systematic relationship with the world. Class membership governs the relation to language, at least in part, through the relation to the body, itself determined by the concrete forms which the sexual division of labour takes in each class, both in practice and in representations.

The opposition between the working class relation to language and the bourgeois relation is crystallized with particular clarity in various French idioms which make use of one or the other of two words for the mouth: *la bouche*, feminine, dainty, distinguished, and *la gueule*, which is typically masculine insofar as it is often used to sum up the whole male body ("*bonne gueule*", "*sale gueule*"<sup>24</sup>). On one side, there are the bourgeois or, in their caricatural form, the petty-bourgeois dispositions of haughtiness and disdain ("*faire la petite bouche*", "*bouche fine*", "*pincée*", "*lèvres pincées*", "*serrées*"<sup>25</sup>), distinction and pretension ("*bouche en cœur*", "*en cul de poule*"<sup>26</sup>); on the other side, the manly dispositions, as working class imagery conceives them, the disposition to verbal violence ("*fort en gueule*", "*coup de gueule*", "*grande gueule*", "*engueuler*", "*s'engueuler*"<sup>27</sup>) or physical violence ("*casser la gueule*", "*mon poing sur la gueule*"<sup>28</sup>), a sense of the feast as a time for a blow-out ("*s'en mettre plein la gueule*", "*se rincer la gueule*") and a good laugh ("*se fendre la gueule*"<sup>29</sup>). From the standpoint of the dominated classes, the values of culture and refinement appear as feminine, and identifying with the dominant class, in one's speech for example, entails accepting a way of using the body which is seen as effeminate ("putting on airs and graces", "la-di-da", "toffee-nosed", "stuck-up", "pansy", "mincing"), as a repudiation of masculine values. This — together with the special interest women have in symbolic production — is one of the factors separating men from women with respect to culture and taste: women can identify with the dominant culture without cutting themselves off from their class so radically as men, without risk of their transformation being seen as a sort of change in both social and sexual identity<sup>30</sup>. Mobility is, as it were, the reward for docility<sup>31</sup>: docility in one of the essential dimensions of social identity, the relation to the body, with — for men — the concern to assert virility in pronunciation and vocabulary (with "coarse" and "crude" words, "broad" and "spicy" stories, etc.) and also in the whole body hexis, cosmetics and clothes, in self-presentation and in the image of relations with others (pugnacity, etc.)<sup>32</sup>. The oppositions through which the dominant taxonomy (recognized, but with an inversion of the signs, by the dominated classes) conceives the opposition

between the classes are, in terms of their basic principle — namely the opposition between material, physical, brute force and spiritual, sublimated, symbolic force — more or less perfectly congruent with the taxonomy which organizes the divisions between the sexes. The dominant qualities are a twofold negation of virility, because acquiring them demands docility, the disposition imposed on women by the sexual division of labour (and the division of sexual labour), and because that docility is applied to dispositions that are themselves feminine. Biological and social determinisms, or, more precisely, socially reinterpreted biological determinisms and specifically social determinisms, exert their influence on linguistic (or sexual) practices and imagery through the structure of homologous oppositions which organize the images of the sexes and the classes.

The uses of the body, of language, and of time are all privileged objects of social control: innumerable elements of explicit education — not to mention practical, mimetic transmission — relate to the uses of the body (“sit up straight”, “don’t touch”) or the uses of language (“say this” or “don’t say that”). Through bodily and linguistic discipline (which often entails a temporal discipline), objective structures are incorporated into the body and the “choices” constituting a certain relation to the world are internalized in the form of durable patternings not accessible to consciousness nor even, in part, amenable to will (automatisms, facilitation). Politeness contains a politics, a practical, immediate recognition of social classifications and of hierarchies, between the sexes, the generations, the classes, etc. The use, in French, of “*tu*” and “*vous*”, and all the stylistic variations linked to the degree of objective tension (euphemization of interrogative sentences, for example), presuppose recognition, in both senses, of hierarchies, as do the postures adopted in the presence of a superior or an inferior, the actions by which one gives way or stands one’s ground, etc.<sup>33</sup>

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## Conclusion

Thus, to give an adequate account of speech, we must constitute in each case, first, the language habitus, the capacity to use the possibilities offered by language and to assess practically the moments to use them, which, at a constant level of objective tension, is defined by a greater or lesser degree of tension (corresponding to experience of a language market at a determinate degree of tension); secondly, the language market, defined by an average degree of tension or, what amounts to the same thing, a certain level of acceptability; and finally, the expressive interest.

It follows that language varies according to the speaker and according to the linguistic production relation, *i.e.* according to the structure of the linguistic interaction (in the case of a dialogue, for example) or the producer’s position in the particular field (in the case of a written product). This varia-

tion is the response to the symbolic constraint exerted by the production relation and manifested, in the case of a dialogue, by the visible signs (body hexis, use of language, etc.) of the interlocutor's relation to the legitimate language and thereby to the language produced by the speaker. What is said is a compromise (like dreams) between what would like to be said and what can be said, a compromise which obviously depends on what the speaker has to say, his capacity to produce language, assess the situation, and euphemize his expression, and on his position in the field in which he expresses himself (in the case of a dialogue, the field may consist of the structure of the relation of interaction, understood as a particular realization of an objective relation between capitals).

But the constraint exerted by the field depends on the symbolic power relations prevailing within it at the moment in question. In crisis situations, the tension and the corresponding censorships are lowered; it is no accident that political crises (or, at another level, interaction crises) are conducive to verbal explosion, corresponding to a relaxation of the usual censorships (*cf.* the analysis of the relationship between prophetic discourse and crisis situations, Bourdieu, 1971). Thus, all linguistic manifestations are situated between highly censored discourse (of which Heidegger's philosophical language is perhaps an extreme example, by virtue of the enormous distance between the expressive interest and the demands of the field), tending towards the limit of *silence* (for those who do not have the means of euphemizing), and the outspokenness of revolutionary crisis or the popular festival as described by Bakhtin in his book on Rabelais (Bakhtin, 1968). It can be seen that it is both true and false to reduce the opposition between the classes to that between *distinction*, censorship turned into a second nature, and the *outspokenness* which flouts the taboos of ordinary language — the rules of grammar and politeness — and hierarchical barriers (the use of *tu*, diminutives, nicknames, insulting epithets, affectionate insults) and which is defined by "the relaxation of articulatory tension" (as Guiraud puts it) and of all the censorships which propriety imposes, particularly on the tabooed parts of the body, the belly, arse, and genitals and, perhaps above all, on the relation to the social world which the tabooed parts make it possible to express, through the reversal of hierarchies ("arsy-versy") or the demeaning of what is exalted (grub, guts, shit)<sup>34</sup>.

## Notes

\* This is a revised and translated version of a paper delivered at a seminar at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris, 25 November 1976. It appeared in French in *Langue française* 34, May 1974 with the title "L'économie des échanges linguistiques". The translation is by Richard Nice.

1. Such an analysis is sketched by V.N. Voloshinov (*i.e.* Mikhail Bakhtin) through a critique of philologism, the occupational bias, resulting from their training and their experience of language, which leads philologists to accept an implicit definition of the object of their science.

2. Practical mastery is thereby distinguished from scholarly (or scholastic) competence. The latter, which is acquired in the unreal situation of school learning — where language is treated as a dead letter, a mere object of analysis — *i.e.* outside any practical situation, comes up against the problem of *kairos* whenever, as happened for the Sophists and their pupils, it has to be applied in real situations.

3. The ability to grasp the different meanings of the same word simultaneously (which so-called intelligence tests often measure) and, a fortiori, the ability to manipulate them practically (for example, by reactivating the original meaning of ordinary words, as philosophers like to do) is a good index of the typically learned ability to detach oneself from the situation and break the practical relation which links a word to a practical context and encloses it in one of its meanings, in order to consider the word in and for itself, *i.e.* as the locus of all the possible relations to situations which are thereby treated as “particular cases of the possible”. This ability to play on different linguistic varieties, successively and especially simultaneously, is one of the most unequally distributed skills. That is because mastery of the different linguistic varieties (*cf.* in Bourdieu, Passeron, and Saint-Martin, 1965, the analysis of the variations by social origin in *range of linguistic register*, *i.e.* the degree to which the different linguistic varieties are mastered), and especially the relation to language it presupposes, cannot be acquired outside conditions of existence capable of allowing a detached, gratuitous relation to language.

4. The distinction Chomsky makes between “grammaticalness” and “acceptability” (particularly in Chomsky, 1965, p. 11, where he indicates that “grammaticalness is only one of many factors that interact to determine acceptability”) entails no theoretical or empirical consequences (even if it nowadays provides retrospective legitimation for some post-Chomskyan researchers, such as Fauconnier or Lakoff).

5. To forestall any “interactionist” reduction, it must be emphasized that speakers bring all their properties into an interaction, and that their position in the social structure (or in a specialized field) is what defines their position in the interaction (*cf.* Bourdieu, 1977, pp. 25-26).

6. The legitimate language owes part of its symbolic force to the fact that its relation to a market is socially unrecognized. So we must include in the complete definition of the legitimate language the mis-recognition of its objective truth, the basis of the symbolic violence which is exercised through it.

7. A dead language constitutes the limiting case of learned language, because here the school system does not even share the work of transmission with the family and only the academic market can ensure the value of the corresponding competence, which is devoid of social use in ordinary life.

8. Whether or not this is true of specifically linguistic competence, social competence — in the sense of the ability to manipulate the greatest number of different uses of signs legitimately *i.e.* imposing their reception in the mode of recognition and belief — increases as one rises in the social hierarchy. Relaxation of tension is observed in all speakers (inherent variations but he who can do more can do less, and the members of the dominant class can slacken tension (*e.g.* to “make themselves accessible”, affect “the common touch”, etc.) more easily than the dominated can increase it.

9. As Pierre Encrevé has pointed out to me, the relaxation of tension only rarely extends to the phonetic level, so that the real distance, falsely denied, continues to be marked in pronunciation.

10. Like the system of tastes and life-styles, the system of linguistic competences and mode of speech reproduces economic and social differences in its specific logic, in the form of a system of differences which seem inscribed in nature (the ideology of distinction).

11. What are called linguistic conflicts arise when the possessors of the dominated competence refuse to recognize the dominant language — and with it the monopoly of linguistic legitimacy which its possessors arrogate to themselves — and claim for their own language the material and symbolic profits that are reserved for the dominant language.

12. A large number of surveys has shown that linguistic characteristics very strongly influence employment chances and occupational success, scholastic attainment, doctors' attitudes to patients, and more generally the receivers' propensity to co-operate with the sender, to help him or to credit the information he supplies.

13. Communicative relations which obey the principle of the pursuit of maximum communicative efficiency are a particular case (and an exception). There are as many economies of linguistic resources as there are possible functions for linguistic acts: what is economy or economical in a certain field in terms of certain functions is wastage in another case. Linguistic economism only recognizes the use of linguistic resources corresponding to the pursuit of maximum communicative profit, and it characterizes the transmitters and receivers solely from the standpoint of the communication which they effect, *i.e.* as pure sign-transmitters and sign-receivers. (This is the basis of the technocraticism which endeavours to measure communicative efficiency.)

14. Extrapolating from the surveys which show that doctors pay more attention to bourgeois patients and their statements (*e.g.* pronouncing more favourable diagnoses in their cases), we may assume that such patients offer them a more explicit and also more controlled discourse.

15. Various social-psychology experiments have shown that speed and quantity of speech, vocabulary, syntactic complexity, etc., vary with the experimenter's attitude (*i.e.* according to the selective reinforcement strategies he uses).

16. The laws of speech production are a particular case of the laws of the production of practices. Whenever dispositions (here, effective aspirations to speak) objectively match the objective chances (*i.e.* the chances objectively inscribed in the field for every occupant of a determinate position in the field), the match between expressive aims and the chances of expression is both immediate and unconscious; censorship has no need to appear as such. When the objective structures confronting it coincide with those of which it is the product, the habitus (*e.g.* the university habitus) anticipates the objective expectations of the field so that the submission to the linguistic order which defines Spinoza's *obsequium as respect for forms* can be experienced as an unconstrained accomplishment by all who are the products of the same conditions. This is the basis of the subtlest and most frequent type of censorship, which consists in filling positions implying the right to speech with speakers whose expressive dispositions coincide perfectly with the demands (or expressive interests) inscribed in those positions.

17. Specialized fields (the philosophical field, the religious field, etc.) exercise a censorship inasmuch as they function as labour markets and as linguistic labour markets, sanctioning different speakers' products positively or negatively, according to their distance from the legitimate language. They assert their relative autonomy through their power to confer value on a determinate use of language and, by the same token, to devalue alternative uses that do not conform to the norms of the field (*cf.* popularization).

18. Most of the differences observed between "working class" and "bourgeois" uses of language are due to the fact that the practical mastery of the euphemistic forms objectively demanded on the legitimate market rises with the speaker's position in the social hierarchy, *i.e.* with the frequency of the social occasions on which the speaker is subjected — starting in early childhood — to those demands and is thus enabled to acquire practically the means of satisfying them. Thus bourgeois usage is characterized by the frequency of what Lakoff (1973, p. 38) calls "hedges", *e.g.* "sort of", "pretty much", "rather", "strictly speaking", "loosely speaking", "technically", "regular", "par excellence", etc., and what Labov (1972, p. 219) calls "filler phrases", *e.g.* "such a thing as", "some things like that", "particularly", etc. In fact, these expressions, which Labov sees as responsible for the "verbosity" of bourgeois language, are elements in a sort of *practical metalanguage* which, within the very form of spoken language, marks the *neutralizing distance* characteristic of the bourgeois relation to language. Having the effect, as Lakoff puts it, of "heightening intermediate values and

toning down extreme values", or, as Labov puts it, of "avoiding all error and exaggeration" they are produced by and for markets (particularly the school system) which, as is known, require a neutral, neutralized use of language.

19. Bally (1952, p. 21) enumerates various expressions [represented here by approximate English equivalents — translator] which are, in appearance, perfectly interchangeable, since they all aim at the same practical result — "Come!", "Do come!", "Would you like to come?", "Wouldn't you like to come?", "Say you'll come!", "Suppose you came?", "You ought to come!", "Come here!", "Here!", to which could be added "Will you come?", "You will come", "Would you be so good as to come", "I should be grateful...", "Please come", "Kindly come", "I beg you to come...", "Come, I beseech you", "I hope you'll come", "I expect you...", etc. The list could be extended *ad infinitum*, corresponding to an infinite number of configurations of the speech-determining factors. Although such expressions are theoretically interchangeable, they are not so in practice. Each one represents the only possible way of attaining the desired end in a determinate social conjuncture. Where "If you would do me the honour of coming" is appropriate and "works", "You ought to come!" would be out of place, because too off-hand, and "Will you come?" distinctly "coarse". In other words, the form, and the content expressed (the information) which it informs, condense and symbolize the whole structure of the social relationship from which they derive their efficacy (the celebrated "illocutionary force") and their very existence. The work of attenuating the injunction, reduced to zero in "Here", "Come", or "Come here", is considerable in "If you would be so kind as to...". The form used to bring about neutralization may be a simple interrogative which acknowledges the interlocutor's power to refuse and may take either the positive form ("Will you...") or the negative, *i.e.* doubly euphemized, form ("Won't you..."). Or again, it may be a formula of insistence which implies recognition of the possibility of the interlocutor's not coming as well as the value set on his/her coming; this can take a colloquial form ("Come here, there's a good chap..."), appropriate between peers, or a more stilted form ("Would you be so kind as to...", "I should be grateful if...") or even a respectful one ("If you would do me the honour..."). What the social sense identifies through the specifically linguistic indices of the degree of euphemization is precisely that which has oriented the production of the utterances in question, *i.e.* the ensemble of the characteristics of the social relationship between the interlocutors, together with the expressive capacities which the producer of the utterance was able to put into the work of euphemization. In social formalism as in magical formalism, in each case there is only one formula which fits and which works.

What is sometimes called the sense of propriety may well be nothing other than the practical mastery of the appropriateness of forms to functions which makes it possible to "choose" a form so perfectly adapted to the function that it constitutes a sort of symbolic expression of all the pertinent features of the relationship. Among French speakers, for example, the interdependence between linguistic form and the structure of the social relationship within and for which it is produced is seen clearly in the oscillations between *vous* and *tu* which sometimes occur when the objective structure of the relationship between two speakers (*e.g.* disparity in age or social rank) is in contradiction with length or continuity of acquaintance and therefore the intimacy and familiarity of the interaction; and everything takes place as if the reorganization of the mode of expression and of the social relationship were being worked out through spontaneous or calculated slips of the tongue and strategies of drift which often culminate in a sort of linguistic contract intended to consolidate the new expressive order on an official basis: "Suppose we used *tu* to each other...?", "Wouldn't it be simpler to call each other *tu*?" But the subordination of the form of discourse to the function conferred on it by its social context is never more clearly seen than in situations of *stylistic collision*, in which the linguistic market calls for two uses of language that are socially opposed and therefore *practically* incompatible. This is what happens when a speaker finds himself confronted with a socially very heterogeneous audience, or, more simply, with two interlocutors socially and culturally very distant from one another, whose presence in the same field prevents the adjustments that are normally effected by means of an overall change of attitude, in separate social spaces.

20. Labov (1973) has convincingly shown that dominated languages cannot stand up to the survey situation and that there is a danger of describing as a linguistic deficit what is only a field effect.

21. Petty-bourgeois speakers also manifest the greatest sensitivity to linguistic correctness, in themselves and in others. Various social-psychology experiments have shown that lower middle class speakers are more skilled than the working classes in identifying social class by accent. This is one aspect of the anxious vigilance which the dominated invest in their relations with the dominant (*cf.* Proust's description of the lift-attendant in the Balbec hotel, so used to scrutinizing his passengers that he could guess their moods in the time the lift took).

22. Linguistic sensitivity and insecurity reach their apogee in petty-bourgeois women. The sexual division of labour, which leads women to hope to achieve social mobility by virtue of their capacities for symbolic production, compels them, in a general way, to *invest* more in acquiring the legitimate dispositions.

23. The relationship between "articulatory style" and life-style, which makes "accent" such a powerful indicator of social position, still gets the better of the rare analysts who have made a place for it in science. Thus Pierre Guiraud's (1965) description of working class pronunciation is coloured by his relation to the speakers and their life-styles (*cf.* the adjectives used to characterize the "accents" which he distinguishes: "flabby", "dissolute", "loutish"; or the value judgements underlying his whole description of those accents: "this slipshod 'accent', flabby and slovenly"; "the 'loutish' accent is that of the 'tough guy' who spits out his words between a cigarette butt and the corner of his mouth"; "a soft, sloppy texture, and, in its most degenerate forms, base and vile" (pp. 111-116)). Pronunciation and, more generally, the relation to language, whether assured or insecure — like all manifestations of the habitus, which is history turned into nature — are, for ordinary perception, revelations of the person in its ultimate truth. Class racialism finds in the embodied manifestations of conditions of existence the justification *par excellence* for its propensity to naturalize social differences. When this has been said, the fact remains that any rigorous analysis of the phonological systems characteristic of the different classes must come to terms with features of articulation in conjunction with the features of ethos which are expressed in the whole body *hexis*; and the most adequate concepts to designate the social variants of pronunciation (or gait, etc.) would doubtless be those which best grasp the dimension of class habitus which pronunciation expresses in its specific logic (aperture, sonority, rhythm, etc.).

24. *I.e.* "nice guy", "an ugly mug" — translator.

25. *I.e.* to "pick and choose", be fastidious, supercilious, "tight-lipped" — translator.

26. Simper, smirk — translator.

27. "Loud-mouthed", a "dressing-down", "bawl", "have a slanging match" — translator.

28. Smash, punch on the nose — translator.

29. Stuffing oneself with food and drink; splitting oneself laughing — translator.

30. The particular relation of women to everything pertaining to culture no doubt plays a part in designating linguistic or cultural refinements as feminine. To this must be added the opposition, within the dominant class, between directly political power and cultural power several features of which reflect the male/female opposition.

31. Docility towards the dominant is also disloyalty towards the dominated, a disavowal of one's "own flesh and blood" ("he's stuck up": arrogance and pretentiousness, the distance that is affirmed, for example, by *correcting* one's accent or adopting a bourgeois style).

32. Abandonment of masculine values is both the price that has to be paid for rising socially and also what favours mobility. The initial impulse may come from a socially qualified biological peculiarity or a social peculiarity: in other words, a property of the socially qualified body (*e.g.* obesity, clumsiness, or weakness) which excludes masculine roles (fighting, sport, etc.) and throws the agent back on roles of docile submission, evasion and craft (the "sissy"), *i.e.* female roles, negatively defined or, in some cases, positive ones, positively



chosen (trades involving taste and culture); or a socially favoured bent for cultural and intellectual things which arouses the same reactions as "feminine" physical peculiarities, and acts as a reinforcement. Everything suggests that in the working classes the process which orients individuals towards feminine dispositions (of which homosexuality is only one manifestation), *i.e.* intellectual, bourgeois dispositions, is a factor in upward mobility (ascent from the working classes may be accompanied by a change in sexual consciousness).

33. It is therefore no accident that the system of education which was first conceived under the Revolution and put into practice under the Third Republic is centred around the inculcation of a relation to language (abolition of regional languages, etc.), a relation to the body (cleanliness, hygiene, etc.), and a relation to time (saving, economic calculation, etc.).

34. The censoring of language is inseparable from the censoring of the body. The domestication of language, which excludes ribaldry (*propos gras*) and "rich" (*grasseyant*) accents — according to Bakhtin, "fatty" (*gras*) ingredients are inevitable features in popular festivity, *les jours gras* — comes hand in hand with domestication of the body, which excludes any excessive manifestation of the appetites and which subjects the body to a whole series of taboos (elbows off the table, eat without making a noise, don't sniff, etc.).

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