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Elaborated and Restricted Codes: Their Social Origins and Some Consequences

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INTRODUCTION

THIS paper represents an attempt to discuss some aspects of the interrelationships between social structure, forms of speech, and the subsequent regulation of behavior. The practical context of the enquiry is the differential response to educational opportunity made by children from different social classes (Reissman 1963; Passow 1963). It has become abundantly clear that the determinants of this response are complex and that the response encapsulates the effects of socialization. The problem requires specification of the sociological processes which control the way the developing child relates himself to his environment. It requires an understanding of how certain areas of experience are differentiated, made specific and stabilized, so that which is relevant to the functioning of the social structure becomes relevant for the child. What seems to be needed is the development of a theory of social learning which would indicate what in the environment is available for learning, the conditions of learning, the constraints on subsequent learning, and the major reinforcing process.

The behavioral implications of the physical and social environment are transmitted in some way to the child. What is the major channel for such transmissions? What are the principles which regulate such transmissions? What are the psychological consequences and how are these stabilized in the developing child? What factors are responsible for variations in the principles which regulate the transmissions? The socio-linguistic approach used here is a limited attempt to provide some kind of answer to these questions.

The general framework of the argument will be given first. This will be followed by a detailed analysis of two general linguistic codes. Towards the end of the paper, some variants of the codes will be very crudely associated with social class.

In order to make a distinction between language and speech, a simple view of language has been adopted. Only two levels of language will be distinguished. The first level consists of the formal elements which may be used for the purposes of organization. These are relational elements and syntactic devices. There are rules regulating the use of such elements. This level is referred to as structure. Language may be looked at from this point of view, in terms of the range of structural alternatives or options which may be used for the purposes of organization. The second level consists of words which have objective reference or can be given objective reference. This level is called vocabulary. From the point of view of vocabulary, language may be considered as the totality of meanings evoked by the words which carry objective reference. Putting the two levels together, it could be said that language represents the world of the possible. On

the one hand, it contains a finite set of options and the rules of their regulation at the structural level and a set of options at the level of vocabulary. Language then represents the totality of options and the attendant rules for doing things with words. It symbolizes what can be done.

Speech, on the other hand, is constrained by the circumstances of the moment, by the dictate of a local social relation and so symbolizes not what can be done, but what *is* done with different degrees of frequency. Speech indicates which options at the structural and vocabulary level are taken up. Between language in the sense defined and speech is social structure. The particular form a social relationship takes acts selectively on what is said. In terms of this approach, the form the social relationship takes regulates the options which speakers select at both the structural and vocabulary levels. Inasmuch as the social relationship does this, then it may establish for the speakers specific principles of choice: coding principles. These specific principles of choice, the canons which regulate selections, entail from the point of view of the speakers and listeners planning procedures which guide the speakers in the preparation of their speech and which guide the listeners in the reception of speech.

Changes in the form of the social relationship, it will be argued, act selectively upon principles of selection. Changes in the form of the social relationship can affect the planning procedures an individual uses in the preparation of his speech and it can affect the orientation of the listener. Different forms of social relationships may generate quite different speech systems or linguistic codes by affecting the planning procedures. These different speech systems or codes may create for their speakers different orders of significance. The experience of the speakers may then be transformed by what is made significant or relevant by the different speech systems. This is a sociological argument, because the speech system is taken as a consequence of the form of the social relationship, or, put more generally, is a quality of the social structure. The social structure becomes the independent variable. There are important psychological implications. The speech system or linguistic code, itself a function of the social structure, marks out selectively for the individual what is relevant in the environment. The experience of the individual is transformed by the learning which is generated by his own apparently voluntary acts of speech (Luria and Yudovich 1959; Luria 1961; Vygotsky 1962).

Summarizing the argument, the following is obtained. Different social structures may generate different speech systems or linguistic codes. The latter entail for the individual specific principles of choice which regulate the selections he makes from the totality of options represented by a given language. The principles of choice originally elicit, progressively strengthen, and finally stabilize the planning procedures an individual uses in the preparation of his speech and guide his orientation to the speech of others. What he actually says, from a developmental perspective, transforms him in the act of saying.

As the child learns his speech, or in the terms used here, learns specific codes which regulate his verbal acts, he learns the requirements of his social structure. The social structure becomes the substratum of his experience essentially through

the effects of the linguistic process. The identity of the social structure, it is thought, is transmitted to the child essentially through the implications of the linguistic code which the social structure itself generates. From this point of view, every time the child speaks or listens, the social structure of which he is part is reinforced and his social identity is constrained. The social structure becomes for the developing child his psychological reality by the shaping of his acts of speech. Underlying the general pattern of the child's speech are, it is held, critical sets of choices, preferences for some alternatives rather than for others, which develop and are stabilized through time and which eventually come to play an important role in the regulation of intellectual, social and affective orientation. Children who have access to different speech systems or linguistic codes, by virtue of their position in the class structure, may adopt quite different intellectual and social procedures which may be only tenuously related to their purely psychological abilities (Bernstein 1961).

ELABORATED AND RESTRICTED LINGUISTIC CODES

A start may be made by putting the following questions, although the answers are bound to be both limited and inadequate.

- 1) What kinds of social relations generate what kinds of speech systems?
- 2) What kinds of principles or planning procedures control the speech systems?
- 3) What kinds of relationships in the environment do these planning procedures both give access to and stabilize?

Two general coding systems will be distinguished.¹ These systems will be defined in terms of the kinds of options speakers take up in order to organize what they have to say. These speech systems or linguistic codes are *not* defined in terms of vocabulary. If it is difficult to predict the syntactic options or alternatives a speaker uses to organize his meanings over a representative range of speech, this system of speech will be called an elaborated code. In the case of an elaborated code, the speaker will select from a wide range of syntactic alternatives and so it will not be easy to make an accurate assessment of the organizing elements he uses at any one time. However, with a restricted code, the range of alternatives, syntactic alternatives, is considerably reduced and so it is much more likely that prediction is possible. In the case of a restricted code, the vocabulary will be drawn from a narrow range but because the vocabulary is drawn from a narrow range, this in itself is no indication that the code is a restricted one.

If a speaker is oriented towards using an elaborated code, then the code through its planning procedures will facilitate the speaker in his attempt to put into words his purposes, his discrete intent, his unique experience in a verbally explicit form. If a speaker is moving towards a restricted code, then this code, through its planning procedures, will *not* facilitate the verbal expansion of the individual's discrete intent. In the case of an elaborated code, the speech system requires a higher level of verbal planning for the preparation of speech than in the case of a restricted code. It will be argued that the general behavior elic-

ited from speakers by these two codes is directed towards different dimensions of significance. The events in the environment which take on significance when the codes are used are different, whether the events be social, intellectual, or emotional. These two codes, elaborated and restricted, it will be argued, are generated by particular forms of social relationships. They do not necessarily develop as a result of the speaker's innate intelligence. The level at which a speaker operates a particular code may well be a function of his native ability, but the *orientation* is entirely a matter of the sociological constraints acting upon the speaker.

I want first to examine some variants of a restricted code which exemplify the social characteristics of this code. These variants represent ideal cases and so they will be referred to as examples of the pure form of a restricted code. These variants all have one major common attribute: the verbal component of the message, given the social context, is highly predictable. Because the verbal component of the message is highly predictable, it necessarily follows that this must also be the case for the syntactic alternatives. Prediction refers to an ability of an observer who knows the code. In the case of the variants to be discussed, both observers and speakers share the ability to make the same level of prediction. Thus these variants can be subsumed under the general title of restricted code, as a special case of lexicon prediction.

RESTRICTED CODE (LEXICON PREDICTION)

A distinction will be made between the verbal component of the message and the extraverbal components. The verbal channel in this paper refers only to the transmission of words. The extraverbal channels include messages transmitted through the expressive associates of the words (intonation, etc.), and messages transmitted through gesture, physical set, and facial modifications. In the first variant of the ideal case, the messages transmitted through all channels (verbal and extraverbal) approach maximal redundancy from the perspective of both transmitter and receiver. This variant will occur where the organization and selection of all signals is bound by rigid and extensive prescriptions. The social relations will be of an ascribed status form, located usually, but not always, in religious, legal, and military social structures. The status relations are such that the area of discretion available to the incumbents is severely reduced, with the consequence that few options exist through which the incumbents may signal their discrete intent. The individual is transformed into a cultural agent. In these social relations, if discrete intent is signaled, that is, if the messages depart from maximal redundancy, then such messages are likely to be evaluated by the receiver(s) as violations, as profane.

The second variant of the ideal case of a restricted code is one where there is considerably less redundancy in the messages carried through the extraverbal channels, while the verbal channel carries messages approaching maximal redundancy. Consider the case of a mother telling her child stories which both know by heart—"And little Red Riding Hood went into the woods" ritualistic pause, "and what do you think happened?" ritualistic question. . . . This is an-

other social relationship which constrains the options available to the incumbents of the statuses for the transmission of difference, or for the transmission of discrete intent. If the mother wishes to transmit her discrete experience or her uniqueness, she is unable to do this by varying her verbal selections. She can do it only by varying the messages transmitted through the *extraverbal channels*; through changes in muscular tension if she is holding the child, changes in facial set, gesture, or intonation. The verbal component of the messages ensures that ascribed status aspects of the social relation are made salient or the saliency of ascribed status aspects of the relation generates the characteristics of the order of communication. Notice that in this variant, the code defines the channels through which new information will be transmitted. New information will be made available *through the extraverbal channels*. *Interpersonal* aspects of this social relation will be regulated by the encoding and decoding of messages passing through the extraverbal channels. The code symbolizes and reinforces the form of the social relation and controls the channel through which new learning is made available. The mutual intents of mother and child are transmitted through extraverbal channels, and these channels are likely to become objects of special perceptual activity.

The third variant refers to an order of communication where the verbal component approaches maximal redundancy, but where the extraverbal channels permit messages of a relatively much lower order of prediction. If this is the case, then it is very likely that the extraverbal channels will become objects of special perceptual activity, as both transmitter and receiver will signal their discrete experience through the agency of such channels. There are many examples of this variant. I shall give only one. Consider a dance hall downtown. A boy asks a girl to dance. They have never met before. Although the precise nature of their initial communications will vary, it is suggested that they will take this form from the point of view of the boy.

"Do you come here often?"

"Bit crowded-n'it?"

"S' nice floor?"

"Band's alright/dead/with it."

Clearly there are many examples of such routines. It is suggested that the exchange of social routines approaching maximal redundancy occurs in those social relationships where the participants have low predictability about each other's discrete intent. The routine establishes predictability at a high level of consensus. The consensus is obtained by making the status aspect of the social relation salient. In fact, the form of the social relation at this point is one of ascribed status, as in the other two cases previously discussed. What is said is impersonal in the sense that the verbal component comes prepacked. *Interpersonal* aspects of the relation will be again transmitted through the extraverbal channels, and these will again become objects of special perceptual activity. How the social relation develops will depend upon the decoding of extraverbal messages, as these will carry new information which refers to the discrete intent

of the participants. Further, this variant of a restricted code affords the possibility of deferred commitment to the relation. Whether the relation will shift from one of status to an interpersonal form regulated by speech will depend upon the decoding of extraverbal messages. This variant differs from the preceding two in terms of a greater use of potential options available in the extraverbal channels. It is suggested that the preliminaries to oriental bargaining relationships also exemplify this variant of a restricted code (lexicon prediction).

In all the three variants of a restricted code (lexicon prediction), the following interrelated characteristics may be found. Clearly, the social contents and function of these variants greatly differ. Attention has been drawn only to very general characteristics of the code.

- 1) The status aspect of the social relation is salient.
- 2) New information is made available through extraverbal channels and these channels will become objects of special perceptual activity.
- 3) Discrete intent can only be transmitted through variations in the extraverbal signals.
- 4) The code reinforces the form of the social relation by restricting the verbal signaling of differences.

RESTRICTED CODE (HIGH STRUCTURAL PREDICTION)

In this form, which is empirically the most general, only the syntactic alternatives taken up to organize meaning across a representative range of speech carry high predictability. In the case of a restricted code (lexicon prediction), it was argued that the controls on lexicon selection and syntactic organization were functions of social assumptions common to the speakers. These assumptions, translated behaviorally, refer to prescriptions inhering in the relative statuses the speakers are filling. It was noted that the speech refracted through these prescriptions did not permit the signaling of discrete intent. In the case of a restricted code (structural prediction) the options available for verbal and extraverbal messages are very much greater than in the case of a restricted code (lexicon prediction). The constraint exists essentially at the syntactic level. The range of syntactic alternatives used in this code is reduced and therefore the alternatives are relatively predictable. The lexicon, however, is likely to be drawn from a narrow range; but the fact that the lexicon is drawn from a narrow range is no criterion for deciding whether the code is restricted.

What is responsible for the simplification of the structure, the narrowing of the lexicon range, and the consequent constraint on the *verbal* elaboration of unique experience? It is suggested that the code is a function of a specific form of social relation. In the case of a restricted code (structural prediction), the speech is played out against a backdrop of assumptions common to the speakers, against a set of closely shared interests and identifications, against a system of shared expectations; in short, it presupposes a local cultural identity which reduces the need for the speakers to elaborate their intent verbally and to make it explicit. In one sentence the extent to which the intent of the other person may be taken for granted, the more likely that the structure of the speech

will be simplified and the vocabulary drawn from a narrow range (Vygotsky 1939; Sapir 1931; Malinowski 1923).

Concretely, a restricted code (structural prediction) will arise in closed communities like prisons, combat units of the armed service, criminal subcultures, and also in peer groups of children and adolescents and between married couples of long standing. In fact, the code will develop wherever the form of the social relation is based upon some extensive set of closely shared identifications, self-consciously held by the members. It is important to note that the use of specialist terms does not of itself indicate a restricted code (structural prediction). (For the sake of simplicity the term restricted code will be used for this speech system unless the context requires greater precision.)

I would like to examine in some detail the characteristics of this code. Consider a group of boys at a street corner, or a group of close friends in a bar, or a courting couple. I suggested that if one were observing these relationships, one would be struck by the following:

1) The observer would be eavesdropping on inclusive relationships, and so he would be struck by the measure of his own exclusion. He might have difficulty at first in following the speech as it would tend to be fast, fluent, relatively unpaused, and so the articulatory clues would be reduced.

2) On the other hand, if he could write down the sequences, he might be surprised to find that they would be relatively impersonal. If intent does not have to be verbalized and made explicit, if much can be assumed and taken for granted, there is no need to use a level of verbal planning which requires careful selection and fine discriminations. Consequently, he could expect that there would be a reduction in the number of qualifiers, a simple verbal stem limited to the active voice. There might be an increase in some personal pronouns like "you" and "they," and a reduction in others like the self-reference pronoun "I." He might find, over and above idiosyncratic use, a greater frequency of terminal sequences like "isn't it," "wouldn't they," "you know," "you see," etc. In other words, he might expect a reduction in the use of those elements which facilitate the verbal transmission of discrete experience and the speech would emphasize the communality of the speakers. This does not mean that there would be no differences between the speakers, only that the differences would be transmitted in a particular way. The verbal meanings would be condensed, but the amount of speech would still be considerable. The change would be in quality, not quantity.

3) He might notice the vitality of the speech and this vitality would serve an important function. The burden of changes in meaning would be carried through the extraverbal component of the communication. The 'how' of the communication would be important rather than the 'what.' The discrete intent of the speakers, the 'I' of the speakers, would be transmitted not through varying their verbal selections, but through varying the expressive features of the communication, through changes in gesture, physical set, intonation, facial modification.

4) He might also notice that the speech sequences, from his point of view,

would tend to be dislocated—disjunctive. There might well be logical gaps in the flow of meaning. The speakers would not be worried because they could take much for granted. The connecting devices in the speech might not clarify the logical organization of meaning. In fact, the observer might find that the meanings were strung together rather like beads on a string rather than being logically ordered.

5) Finally, the content of the speech is likely, but not necessarily, to be concrete, narrative and descriptive, rather than analytical or abstract. If the speech moved in the direction of the abstract, it would be likely that the propositions would not be fully developed, relying on sequences like “you see,” “you know,” “wouldn’t it” to bridge points of uncertainty.

Putting all this together, an observer might be struck by the fact that the speech in these social relationships was fast, fluent, with reduced articulatory clues, the meanings might be discontinuous, dislocated, condensed and local, but the quantity of speech might not be affected, that there would be a low level of vocabulary and syntactic selection, and that the ‘how’ rather than the ‘what’ of the communication would be important. *The unique meaning of the person would tend to be implicit.*

In fact, the sequence might have the same *general* form as this:

It's all according like well those youths and that if they get with
gangs and that they most
they most
have a bit of a lark around and
say it goes wrong
and that and they probably knock some off I think they do it just to be a
bit big you know
getting publicity here and there.

Verbal I.Q. average
(lower working-class)

Transcript of a tape-recorded discussion

The point I want to make is that a restricted code is available to *all* members of society as the social conditions which generate it are universal. But it may be that a considerable section of our society has access only to this code by virtue of the implications of class background. I am suggesting that there is relatively high probability of finding children limited to this code among sections of the lower working-class population. On this argument, the general form of their speech is not substandard English but is related to and shares a similar social origin with the restricted code I have just outlined. It is a special case—a case where children can use one and only one speech system. What this code makes relevant to them, the learning generated by apparently spontaneous acts of speech, is not appropriate for their formal educational experience. But only from this point of view is it inappropriate.

A restricted code (structural prediction) shares the general social characteristics of the variants of a restricted code (lexicon prediction). It is perhaps somewhat less misleading to say that it is on the same dimension but at the opposite end. It limits the verbal signaling of discrete intent; the extraverbal signals become important bearers of changes in meaning and so tend to become the ob-

jects of special perceptual activity. *The status aspect of the social relation is salient with a consequent reduction in role discretion.* The code is a facility for the transmission of global, concrete, descriptive, narrative statements in which discrete intent is unlikely to be raised to the level of elaboration and so made explicit.

ELABORATE CODES (LOW STRUCTURAL PREDICTION)

I shall consider finally the nature of an elaborated code, its regulatory function and its social origin. Restricted codes can be considered status-oriented speech systems. The codes reinforce the form of the social relation, by limiting the verbal signaling of personal difference. The forms of an elaborated code are quantitatively and qualitatively different from the codes so far discussed. An elaborated code was defined in terms of the difficulty of predicting the syntactic alternatives taken up to organize meaning across a representative range of speech. This difficulty arises because an extensive range of syntactic alternatives is available within this code and therefore the probability of which alternatives will at any one time be taken up is low. This code, through its planning procedures, allows the speaker to elaborate verbally and to make explicit his discrete intent. An elaborated code, or at least an orientation towards this code, will develop to the extent that the discrete intent of the other person may *not* be taken for granted. Inasmuch as the other person's intent may not be taken for granted, then the speaker is forced to expand and elaborate his meanings, with the consequence that he chooses more carefully among syntactic and vocabulary options.

Now to the extent a speaker does this his sequences will carry *verbally* the elaboration of his experience. The potential discrepancy between speakers in expectations, in nuances of interests, generates in them a tension to select from their linguistic resources a verbal arrangement which closely specifies a given referent. Meanings which are discrete and local to the speaker are cut so that they are intelligible to the listener. The condition of the listener, unlike the case of a restricted code, will be taken into account in the preparation of the speech. In terms of what is transmitted *verbally* rather than what is transmitted *extra-verbally*, an elaborated code encourages the speaker to focus upon the other person as an experience different from his own. An elaborated code is *person* rather than status oriented.

In the case of a restricted code, what is transmitted *verbally* refers to the other person in terms of his status or local group membership. What is *said* reflects the form of the social relation and its basis of shared assumptions. Speakers using a restricted code are dependent upon these shared assumptions. The mutually held range of identifications defines the area of common intent and so the range of the code. The dependency underpinning the social relation generating an elaborated code is not of this order. With an elaborated code, the listener is dependent upon the *verbal elaboration of meaning*. In restricted codes, to varying degrees, the extraverbal channels become objects of special perceptual activity; in elaborated codes it is the verbal channel.

It is important to consider differences in the role relations which these codes presuppose.

The form of the social relation which generates an elaborated code is such that a range of discretion must inhere in the role if it is to be produced at all. Further, the speaker's social history must have included practice and training for the role. These role relations receive less support from shared expectations. The orientation of the speaker is based upon the expectation of psychological difference—his own and that of others. Individuated speech released through an elaborated code presupposes a history of a particular role relation if it is to be both prepared *and* delivered appropriately. The range of discretion which must necessarily inhere in the role involves the speaker in a measure of social isolation. He may be differentiated from his social group as a figure is differentiated from its ground. The role relations which presuppose a restricted code are quite different. The range of discretion of the role is confined to the area of common intent and, therefore, the role receives explicit support from the status components of the relationship. Looked at from another point of view, control on the role is mediated through a restricted self-editing process as far as the *verbal* messages are concerned. Although it is going too far to argue that the role relations of a restricted code orient its speakers to seeking affirmation, confirmation, or similarity, it is likely that role strain results from persistent attempts to signal discrete intent in a verbally elaborated form. This source of role strain in restricted code relationships is precisely the role relationship appropriate for an elaborated code.

These codes are translations of different forms of social relations or even qualities of different social structures; thus, different orientations, different ranges of discretion, different forms of dependency, and different sources of strain inhere in the respective roles. Thus speakers limited to a restricted code may be unable to manage the role requirements which are necessary for the production of an elaborated code. Conversely, it is possible that an individual limited to an elaborated code cannot switch codes because of an inability to switch roles.

An elaborated code generated originally by the form of the social relation becomes a facility for transmitting individuated verbal responses. As far as any one speaker is concerned, he is not aware of a speech system or code, but the planning procedures which he is using both in the preparation of his speech and in the receiving of speech are creating one. These planning procedures promote a relatively higher level of structural organization and vocabulary selection than in the case of a restricted code. What is then made available for learning by an elaborated code is of a different order from what is made available in the case of a restricted code. The learning generated by these speech systems is quite different, whether it be social, intellectual, or affective. From a developmental perspective, an elaborated code user comes to perceive language as a set of theoretical possibilities available for the transmission of unique experience. The concept of self, unlike the concept of self of a speaker limited to a restricted code, will be verbally differentiated, so that it becomes in its own right the object of special perceptual activity. In the case of a speaker limited to a restricted code

the concept of self will tend to be refracted through the implications of the status arrangements. Here there is no problem of self, *because the problem is not relevant*.

The preparation and delivery of relatively explicit meaning is the major purpose of an elaborated code. This affects the manner of delivery. The speech of a restricted code, it was argued above, would be delivered in a fast, fluent, relatively unpaused style with reduced articulatory clues. The speech controlled by an elaborated code will be punctuated by relatively frequent pauses and longer hesitations. A specific monitoring, or self-editing, system initially generates the code. The time dimension underlying the planning process producing an elaborated code tends to be longer than the time dimension underlying the planning process producing a restricted code. The delay between impulse and verbal signal is mediated through an extensive self-editing process in the case of an elaborated code. If a speaker is limited to a restricted code, then a specific planning or monitoring system develops and becomes progressively strengthened. These differences in the time dimension inhering in the planning processes of the two codes will have a number of psychological consequences, which cannot be developed here.

As a child learns an elaborated code, he learns to scan a particular syntax, to receive and transmit a particular pattern of meaning, to develop a particular planning process and *very early learns to orient towards the verbal channel*. He learns to manage the role requirements necessary for the effective production of the code. He becomes aware of a certain order of relationships (intellectual, social, and emotional) in his environment and his experience is transformed by these relations. As the code, through its planning procedures, becomes established, the developing child voluntarily through his acts of speech generates these relations. He comes to perceive language as a set of theoretical possibilities for the presentation of his discrete experience to others. An elaborated code through its regulation, induces developmentally in its speakers an expectation of separateness and difference from others. It points to the possibilities inherent in a complex conceptual hierarchy for the organization of experience.

It is possible to distinguish two modes of an elaborated code. One mode facilitates relations between *persons* and the second facilitates relations between *objects*.² These two modes of an elaborated code would, in principle, differentiate different ranges of experiences and would presuppose different role relations. Although there is little time to develop this distinction, it might have some relevance to the present problems of C. P. Snow's two cultures.

A child *limited* to a restricted code will tend to develop essentially through the regulation inherent in the code. For such a child, speech does not become an object of special perceptual activity, neither does a theoretical attitude develop towards the structural possibilities of sentence organization. The speech is epitomized by a low level and limiting syntactic organization and there is little motivation or orientation toward increasing vocabulary. This code becomes a facility for transmitting and receiving concrete, global, descriptive, narrative statements

involving a relatively low level of conceptualization. The planning processes which generate the speech involve a relatively short time dimension and, thus, a reduced self-editing function. Extraverbal channels tend to become the agencies through which discrete intent is signaled and so these extraverbal channels early become objects of special perceptual activity. It is a status-oriented code and elicits and progressively strengthens a relatively undifferentiated adherence to the normative arrangements of a local social structure. The verbal channel promotes the transmission of social rather than individual symbols. As the child learns a restricted code, he learns to control a particular role relation, and code switching may be hampered by the role requirements of a restricted code. Finally, an individual limited to a restricted code will tend to mediate an elaborated code through the regulation of his own. Clearly one code is not better than another; each possesses its own esthetic, its own possibilities. Society, however, may place different values on the orders of experience elicited, maintained, and progressively strengthened through the different coding systems.

The orientation towards these codes, elaborated and restricted, may be independent of the psychology of the child, independent of his native ability, although the *level* at which a code is used will undoubtedly reflect purely psychological and physiological attributes. The orientation toward these codes may be governed entirely by the form of the social relation, or more generally by the quality of the social structure. The intellectual and social procedures by which individuals relate themselves to their environment may be very much a question of their speech models within the family and the codes these speech models use.

Finally, I should like to draw attention to the relations between social class and the two coding systems. The subcultural implications of social class give rise to discrete socialization procedures (Bronfenbrenner 1958; Newson and Newson 1963). The different normative systems create different family role systems operating with different modes of social control. It is considered that the normative systems associated with the middle-class and associated strata are likely to give rise to the modes of an elaborated code while that associated with some sections of the working class is likely to create individuals limited to a restricted code. Clearly, social class is an extremely crude index for the codes, and more specific conditions for their emergence have been given in this paper. Variations in behavior found within groups who fall within a particular class (defined in terms of occupation and education) within a mobile society are often very great. It is possible to locate the two codes more precisely by considering the orientation of the family role system, the mode of social control, and the resultant verbal feedback. Variations in the orientation of the family role system can be linked to the external social network of the family and to occupational roles (Bernstein ms.). It is not possible to do more than mention the possibilities of these more sensitive indices.

Very broadly, then, children socialized within middle-class and associated strata can be expected to possess *both* an elaborated and a restricted code while children socialized within some sections of the working-class strata, particularly

the lower working-class, can be expected to be *limited* to a restricted code. As a child progresses through a school it becomes critical for him to possess, or at least to be oriented toward, an elaborated code if he is to succeed.

Some research specific to this thesis based upon small samples of subjects and speech does indicate that middle-class and working-class subjects aged fifteen years, male, matched for average verbal I.Q., differ in their coding orientation in the predicted direction (Bernstein 1962b). This research further indicates that differences in the time dimension of the planning processes inhering in the respective codes are also in the predicted direction (Bernstein 1962a). It is important to repeat that these results are based upon small samples. Further research has shown that middle-class and working-class subjects, male, at two age levels, matched for average verbal and average nonverbal I.Q., operated with the predicted codes in a sample of representative written work (Lawton 1963, 1964). This study also showed a relation between levels of abstraction and the use of the respective codes.

There is also firm evidence showing a relative deterioration in verbal I.Q. between the ages of eight and eleven years and between eleven and fifteen years for working-class children when compared with middle-class children between the same ages (Committee on Higher Education 1963). Other research shows clearly that the verbal I.Q. scores of working-class subjects, particularly lower working-class, are likely to be severely depressed in relation to their scores at the higher ranges of a nonverbal test (Bernstein 1958, 1960; Venable 1962; Report 1958; Ravenette 1963). This deterioration in verbal I.Q., discrepancy between verbal and nonverbal I.Q. tests and failure to profit from formal education on the part of working-class children, particularly those of lower working-class origins, is thought to be closely related to the control on types of learning induced by a restricted code. The relative backwardness of some working-class children may well be a form of culturally induced backwardness transmitted to the child through the implications of the linguistic process. The code the child brings to the school symbolizes his social identity. It relates him to his kin and to his local social relations. The code orients the child progressively to a pattern of relationships which constitute for the child his psychological reality and this reality is reinforced every time he speaks.

CONCLUSION

An attempt has been made to show how two general coding systems and their variants are elicited by the structure of social relations. The dimensions of relevance created by the different coding systems have been explored. Although the main burden of the paper has been to examine broad social class affiliations of the codes and to indicate briefly their socializing and formal educational consequences, it is tentatively thought that the theory might well have a more general application. Elaborated and restricted codes and their variants should be found in any social structure where their originating conditions exist. The definitions should, in principle be capable of application to a range of languages although in any one case elaboration and restriction will be relative.

NOTES

¹The term code refers to the principles which regulate the verbal planning function. Three stages of this function are distinguished:

1. Orientation: the receiver scans incoming messages for a pattern of dominant signals;
2. Association: associations to the pattern of dominance control selections from the store of words and extraverbal signals;
3. Organization: the selected words are fitted within grammatical frames and integrated with extraverbal signals.

It follows that restricted and elaborated codes will establish different kinds of control which crystallize in the nature of verbal planning. The latter is a resultant of the conditions which establish the patterns of orientation, association, and organization. The originating determinants of this trio would be the form of the social relationship or more generally the quality of the social structure. This would allow the following postulate: the form of the social relationship acts selectively on the type of code which then becomes a symbolic expression of the relationship and proceeds to regulate the nature of the interaction. Simply, the consequences of the form of the social relationship are transmitted and sustained by the code on a psychological level through the verbal planning function. Strategic learning would be elicited, sustained, and generalized by the code which would mark out what is available to be learned and would constrain the conditions of successful learning.

²This may seem confusing as an elaborated code has been considered, relative to a restricted code, as a person-oriented speech system. These new distinctions are *within* the general form of an elaborated code. The two possess the general features of an elaborated code. They both carry low structural prediction, they serve as facilities for the verbal elaboration of discrete intent, they orient their users to the expectation of difference, they point to logically similar conceptual orders; but the referents of the relationships are different, and the role relationships, which the modes presuppose, are also different.

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