1 Introduction

Language problems often seem to be problems concerning linguistic competence. A great part of language problems are related to power relationship, disadvantage, inequality and linguistic human rights (LHRs). Language shift is one of these phenomena which is commonly related to language problems. Our argumentation on competence here, is principally based on the phenomenon of language shift but it also concerns problems other than language shift.

Language contact may give rise to language shift but this situation may also persist a long time without causing the decline of one of the languages in contact. In each specific situation many factors can be identified which make one specific situation different from others. One of these factors may be high or low competence of the speakers of a ‘given language’.

But as we will argue, competence is a rather weak factor to explain language shift or maintenance because it is an individual phenomenon (see also Hudson 1996: 252-53) and at the same time the concept of ‘a given language’ leads us to the structuralist paradigm which offers an obsolete theoretical basis for our purpose. The choice of a code in a specific situation depends not only on the speaker’s competence, but also on the listener’s competence. In order to be successful, the speaker and the hearer have to base their communication on their shared knowledge, which includes the negotiation of a code that is not always identical with ‘a given language’. This happens in spite of the fact that the speakers would like to identify their code with a specific language.

It can be proposed that one of the factors of language shift is that speakers often do not speak as they think they should. This does not depend on competence but on that part of the common ground (Clark 1996) which has been made most automatic among the participants. This new concept we will call ‘common routine’ and it is, as we will argue, a stronger factor than competence in linguistic processes.

First we will explain how pressure emerges and how it may give rise to power, inequality and problems with LHRs. Since competence is a part of this interplay there will be a discussion of competence. Then we will present some of our own data to show that the concept isn’t useful for our purpose and we will substitute it by the concept of ‘common routine’, that will then be introduced.

2 Power and Inequality

First we have to ask, what causes the relationship between language and power, and what, in this relationship, causes disadvantage for some speakers? We suppose that those speakers who suffer more pressure in a given situation are less powerful. A relative lack of power means some grade of disadvantage which in specific cases may be related to LHRs. We will take as an example the language shift in the Irish Gaeltacht.

Many minorities are still fighting for the rights the Gaelic speakers in Ireland are enjoying. But as far as the LHRs are concerned, they don’t enjoy the same rights as the more powerful English-speaking population. So we should be able to explain why Gaelic keeps on dying and why speakers of Gaelic are in disadvantage in spite of its support from the Irish state. (see also Edwards 1985)
As mentioned, our intention is to explain the relationship between language, power, pressure, (with pressure we are referring to the obligations an individual feels to act in a certain manner) advantage, disadvantage and LHRs, and how competence interweaves with all these aspects. Pressure may lead to action and action changes the actual state of the world.

One aspect of disadvantage, necessary is language shift in minority groups, which may be an aspect of LHRs too. We suppose that those speakers who suffer more pressure in a given situation are less powerful. Their action doesn’t lead to a state of the world which will be completely favorable for them or the actual state of the world makes their action more difficult.

So we have to ask first: "How is pressure created?"

FIG. 1

The pressure a person feels, depends on his own interest in something, for example the interest in communicating with another person (see FIG. 1). Sometimes the pressure is in equilibrium between both persons and sometimes it is not, because those who are more interested will feel more pressure and they have to make more concessions to succeed in their intentions. Power is only possible in a disequilibrium, i.e. power is possible for the person (or group) who feels less pressure. The less powerful person is in disadvantage and when this disadvantage persists we have a case of inequality. The ignorance of one’s own power does not necessarily abolish the situation of inequality.

LEVELS OF PRESSURE

PARALLEL GOALS (INTERESTS)

CONGLOMERATES

FIG. 2

(In our graph the goals are represented as arrows and the pressures as ovals.)

There are always combinations of several goals in space and time (FIG. 2). These conglomerates and chains of parallel goals are accompanied by different levels of pressures. One kind of conglomerates is when an
immediate interest and a permanent interest will point in the same direction. This means that there is a goal for the actual moment and another long-term goal for the future. In the same way there exist individual and group interests which form conglomerates. These are the most important conglomerates in modern human life. Apart from them there exist a lot of different kinds of conglomerates depending on the actual state of the world.

Most of them are pointing in the same direction, but also there may be conflicts between them, i.e. they may point into different or even opposite directions. These goals then do not represent a conglomerate. Conflicts may appear between the pressures of different persons but also between the pressures of a single person (FIG. 3). Thus, there also can appear a conflict between the pressures of two persons without having a conflict between these persons since their pressures are the same (equilibrium).

![Conflict Diagram](http://www.4/21/2017 linguistik-online.com/3_00/terborg.html)

(FIG. 3)

When the conflict exists between two persons (disequilibrium), for example the person who feels less pressure to talk to another person is in a more powerful position to impose his style or language he prefers.

Two people who are communicating want to transmit information, and they want to be successful in doing so. Now considering communication as a social action, the speakers’ goals (or interests) are to be understood by others. In a joint action with common goals (Clark 1996), to understand or to be understood means to be successful. In case that they want to express their identity at the same time by using their ancestors’ language in spite of the fact that they are very limited in this language, the different conflicting pressures will decide the way of the action.

Now, we have to ask: Why do two persons feel some pressure to use another language (or a mixed language) they don’t want to use, when they have the same amount of interest into a given topic? To explain this phenomenon, we have to add the actual state of the world because this is what influences into the pressure. In the case of language use, part of this state is linguistic competence. It seems, that pressure doesn’t depend only on goals but also on competence, because competence is a part of the actual state of the world. All human activities depend on the actual state of the world, and this, at the same time, is modified by all human activities.

Competence seems to be the tool which helps us to be successful and this tool is part of the state of the world. So in a given community certain rules exist and the knowledge about these rules and their correct application makes speakers and hearers successful. This knowledge is called competence or proficiency. The problem is that this concept principally is based on a positivistic view of language, as we would like to demonstrate now.

### 3 Competence

Chomsky’s postulation of what linguistics should study is well known. Doing linguistics means to investigate the competence of the ideal listener-speaker of a given speech community. Thus the focus of linguistics still was situated in a structural and positivist paradigm. As Hymes pointed out, for Chomsky competence stands for language.

For "language" Chomsky substitutes "competence" defined as a fluent native speaker’s knowledge (largely tacit) of grammaticality — of whether or not putative sentences are part of
his language, and according to what structural relationships. The goal of linguistic description is thus changed, from an object independent of men, to a human capacity. Both changes (deep structure, human capacity) are felt to be so great as to lead transformational grammarians to reject "structural linguistics" as a name for their work, and to use it solely to describe other schools as predecessors. From a social standpoint, transformational grammar might equally well be seen as the culmination of the leading theme of structural linguistics. To center analysis in a deep structure, one grounded in human nature, is to fulfill an impulse of structural linguistics to treat language as a sphere of wholly autonomous form. Such a theory perfects and gives the ultimate justification to a study of language at once of human significance and abstracted from actual human beings. (Hymes 1981: 92)

3.1 A Monolingual Perspective

Another problem is that this point of view is a monolingual perspective of the linguistic phenomena. The individual speaker/hearer has to project his linguistic capacity onto the norms of the homogeneous speech community.

Bilingual phenomena have been studied taking monolingualism as a starting point. As Romaine notes most of the books concerning linguistics, are written about monolingualism.

It is precisely a monolingual perspective which modern linguistic theory takes as its starting point in dealing with basic analytical problems such as the construction of grammars and the nature of competence. However, Jacobson … observed: "Bilingualism is for me the fundamental problem of linguistics." (Romaine 1989: 1)

Of course, modern linguistics has been developed on the ideology of the language nation state and thus bilingualism was treated as a case that deviates from the norm. Even many of those serious studies concerning bilingualism actually are using the monolingual background as a starting point to explain bilingual and multilingual phenomena. This is also inherent in the terms "bilingualism" and "multilingualism." As Mühlhäusler notes:

Much of the ignorance and misinterpretation found in earlier work was caused by the absence of adequate questions, promoted by a tendency to see similarities with SAE [Standard Average European] languages or supposed universals.

Most of the labels employed by Western linguists stand in need of revision, including key concepts such as language, meaning or communication. (1996: 48)

There are many notions in Western linguistics that should be questioned because they lead us to a static view of language and culture, and this leads us to the limitations of structuralism and positivism in our views of language (see Pennycook 1995: 46)

3.2 Effectiveness in Conversation

For many language teachers (and linguists as well) competence seems to guarantee the effectiveness in conversation. (Milhouse 1993: 188, Martin 1993: 22) Participants try to be as effective as possible in their conversation. Disadvantage in human communication generally means that there is a lack of success in the use of the linguistic sign. The linguistic sign is successful only to a certain degree. (Ungerer 1991) For analytical reasons we will present it the following way, that success or lack of success occurs mainly in two different levels:

A. The message is comprehensible or incomprehensible to a certain degree.
B. When the message is comprehensible for all participants, there may be agreement or disagreement about its adequacy. This is related to attitudes towards language and speakers.

We suppose that level A) is primordial in human communication although both levels are interrelated to one another and it is not possible to draw a clear borderline between them. But, concerning disadvantage, there is an important difference between them; only in level A) is it possible to find the same disadvantages for all
participations. In level B) the disadvantage may never be the same for all participants. We suppose that this disequilibrium is one condition which makes power possible. Level B) is mainly related to attitudes.

In language planning these levels may be related to the distinct kinds of activities "those that are concerned specifically with attempts to modify language itself, and those that are concerned with attempts to modify the environment in which a language is used. These have come to be designated 'corpus planning' and 'status planning', respectively." (Kaplan & Baldauf 1997: 28) These activities may be related to level A) and B) respectively, and they will require different kinds of competence.

3.3 Communicative Competence and Language Problems

With the development of the ethnography of communication (Hymes 1981, Gumperz & Hymes 1972, Saville Troike 1982, Sherzer 1983, Spindler 1987) the perspective changed and the interest in multilingual speech communities began to grow (Weinreich 1968, Fishman 1967, Sherzer 1983, Gal 1978, 1979, Dorian 1982, 1994, Schmidt 1985, ...). It was not only in the multilingual speech communities, but also in the monolingual communities, where competence as knowledge of grammar rules seemed insufficient to communicate successfully. Speakers have to know how to communicate adequately in a given situation as well.

Linguistic theory treats competence in terms of the child’s acquisition of the ability to produce, understand, and discriminate any and all of the grammatical sentences of a language. A child from whom any and all of the grammatical sentences of a language might come with equal likelihood would be of course a social monster. Within the social matrix in which it acquires a system of grammar a child acquires also a system of its use, regarding persons, places, purposes, other modes of communication, etc. - all the components of communicative events, together with attitudes and beliefs regarding them. There also develop patterns of the sequential use of language in conversation, address, standard routines, and the like. In such acquisition resides the child’s sociolinguistic competence (or, more broadly, communicative competence), its ability to participate in its society as not only a speaking, but also a communicating member. What children so acquire, an integrated theory of sociolinguistic description must be able to describe. (Hymes 1981: 75)

Communicative competence is able to explain the behavior of speakers in a broader sense. It also permits comparing different cultures which may "impose quite different conventions for the use and form of language in comparable social situations, ... and appropriate linguistic practices in line with these conventions is a definite characteristic of speaker’s membership in the linguistic community as a competent member ..." (Foley 1997: 249-50) In the same way it permits explaining a single culture with different languages, i.e. a multilingual culture, (Edwards 1985, Skutnabb-Kangas 1981, Le Page and Tabouret Keller 1985, Romaine 1989, 1994, Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas 1996, Zimmermann 1992). Thus code-switching becomes worthwhile to be investigated (Timm 1975, Poplack 1980, Auer 1983, Li 1995, Milroy and Muysken 1995)


The problem of language shift in many cases is seen as related to a lack of proficiency among the members of the minority groups’ younger generation. (see for example Rouchdy 1992) Presently language shift isn’t seen the way Bloomfield (1974) may have considered the younger generation of the Menomini. In more recent works the notions of competence and proficiency may even not appear (see Grenoble & Whaley 1998), but in some way it is still inherent in a manifestation, as for example made by Dorian, "Attrition in language contact implies loss and incompleteness, while convergence implies mutual influence." (1998: 12) Specially the term "incompleteness" cannot avoid its relation to competence, as well as "loss", "semi-speakers" (see also Schmidt 1985) or "double semilingualism" (Skutnabb-Kangas 1981). In an earlier publication Dorian defined semi-speakers and near-passive bilinguals by proficiency:

Semi-speakers are individuals who have failed to develop full fluency and normal adult proficiency in East Sutherland Gaelic, as measured by their deviations from the fluent-speaker norms within the community. At the lower end of the proficiency scale they are distinguishable
from near-passive bilinguals by their ability to manipulate words in sentences: reminded of a forgotten Gaelic noun or verb, for example, they can nearly always build it into an intelligible Gaelic sentence, whereas near-passive bilinguals can rarely do so ... At the upper end of the proficiency scale, semi-speakers are distinguishable from even the youngest fully fluent speakers of East Sutherland Gaelic by the presence in their speech of deviations from the local grammatical norms. (1982: 26)

Semi-speakers are those we can find in level B) concerning lack of success and near-passive bilinguals in level A). 2 It seems to be obvious that an increasing number of near-passive bilinguals will lead to language death. It may be the case as well with an increasing number of semi-speakers because of conservative attitudes towards their speech. (see also Dorian 1994) In both cases the problem is a lack of proficiency since these speakers aren’t competent enough to reach the norms of the traditional speakers. Schmidt reports in her survey on young Dyirbal in Northern Australia that most of the younger semi-speakers avoid using Dyirbal with elder people to whom they usually speak in English. "...the corrective mechanism appears to limit vertical communication between less-fluent YD [Young Dyirbal] and TD [Traditional Dyirbal] speakers. The less Dyirbal a speaker has, the less likely he is to use it with traditional speakers (because of constant correction); rather he reserves it for the in-group." (Schmidt 1985: 40)

But what happens when those semi-speakers have an effective conversation among themselves, i.e. the in-group? Can we still say that there is a lack of proficiency? We only can say that they aren’t successful in level B). Nevertheless, there are certain peers who use Young Dyirbal in their in-group to symbolize membership. To explain this phenomenon, we think the concept of competence leads to a contradiction. There may exist parallel interests among the members of the in-group in their communication, i.e., one interest is to express identity and the other to be successful in a propositional act. But the first causes a pressure which is weakened by the unfavorable instrument (here the code), since all of the members are rather incompetent speakers of Dyirbal. So competence cannot explain why they act in this way.

Chomsky substitutes "competence" for "language" (Hymes ibid) but Hymes’ "communicative competence" cannot be said to be completely free of this critic, in spite of including variation and changing processes. It is still the individual who has to accommodate to the general societal (and "homogeneous") norms. Hudson brings it to the point, when he deals with competence (i.e. knowledge) of individual people and not a whole society (1996: 253). This way we only may measure effectiveness by correctness.

3.4 Intercultural Communication Competence

Quite different is the concept of "intercultural communication competence". Since one of its topics is intercultural effectiveness, it cannot be based on the power of societal norms. It has to deal with the merging of these norms and the creation of new ones. Here the success which might be of importance would be on level A).

Of course, it is yet a theory with a lot of different positions since scholars as Nakanishi & Johnson or Kim "view competence as primarily based on individual characteristics." On the other hand "Gudykunst, Cupach and Imahori, and Milhouse ... view competence as occurring within a relationship." (see Koester, Wiseman and Sander 1993: 7)

The "view of competence as a social impression also requires recognition that competence is not determined by the knowledge, motivation, or skills of only one of the parties in the interaction, but rather that judgments of competence are relational outcomes." (ibid)

Obviously, this is a crucial point. We consider that individual and social characteristics shouldn’t exclude one another because both are important points. But social characteristics have been excluded in traditional monolingual analysis as we will try to show.

We have to measure competence before measuring pressure, but measuring competence may lead us to a static view of language and culture, and consequently our views of language will be trapped in the limitations of structuralism and positivism.

3.5 Attitudes toward Code switching

http://www.linguistik-online.com/3_00/terborg.html
We would like to present another example of minority languages and highlight some aspects of our own data from the Mayan area in the state of Yucatan, Mexico (525,000 speakers over 5 years in 1990). We developed two case studies in eastern Yucatan in the villages of Dzitás and Xocen. Dzitás is situated at about 20 km north from Chichén Itzá and has about 5000 inhabitants. Since the first half of this century the railway from Mérida (the capital of Yucatan) to Valladolid communicates the village with the rest of the state. Xocen in spite of being situated close to Valladolid (about 8 km) is more isolated because there was just one road crossing the forest without pavement and there wasn’t any public transport. The inhabitants are peasant men and very few live in houses built of stone while in Dzitás only a part of the population is working in the fields and in comparation to Xocen Dzitás is more urbanized. At the same time Xocen has a very rigid social structure related to religious beliefs, and who is sometimes hostile to outsiders. As a consequence, language shift has made progress in Dzitás where among people under the age of 50 there weren’t any monolinguals of Maya.

By contrast with Dzitás, in Xocen there weren’t any monolinguals of Spanish. Another difference between both villages is reflected by the women. In Dzitás they speak only Spanish in contrast to men who are more often bilingual. The same happens in Xocen, but here the women are more likely to speak only Maya. This means that women in Dzitás are progressive and in Xocen they are conservative. As a consequence, all children in Xocen were still native speakers of Maya. \( \frac{1}{2} \) (see Terborg 1992, 1995, 1996)

From Xocen we will now see parts of a transcription of a lesson in the primary school which may show the inadequacy of the concept of "competence". A conflict of different pressures made the teacher act in an incoherent way. Among a lot of examples of code switching, this is the most interesting because the teacher became aware that he didn’t speak as he thought he should. This was caused by a statement he made against code switching. In this lesson of Mexican history he directed attention to the form of the language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T: - teacher</th>
<th>P: - not identified pupil</th>
<th>A: - all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>eagle — translation from águila Spanish</td>
<td>(kina ca wa'alce'ex pos) uncomprehensible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eagle — translation from ch'u'uy Maya</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

'&quot;QUÉ&quot; capitals mean volume

| 4. T: | ((P)) caa kucho'obte te lu'um beyo' caa bin ti'lo'obe yaan tun hum |
| engl | they went to the land where they found an |
| 5. T: | p'eé águila bix ya'alal águila a wohele'ex ha le |
| engl | T: eagle - how do you say eagle, do you know... |
| P: | ch'u'uy |
| A: | ch'u'uy |
| 39. T: | ((P)) huitzilopochtli dios del sol ((P)) le huitzilopochtli |
| engl | T: huitzilopochtli god of the sun - the huitzilopochtli |
| 40. T: | ciacobo' le tu 'u dios le kino' ((P)) pero letio'obe 'u yoholo'obe |
| engl | T: their god of the sun - but they knew... |
| 62. T: | 'uchi pero como entonces hach ba'atena'al bino' yumlo'ob beyo' caa |
| engl | T: good — but why they wanted to go to the gods... |
| 71. T: | (kina ca wa'alce'ex pos) sib kaax 'u hantic he yum ch'aaco'ob pos |
| engl | as the gods of the rain eat their hen — well... |
| 93. T: | way kin () ((P)) pos caa 'a'alal tumen yumile caax maax yumile |

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Beginning his lesson without any attention to his language, he started to look for new words to keep his Maya pure. This we can see as he used eagle (águila) in the lines 4 to 5 while he asked at once what it is and the children answered in Maya "ch’u’uy". In line 39 he mentioned the god of the sun "dios del sol" and changed to Mayan "dios le kino" in line 40. Also he used the Spanish word "dios" from line 14 to 93 with different Mayan suffixes while in line 62 he first used the Mayan word "yum" which he continued using (line 93). At the same time, the children were resisting his intentions to purify the language, in spite of the fact that some of them still had problems in speaking Spanish (L2) all of them are competent in Maya (L1). This is the common discourse in the other classrooms as well.

Again the concept of competence fails to explain why it was so difficult for the teacher to keep the discourse ‘clean’ from contamination, i.e. Spanish elements in Mayan discourse or Mayan elements in Spanish discourse.

The teacher himself grew up in a very small village where most of the people were Mayan monolinguals. That means that he was a Mayan native-speaker and he was supposed to be competent in Maya.

Concerning the national language, some of the children in the school of Xocen were able to converse in Spanish, but among other children in the village they always prefered Maya. Many children of them still had difficulties in sustaining a longer conversation in Spanish. Consequently, all of them were competent in Maya.

Now the question is when the children were competent in Maya, why did they resist the use of elements which were familiar to them; like the words ‘chuúy’, ‘kin’, ‘ha’, ‘yum’ and so on? Of course, code-switching is a common phenomenon among bilinguals, and in part it is ruled by communicative competence but we don’t see any way to explain it satisfactorily with competence.

Hudson (1996: 225-226) illustrates the problem of ‘incompetence’ with the discourse in school-lessons: "Indeed one of the problems that children face is precisely that teachers are not explicit about what they want children to do; the children have to read the teacher’s mind ..." He puts the example of a pupil who exactly knew how to answer the teacher’s question. "This pupil knew about teachers’ questions — that the teacher usually already has one particular target answer, that the teacher wants the pupil to supply this answer, that this may involve completing an unfinished sentence, and that the teacher will accept a close approximation to the target but will still say the target even if a pupil has just said it. This elaborate interplay is controlled by rules, and is successful only when both parties share the rules (and accept the point of the game)." (ibid)

So the important point is not just being competent but also to share knowledge in which a person is competent. We will try to illuminate the problem with one of the specifications, Hudson says a theory of linguistic structure must satisfy:

A theory of linguistic structure "... must be a theory about the linguistic competence (i.e. knowledge) of individual people, not of whole communities." (1996: 252-253) Thus, he coincides with Nakanishi and Johnson (1993) and Kim (1993) in the field of intercultural communication competence.

4 Common Routine

Therefore our problem is that competence is an individual and not a shared phenomenon. It is an important factor but it is not enough to explain the pressure to act in a certain way during a joint action. If we want to explain how pressure emerges we need something more than interest and competence. We need something that is based on common ground (Clark 1996). Indeed, the individual component is also an important factor (Clark ibid) but it is not enough to explain the whole phenomenon.
In speech there is always transmission of information through levels of phonetic, morphologic, syntactic, semantic levels and the knowledge of the world. If we accept this, a speech event at the same time is a learning event. It contains some new and a lot of repeated learning. The negotiation in language use results from different learning events.

In each speech event, the interlocutors are directing their attention to just a small part of these levels. The information is generally of a semantic and pragmatic character. Obviously, it requires more concentration to direct one’s attention to several levels of information in the communication.

As the form of language is changed, part of the information is changed as well. It requires more attention for speaker and listener when there are more levels with new information. This is difficult to maintain. As we could see in our school-lesson there can be different options for two speakers, one is the easier option for all participants and the other is the desired one. These options may be different codes such as styles, dialects or languages but they also may be more private ones like a mixture of some of these codes. Normally, the best option is the one which is more automatic among a given group of speakers, i.e., which has more levels of repeated information thereby requiring less attention. This depends on the constitution of speakers’ group and on the topic, such as we have seen here with the topic of Mexican history. It need not necessarily be one’s native language.

Thus, according to the speakers’ goals they will choose the option which requires the least amount of effort for a special topic and situation. It has to be negotiated as common ground and it has to be as automatic as possible. It is this way we would like to define ‘common routine’. The common routine, in contrast to competence, is not individual but depends on parts of the common ground of all participants in a given setting becoming automatic and it changes with participants and topics they are involved in. (Terborg 1994, 1995, 1996) Being automatic means that there isn’t any necessity to direct the attention to many levels of information. Therefore only a part of the shared knowledge is part of the common routine. But it does not only include social and language knowledge, it includes all knowledge about the world when it is shared and automatic. Common routine forms part of the actual state of the world, which leads to a certain pressure to act. So not all shared knowledge is part of the common routine. The pressure is formed by the goal or interest and the common routine (FIG. 4). Interest includes essential needs which are concerned with survival. Common routine includes the tools we need to be successful in a joint action (Clark 1996). It partly includes competence but its tendency is towards effectiveness on level A) and competence mainly towards effectiveness on level B).

(FIG. 4)

The emerging pressure leads the participants to the objective of language use and language acquisition. The common routine is partly changed by language acquisition in each conversation.

In a situation where a minority group is suffering a growing language shift in spite of the desire to maintain the indigenous language, there exists a conflict at different levels of pressure accompanying contradictory interests. In many situations, one interest is to be successful in a propositional act and the other is to show one’s identity by using a certain language. Here the common routine determines the force of the pressure. This we could see in the school lesson where the common routine consists of a mixture of Maya and Spanish
Despite the teacher trying to separate both languages. In many cases of language shift the common routine of a great part of the minority group’s speakers coincides with the majority language. So the use of the majority language reinforces this kind of common routine.

For example, in a minority language group there may be members interested in special contacts with the majority language group. Some members will be partly excluded from these contacts. For some of them the transition is favorable, but for those who are excluded it isn’t. They require extraordinary efforts in their attempts, which often give rise to failures or lack of success. This occurs in relation to the immediate pressure as well to the conflict between immediate pressure and permanent pressure.

Thus, in the case of Dyirbal we observe a fragmentation of the common routine. What is the common routine among a peer-group is different from the situation when one of the peers converses with other members of the community, including speakers of traditional Dyirbal. It may not only be the expression of group-identity, as Schmidt (1985) puts it.

In the same way we find a lot of competent readers of traditional Gaelic in Ireland whose common routine is based on Irish English in most situations. In Mexico there are native speakers of Nahuatl who prefer speaking in Spanish to one another because they come from different regions with different dialects.

Code-switching in most situations is the common routine which has been best developed by a group of speakers and listeners, as we tried to demonstrate. In our school-lesson the teacher and the pupils had been talking this way on other days without paying any attention to their speech. In our transcription the teacher tried to use a form which wasn’t exactly identical with the best developed common routine in this situation. He wanted to be effective on level B) which produced a slight conflict with the pressure coming from level A). As the data has suggested language shift is not caused by a loss of competence in the community, but by the fragmentation and changes of common routine which make the members of the community change their joint action.

5 Conclusion

Concluding, we would like to highlight some aspects in which the concepts of competence and common routine may be distinguished and how they may effect language use in different ways.

Competence and common routine may be distinguished in different points. While competence is oriented on whole communities, based on some kind of normativity, common routine is mainly interpersonal with different strength, but always related to one or more communities.

Competence is the relation of an individual to a given system in which he tries to reach perfection. In contrast common routine means to find out the best choice for a given group of speakers who try develop a mutual growth in effective communication. Thus, the tendencies of competence are towards "correctness" (level B) and the tendencies of common routine towards effectiveness (level A) in communication. We will try to highlitye this with an example of the use of a lingua franca. When a speaker of English and a speaker of French use Spanish in their conversation, in spite of knowing the other’s language, then their common routine is based on Spanish as a second language. Of course, there is always some kind of competence implicit, but they may develop high proficiency in their communication which is also based on their non-native common changes. This is their common routine. When a monolingual speaker of English or French joins the conversation, this common routine will change immediately.

The concept of competence also means a pressure towards "correctness", and this may give rise to a disequilibrium in the mutual pressure, what will lead to power. Power frequently causes disadvantage, inequality and problems related to LHRs. So competence explains how an individual is able to act according to the pressure in a power relationship. Common routine means a pressure towards effectiveness, i.e. an equilibrium of mutual pressure which eliminates great part of inequalities. Thus common routine explains the coorporation of different persons who are solving a problem.
Normally there doesn’t exist any common routine which is not based of some competence. Competence even may be nearly identical with common routine. The concept of competence also may be necessary in some kind of analysis, for example second language learning. On the other hand, common routine will be better to explain phenomena as pidgin languages and intercultural communication. In this way, we can say that it coincides with many of the ideas developed in the fields of intercultural communication competence. Both may give rise to a bilingual theory which would not be based on the Western language nation state ideology.

Language maintenance cannot be successful when the promoters of the minority language are trying to preservate competence. What is needed is an adapted version of the language to a changing world. (see our example from Dorian 1994) Thus, it would be important for the field of language policy to base its analysis and activities on common routine for reaching the greatest equilibration in using the existent resources.

Notes

* I am grateful to Phyllis Ryan and Alice Bracho for their comments on an earlier version of this paper.[back]

1 Here we will treat both, competence and proficiency, in the same way, because for our purpose there is no necessity of a differentiation.[back]

2 Of course, this is a rather simple view, since near-passive bilinguals understand Gaelic and they are able to use short phrases. As well they may speak English to make themselves understood. But it will help us to explain the phenomenon.[back]

3 In spite of Maya is still vital in Xocen, there are also different indications of a beginning language shift. [back]

References


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