

The study of language management in applied linguistics

Hirofumi Asada

This paper will introduce language management theory in the context of linguistic and cultural interaction with reviews of some outstanding work and will discuss promising directions of applying the concept of management processes, particularly in the area of language teacher education and development.

Language management theory

Language management theory draws on Neustupny's (1985a) paradigm for the study of intercultural communication which relates to generative-corrective rules. This theoretical framework is of importance in the area of linguistic and cultural interaction, in that "generative rules of language are only one part of our overall communicative competence", and "since they inadvertently produce "deviant" and "inadequate" communicative acts, they must be supplemented by the second largest set of communication rules we possess, the rules of corrective competence" (p. 44).

The later concept of "language management" (Jernudd & Neustupny, 1987), which was formerly referred to as "language correction" (Neustupny, 1994), was first developed as a tool of language planning at the macro level, while it can be applied to deal with problems in discourse at the micro level. Neustupny (1994, p. 50) claims that "any act of language planning should start with the consideration of language problems as they appear in discourse, and the

planning process should not be considered complete until the removal of the problems is implemented in discourse”, and “the important issue is not what some people think the language problems are, but what particular speakers actually identify as language problems in the course of particular interaction”. Neustupny (1994, p. 52) claims that “language management covers all overt noting of language, attitudes assumed, and all subsequent behavior toward language” (“behavior toward language”, cited from Fishman, 1971).

The language management framework also focuses on the understanding of specific processes rather than on the product of linguistic change in the contact situations. Unlike the original paradigm of “language in contact” developed by Weinreich (1952) and Haugen (1956), Neustupny (1985b, p. 161) states that “we now are more interested in what it is that happens in a particular contact situation or in contact situations in general”, rather than asking “what features of a language (or of two or more languages) did or did not change”.

Contact situations and management processes

The contact situation is an important concept for the study of language management. According to Neustupny (1985a), communicative situations are basically divided into “intracultural” and “intercultural” situations. The former can be called as “native” or “internal” and the latter as “foreign” or “contact” situations. He claims:

When one or more of the constituent factors of a situation is foreign to the cultural system in question, communication in the situation differs substantially from communication in “native” situations. Even more importantly, it cannot be understood on the basis of experience and knowledge of the two cultures considered in isolation (p. 44).

Furthermore, Neustupny emphasizes that “as a result of the presence of “foreign” factors, a typical contact situation is packed with communication problems and attempts are constantly made for their removal” (p. 44).

Neustupny’s framework of contact situations is intrinsically different from the

theory of “language in contact” by Weinreich (1952) and Haugen (1956) focusing upon the language use of bilinguals or multilinguals whose languages are spoken alternately by the same persons. Contact situations normally refer to interaction between members of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds while native situations are concerned with one between members of the same linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Fan (1994) argues, however, that interaction between members of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (i.e., native speaker-non-native speaker) is always considered to be a typical contact situation, but the distinction between “native” and “contact” situations is not always clear-cut, and “it is dangerous if we simply identify native situations as interactions between participants of the same nationality or those who speak the same language” (p. 239). Fan exemplifies the two cases of communicative situations whose native speakers possess a different culture (e.g., Australian-American), and whose non-native speakers share a foreign language (e.g., Japanese-Chinese in English). The former situation is termed “cognate variety contact situations” and the latter “third-party variety contact situations”, as well as “partner variety contact situations” in which a native language of either participant is used when communicating each other.

In order to promote further understanding of contact situations above, Fan (1994) defines such situations as interaction between members of different “speech communities” in contrast to native situations as one between members of the same speech communities which constitute shared language code(s), shared communication norms, and shared sociocultural norms.

Language management starts with the comparison of communication problems occurred in discourses and norms which participants possess. Neustupny (1985b) proposes the concept of language management which defines norms as rules judged by participants to be correct for the particular communicative situations. It also focuses upon the fact that participants deviate from the norms in contact situations. Neustupny (1985a, p. 45) demonstrates that “what differentiates contact situations from native ones is the amount and

types of “deviations” from what is accepted as the base norm for the encounter, and the type of processes that ensue”.

Language management consists of the following processes in general (Neustupny 1985a, 1985b, 1994, 1997a, 1997b):

1. Deviation.
2. Noting.
3. Evaluation.
4. Adjustment.
5. Implementation.

According to Neustupny’s model of language management above, firstly, deviations from norms occur in communicative situations. Secondly, these deviations may be noted by one or more participants or can remain unnoted, and if noted, they may be disregarded, or often evaluated in a negative way, or occasionally lead to positive evaluations at the third stage. Fourthly, plans of suitable actions may be set in order to remove the deviations. Finally, these plans may be subsequently implemented. Enomoto and Marriott (1994) state that using this model of language management, it is beneficial to examine not only deviations from the norm but “the ways in which these deviations are treated, either by the participant who commits the deviation or by others in the situation” (p. 134).

Neustupny (1985a, 1985b) claims that all communication problems or phenomena occurring in contact situations can be related to and explained in various stages of the correction process (i.e., language management), and “all participants in contact situations necessarily use norms as a yardstick from which all deviations are measured, and to which evaluation of behavior is firmly bound. Without norms discourse could not exist” (1985b, p. 162). As Neustupny (1985a) points out, however, it should be noted that the process of language management can stop at any of the stages, or in other words, does not

necessarily pass through all the stages, and also “adjustment through correction is not always successful and the deviation from norm which results serves as a starting point for new correction processes” (p. 45).

As mentioned earlier, the principal determinant of deviation from norms of the base system in contact situations involves the presence of foreign factors in the situation (Neustupny, 1985a). In native-non-native contact situations (i.e., partner variety contact situations), rules of native speakers normally serve as the base norm. This is a case in which native speakers possess a relatively complete set of the norms, while foreign speakers’ norms are deficient (Neustupny, 1985b). Neustupny also claims, however, that native and foreign participants perceive deviations from native norms in different ways and communication problems may arise from such differences, indicating that participants (i.e., Australian-Japanese in English) “vary the native norm of English to a considerable extent, omitting, applying norms from other systems and creating new ones” (p. 163).

The concept of foreignness is useful to explain deviations from norms applicable in native situations in the case of other than native-non-native interaction such as cognate or third-party variety contact situations as well. Fan (1994) divides the foreign factors in contact situations into three components: linguistic foreignness, communicative foreignness and sociocultural foreignness. They are concerned respectively with differences between native languages, communication rules and sociocultural norms of the speakers.

Deriving from the presence of the foreignness mentioned above, there are several types of deviations present in contact situations. The most obvious cases include propositional deviance, presentational deviance and performance deviance (Neustupny, 1985a, 1994). The propositional deviance concerns the inability to construct or comprehend a particular proposition. Neustupny (1985a, p. 50) states that “what was to be said was not said (in whole or in part) and what was to be understood remained uncomprehended”. The presentational type refers to how speakers communicate their intentions, attitudes, or

personality. The third type of deviance results from the inability of speakers and/or hearers to perform a particular message according to norms present in native situations.

Previous Studies

There has been a large amount of research conducted from different perspectives with application of language management framework. Among these are a series of studies in which Marriott (1993, 1995, 1996) addresses the acquisition of sociolinguistic variables, principally in relation to politeness phenomena by Australian exchange students at the secondary level. Marriott (1991) and Enomoto and Marriott (1994) also focus on politeness patterns in Australian and Japanese business domains. Marriott (1997) explores language learning experiences and the types of strategies adopted by Australian secondary level exchange students. At tertiary level, management processes of Japanese students in English academic situations have been investigated (Marriott, 2000, 2003; Nemoto, 2004). Furthermore, a different approach is taken to focus on communication or interaction problems in L2 settings. Muraoka's (2000) case study of two Korean residents of Japan deals with management of intercultural input. Neustupny (2003) deals with Japanese tertiary students of Czech language who stayed in Czech Republic for a short period. Fairbrother (2000) addresses interaction management within a party situation. In contrast to contact situations with native and non-native speakers, Fan (1999) explores communication problems in Japanese between non-native speakers.

Future directions

There has been little study in relation to teacher development in which language management framework has been applied. The theoretical framework

can widely be applied in order to investigate school culture such as teachers' attitudes or beliefs towards language teaching in micro-level approaches.

This paper will show, taking Sato's (2002) descriptive article for instance in native situations, promising opportunities of exploration of teacher education with application of the framework. Sato's study aims to explore the relationships among EFL teachers' context, beliefs, and practices in a Japanese high school. The multiple data sources include four themes: school norms and values, tension between individual ideas and a hidden goal, a pattern of teaching, and lack of learning opportunities. The following will deal with some of the significant issues above and analyze EFL teachers' management processes in their collaborative interaction.

First of all, this high school put high values on norms such as managing students, keeping pace with other teachers, and getting things done. Although teachers in the English department evaluated only class sequencing in a negative way and noticed the importance of addressing instructional issues as an corrective adjustment, these school norms and lack of time did not encourage EFL teachers from proceeding to the final stage of implementation, that is, focusing more on solving teaching problems or developing teaching methods. This is illustrated from teachers' remarks in Sato's (2002) study as follows:

Toda: With other teachers of English, I want to talk a little bit more about goals and objectives. But we mainly talk about what to do next, which lesson we will cover before the exam, who will make a supplementary handout, or which section we have finished so far. I wish I could talk more about other important things (p. 53).

Hori: Since I am a new teacher, I have so many things to talk about. But other teachers are so busy that I cannot afford to joke or talk about topics other than classes. Though I want to ask other teachers many questions, I dare not. I try to solve problems by myself, because I don't want to bother other teachers. To be honest, I myself am busy and still have many problems that I have not yet solved (p. 53).

Observation in regular classes reveals EFL teachers' heavy emphasis on

grammar and translation method, in spite of the teachers' expression of individual ideas of communication-oriented English in their prior interviews. This is, in Sato's (2002) interpretation, because of a hidden departmental goal of examination-oriented English in contrast to new guidelines for communication-oriented English introduced by Mombusho, as shown in the following extract:

Hatano: I agree that the purpose of English is developing learners' communicative skills, so being able to get across one's intentions, read, and understand what people say are ideals....It is necessary and is an ideal to be able to speak and listen. But, we cannot ignore university entrance examinations. That's another problem. If entrance exams were removed, we could begin to think about alternatives (p. 57).

In this case, Hatano regards an existing departmental curriculum with heavy emphasis on examination-oriented English, as deviations from his ideal practices as well as new guidelines by Mombusho which focus more on communication-oriented English. However, Hatano's negative evaluations of these deviations did not lead to the next stage of planning an adjustment because of school culture which requires collaborative work keeping order and pace with other teachers in the department for university entrance examinations.

Sato's (2002) study indicates that EFL teachers' routine practices with grammar and translation method also arise from teachers' peer observations and persistent beliefs in relation to their own second language learning, in addition to lack of knowledge and ability of EFL teaching focused on oral communication:

Inoue: I don't think I have any successful classes. I didn't try that. Well, we used the textbook of basic grammar in the first term. Each lesson had five key sentences, and to have learners memorize them I gave a quiz at the beginning of the next class. After that, I briefly explained grammar points in the next lesson and had students translate key sentences and try the exercises. If necessary, I added other exercises or had them make simple sentences. I had this kind of pattern. I don't think it is good, but other teachers followed it, too, because we talked about how to go about our lessons (p. 58).

Sakamoto: As for teaching method, I have not learned any in particular. After all, the way I teach is based on how I learned English in classes. Another source may be how I studied English on my own. Therefore, I have been teaching according to my vague conception of how we can understand English. I think it is very personal. I don't remember having learned any teaching methods. So I may have preconceptions about the way of teaching (p. 69).

Sakamoto: I have not been to any [workshop] recently. I can look for old reports of the workshop in my desk, but have not used those ideas myself. For example, even though some teachers say using English songs is good, I cannot use songs if I am not interested in them ... unless the teacher really wants to use the idea, he or she won't try it out (p. 71).

Inoue's remarks indicate that he is aware of the sentence memorization, grammar explanation and translation to be deviant from having successful classes. As described in Hatano's extract above, however, their departmental pressures on the homogeneous pattern of teaching did not encourage him from taking any risks of trying out new ideas in EFL practices. On the other hand, Sakamoto's persistent teaching approach is not noticed by herself as deviations which reinforce routine practices. Rather, Sakamoto's avoidance of learning or using innovative ideas in EFL contexts, which results from her own second language learning beliefs, is evaluated neutrally and thus does not undertake any further adjustment strategies so as to enrich her teaching repertoires.

In conclusion, along with introductory overviews on language management theory, this paper has applied the theoretical framework to the areas of teacher development and has explored new directions for future research. More careful consideration and application for many facets of language teacher education are obviously necessary for a better understanding for teachers' management processes at the micro level in school culture.

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