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On Communicative Competence

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I

This paper is theoretical. One connotation of 'theoretical' is 'programatic'; a related connotation is that one knows too little about the subject to say something practical. Both connotations apply to this attempt to contribute to the study of the 'language problems of disadvantaged children'. Practical work, however, must have an eye on the current state of theory, for it can be guided or misguided, encouraged or discouraged, by what it takes that state to be. Moreover, the language development of children has particular pertinence just now for theory. The fundamental theme of this paper is that the theoretical and the practical problems converge.

It is not that there exists a body of linguistic theory that practical research can turn to and has only to apply. It is rather that work motivated by practical needs may help build the theory that we need. To a great extent programs to change the language situation of children are an attempt to apply a basic science that does not yet exist. Let me review the present stage of linguistic theory to show why this is so.

Consider a recent statement, one that makes explicit and precise an assumption that has underlain much of modern linguistics (Chomsky, 1965, p. 3):

Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance.

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From the standpoint of the children we seek to understand and help, such a statement may seem almost a declaration of irrelevance. All the difficulties that confront the children and ourselves seem swept from view.

One's response to such an indication of the state of linguistic theory might be to ignore fundamental theory and to pick and choose among its products. Models of language structure, after all, can be useful in ways not envisioned in the statements of their authors. Some linguists (e.g., Labov, Rosenbaum, Gleitman) use transformational generative grammar to study some of the ways in which a speech community is not homogeneous and in which speaker-listeners clearly have differential knowledge of a language. Perhaps, then, one ought simply to disregard how linguists define the scope of 'linguistic' theory. One could point to several available models of language – Trager-Smith-Joos, tagmemic, stratificational, transformational-generative (in its MIT, Pennsylvania, Harvard and other variants), and, in England, 'system-structure' (Halliday and others); remark that there are distinguished scholars using each to analyse English; regret that linguists are unable to agree on the analysis of English; and pick and choose, according to one's problem and local situation, leaving grammarians otherwise to their own devices.

To do so would be a mistake for two reasons: on the one hand, the sort of theoretical perspective quoted above *is* relevant in ways that it is important always to have in mind; on the other hand, there is a body of linguistic data and problems that would be left without theoretical insight, if such a limited conception of linguistic theory were to remain unchallenged.

The special relevance of the theoretical perspective is expressed in its representative anecdote (to use Kenneth Burke's term), the image it puts before our eyes. The image is that of a child, born with the ability to master any language with almost miraculous ease and speed; a child who is not merely molded by conditioning and reinforcement, but who actively proceeds with the unconscious theoretical interpretation of the speech that comes its way, so that in a few years and with a finite experience, it is master of an infinite ability, that of producing and understanding in principle any and all grammatical sentences of language. The image (or theoretical perspective) expresses the essential equality in children just as human beings. It is noble in that it can inspire one with the belief that even the most dispiriting conditions can be transformed; it is an indispensable weapon against views that would explain the communicative differences among groups of children as inherent, perhaps racial.

The limitations of the perspective appear when the image of the unfolding, mastering, fluent child is set beside the real children in our schools. The theory must seem, if not irrelevant, then at best a doctrine of poignancy:

poignant, because of the difference between what one imagines and what one sees; poignant too, because the theory, so powerful in its own realm, cannot on its terms cope with the difference. To cope with the realities of children as communicating beings requires a theory within which socio-cultural factors have an explicit and constitutive role; and neither is the case.

For the perspective associated with transformational generative grammar, the world of linguistic theory has two parts: linguistic *competence* and linguistic *performance*. Linguistic competence is understood as concerned with the tacit knowledge of language structure, that is, knowledge that is commonly not conscious or available for spontaneous report, but necessarily implicit in what the (ideal) speaker-listener can say. The primary task of theory is to provide for an explicit account of such knowledge, especially in relation to the innate structure on which it must depend. It is in terms of such knowledge that one can produce and understand an infinite set of sentences, and that language can be spoke of as 'creative', as *energeia*. Linguistic performance is most explicitly understood as concerned with the processes often termed encoding and decoding.

Such a theory of competence posits ideal objects in abstraction from sociocultural features that might enter into their description. Acquisition of competence is also seen as essentially independent of sociocultural features, requiring only suitable speech in the environment of the child to develop. The theory of performance is the one sector that might have a specific sociocultural content; but while equated with a theory of language use, it is essentially concerned with psychological by-products of the analysis of grammar, not, say, with social interaction. As to a constitutive role for sociocultural features in the acquisition or conduct of performance, the attitude would seem quite negative. Little or nothing is said, and if something were said, one would expect it to be depreciatory. Some aspects of performance are, it is true, seen as having a constructive role (e.g., the cycling rules that help assign stress properly to sentences), but if the passage quoted at the outset is recalled, however, and if the illustrations of performance phenomena in the chapter from which the passage comes are reviewed, it will be seen that the note struck is persistently one of limitation, if not disability. When the notion of performance is introduced as 'the actual use of language in concrete situations', it is immediately stated that only under the idealization quoted could performance directly reflect competence, and that in actual fact it obviously could not. 'A record of natural speech will show numerous false starts, deviations from rules, changes of plan in mid-course, and so on.' One speaks of primary linguistic data as 'fairly degenerate in quality' (Chomsky, 1965, p. 31), or even of linguistic performance as 'adulteration' of ideal competence (Katz,

1967, p. 144). While 'performance' is something of a residual category for the theory, clearly its most salient connotation is that of imperfect manifestation of underlying system.

I do not think the failure to provide an explicit place for sociocultural features to be accidental. The restriction of competence to the notions of a homogeneous community, perfect knowledge, and independence of sociocultural factors does not seem just a simplifying assumption, the sort that any scientific theory must make. If that were so, then some remark to that effect might be made; the need to include a sociocultural dimension might be mentioned; the nature of such inclusion might even be suggested. Nor does the predominant association of performance with imperfection seem accidental. Certainly, any stretch of speech is an imperfect indication of the knowledge that underlies it. For users that share the knowledge, the arrangement might be thought of as efficient. And if one uses one's intuitions as to speech, as well as to grammar, one can see that what to grammar is imperfect, or unaccounted for, may be the artful accomplishment of a social act (Garfinkel, in press), or the patterned, spontaneous evidence of problem solving and conceptual thought (John, 1967, p. 5). These things might be acknowledged, even if not taken up.

It takes the absence of a place for sociocultural factors, and the linking of performance to imperfection, to disclose an ideological aspect to the theoretical standpoint. It is, if I may say so, rather a Garden of Eden view. Human life seems divided between grammatical competence, an ideal innately-derived sort of power, and performance, an exigency rather like the eating of the apple, thrusting the perfect speaker-hearer out into a fallen world. Of this world, where meanings may be won by the sweat of the brow, and communication achieved in labor (cf. Bonhoeffer, 1965, p. 365), little is said. The controlling image is of an abstract, isolated individual, almost an unmotivated cognitive mechanism, not, except incidentally, a person in a social world.

Any theoretical stance of course has an ideological aspect, and that aspect of present linguistic theory is not its invention. A major characteristic of modern linguistics has been that it takes structure as primary end in itself, and tends to depreciate use, while not relinquishing any of its claim to the great significance that is attached to language. (Contrast classical antiquity, where structure was a means to use, and the grammarian subordinate to the rhetor.) The result can sometimes seem a very happy one. On the one hand, by narrowing concern to independently and readily structurable data, one can enjoy the prestige of an advanced science; on the other hand, despite ignoring the social dimensions of use, one retains the prestige of dealing with something fundamental to human life.

In this light, Chomsky is quite correct when he writes that his conception

of the concern of linguistic theory seems to have been also the position of the founders of modern general linguistics. Certainly if modern structural linguistics is meant, then a major thrust of it has been to define the subject matter of linguistic theory in terms of what it is not. In de Saussure's linguistics, as generally interpreted, *la langue* was the privileged ground of structure, and *la parole* the residual realm of variation (among other things). Chomsky associates his views of competence and performance with the Saussurian conceptions of *langue* and *parole*, but sees his own conceptions as superior, going beyond the conception of language as a systematic inventory of items to renewal of the Humboldtian conception of underlying processes. The Chomsky conception is superior, not only in this respect, but also in the very terminology it introduces to mark the difference. 'Competence' and 'performance' much more readily suggest concrete persons, situations, and actions. Indeed, from the standpoint of the classical tradition in structural linguistics, Chomsky's theoretical standpoint is at once its revitalization and its culmination. It carries to its perfection the desire to deal in practice only with what is internal to language, yet to find in that internality that in theory is of the widest or deepest human significance. No modern linguistic theory has spoken more profoundly of either the internal structure or the intrinsic human significance.

This revitalization flowers while around it emerge the sprouts of a conception that before the end of the century may succeed it. If such a succession occurs, it will be because, just as the transformational theory could absorb its predecessors and handle structural relationships beyond their grasp, so new relationships, relationships with an ineradicable social component, will become salient that will require a broader theory to absorb and handle them. I shall return to this historical conjecture at the end of this paper. Let me now sketch considerations that motivate a broader theory. And let me do this by first putting forward an additional representative anecdote.

II

As against the ideal speaker-listener, here is Bloomfield's account of one young Menomini he knew (1927, p. 395):

White Thunder, a man around forty, speaks less English than Menomini, and that is a strong indictment, for his Menomini is atrocious. His vocabulary is small; his inflections are often barbarous; he constructs sentences of a few threadbare models. He may be said to speak no language tolerably. His case is not uncommon among younger men, even when they speak but little English.

Bloomfield goes on to suggest that the commonness of the case is due, in some indirect way, to the impact of the conquering language. In short,

there is here *differential competence* within a *heterogeneous speech community*, both undoubtedly shaped by acculturation. (The alternative to a constitutive role for the novel sociocultural factor is to assume that atrocious Menomini was common also before contact. If taken seriously, the assumption would still implicate sociocultural factors). Social life has affected not merely outward performance, but inner competence itself.

Let me now review some other indications of the need to transcend the notions of perfect competence, homogeneous speech community, and independence of sociocultural features.

In her excellent article reviewing recent studies of subcultural differences in language development in the United States, Cazden (1966, p. 190) writes that one thing is clear:

The findings can be quickly summarized: on all the measures, in all the studies, the upper socio-economic status children, however defined, are more advanced than the lower socio-economic status children.

The differences reviewed by Cazden involve enabling effects for the upper status children just as much as disabling effects for the lower status children. Moreover, given subcultural differences in the patterns and purposes of language use, children of the lower status may actually excel in aspects of communicative competence not observed or measured in the tests summarized. And among the Menomini there were not only young men like White Thunder, but also those like Red Cloud Woman, who

speaks a beautiful and highly idiomatic Menomini ... (and) speaks Ojibwa and Potawatomi fluently. ... Linguistically, she would correspond to a highly educated American woman who spoke, say, French and Italian in addition to the very best type of cultivated, idiomatic English (Bloomfield, 1927, p. 394).

There are tribes of the northeast Amazon among whom the normal scope of linguistic competence is a control of at least four languages, a spurt in active command coming during adolescence, with repertoire and perfection of competence continuing to be augmented throughout life. Here, as in much of our world, the ideally fluent speaker-listener is multilingual. (Even an ideally fluent monolingual of course is master of functional varieties within the one language.)

In this connection it should be noted that fluent members of communities often regard their languages, or functional varieties, as not identical in communicative adequacy. It is not only that one variety is obligatory or preferred for some uses, another for others (as is often the case, say, as between public occasions and personal relationships). Such intuitions reflect experience and self-evaluation as to what one can in fact do with a given variety. This sort of differential competence has nothing

to do with 'disadvantage' or deficiency relative to other normal members of the community. All of them may find Kurdish, say, the medium in which most things can best be expressed, but Arabic the better medium for religious truth; users of Berber may find Arabic superior to Berber for all purposes except intimate domestic conversation (Ferguson, 1966).

The combination of community diversity and differential competence makes it necessary not to take the presence in a community of a widespread language, say, Spanish or English, at face value. Just as one puts the gloss of a native word in quotation marks, so as not to imply that the meaning of the word is thereby accurately identified, so one should put the name of a language in quotation marks, until its true status in terms of competence has been determined. (Clearly there is need for a theoretically motivated and empirically tested set of terms by which to characterize the different kinds of competence that may be found.) In an extreme case what counts as 'English' in the code repertoire of a community may be but a few phonologically marked forms (the Iwam of New Guinea). The cases in general constitute a continuum, perhaps a scale, from more restricted to less restricted varieties, somewhat crosscut by adaptation of the same inherited 'English' materials to different purposes and needs. A linguist analysing data from a community on the assumption 'once English, always English' might miss and sadly misrepresent the actual competence supposedly expressed by his grammar.

There is no way within the present view of linguistic competence to distinguish between the abilities of one of the pure speakers of Menomini noted by Bloomfield and those of whom White Thunder was typical. Menomini sentences from either would be referred to a common grammar. Perhaps it can be said that the competence is shared with regard to the recognition and comprehension of speech. While that would be an important (and probably true) fact, it has not been the intention of the theory to distinguish between models of competence for reception and models of competence for production. And insofar as the theory intends to deal with the 'creative' aspect of language, that is, with the ability of a user to devise novel sentences appropriate to situations, it would seem to be a retrenchment, if not more, to claim only to account for a shared ability to *understand* novel sentences produced by others. In some fundamental sense, the competence of the two groups of speakers, in terms of ability to make 'creative' use of Menomini, is clearly distinct. Difference in judgement of acceptability is not in question. There is simply a basic sense in which users of Menomini of the more versatile type have a knowledge (syntactic as well as lexical) that users of White Thunder's type do not. [. .]

Labov has documented cases of dual competence in reception, but single competence in production, with regard to the ability of lower-class

Negro children to interpret sentences in either standard or substandard phonology, while consistently using only substandard phonology in speaking themselves. An interesting converse kind of case is that in which there is a dual competence for production, a sort of 'competence for incompetence' as it were. Thus among the Burundi of East Africa (Albert, 1964) a peasant may command the verbal abilities stressed and valued in the culture but cannot display it in the presence of a herder or other superior. In such cases appropriate behavior is that in which 'their words are haltingly delivered, or run on uncontrolled, their voices are loud, their gestures wild, their figures of speech ungainly, their emotions freely displayed, their words and sentences clumsy.' Clearly the behavior is general to all codes of communication, but it attaches to the grammatical among them.

Such work as Labov's in New York City, and examples such as the Burundi, in which evidence for linguistic competence co-varies with interlocutor, point to the necessity of a social approach even if the goal of description is a single homogeneous code. Indeed, much of the difficulty in determining what is acceptable and intuitively correct in grammatical description arises because social and contextual determinants are not controlled. By making explicit the reference of a description to a single use in a single context, and by testing discrepancies and variations against differences of use and context, the very goal of not dealing with diversity can be achieved – in the limited, and only possible, sense in which it can be achieved. The linguist's own intuitions of underlying knowledge prove difficult to catch and to stabilize for use (and of course are not available for languages or varieties he does not himself know). If analysis is not to be reduced to explication of a corpus, or debauch into subjectivity, then the responses and judgements of members of the community whose language is analysed must be utilized – and not merely informally or *ad hoc*, but in some explicit, systematic way. In particular, since every response is made in some context, control of the dependence of judgements and abilities on context must be gained. It may well be that the two dimensions found by Labov to clarify phonological diversity – social hierarchy of varieties of usage, and range (formal to informal) of 'contextual styles', together with marking for special functions (expressivity, clarity, etc.) will serve for syntactic diversity as well. Certainly some understanding of local criteria of fluency, and conditions affecting it, is needed just insofar as the goal is to approximate an account of ideal fluency in the language in question. In sum, if one analyses the language of a community as if it should be homogeneous, its diversity trips one up around the edges. If one starts with analysis of the diversity, one can isolate the homogeneity that is truly there.

Clearly work with children, and with the place of language in education, requires a theory that can deal with a heterogeneous speech community, differential competence, the constitutive role of sociocultural features – that can take into account such phenomena as White Thunder, socioeconomic differences, multilingual mastery, relativity of competence in 'Arabic', 'English', etc., expressive values, socially determined perception, contextual styles and shared norms for the evaluation of variables. Those whose work requires such a theory know best how little of its content can now be specified. Two things can be said. First, linguistics needs such a theory too. Concepts that are unquestioningly postulated as basic to linguistics (speaker-listener, speech community, speech act, acceptability, etc.) are, as we see, in fact sociocultural variables, and only when one has moved from their postulation to their analysis can one secure the foundations of linguistic theory itself. Second, the notion of competence may itself provide the key. Such comparative study of the role of language as has been undertaken shows the nature and evaluation of linguistic ability to vary cross-culturally; even what is to count as the same language, or variety, to which competence might be related, depends in part upon social factors (cf. Gumperz, 1964; Hymes, 1968a; Labov, 1966). Given, then, the assumption that the competency of users of language entails abilities and judgements relative to, and interdependent with, sociocultural features, one can see how to extend the notion to allow for this. I shall undertake this, by recasting first the representative anecdote of the child, and then the notions of competence and performance themselves.

III

Recall that one is concerned to explain how a child comes rapidly to be able to produce and understand (in principle) any and all of the grammatical sentences of a language. Consider now a child with just that ability: A child who might produce any sentence whatever – such a child would be likely to be institutionalized: even more so if not only sentences, but also speech or silence was random, unpredictable. For that matter, a person who chooses occasions and sentences suitably, but is master only of fully grammatical sentences, is at best a bit odd. Some occasions call for being appropriately ungrammatical.

We have then to account for the fact that a normal child acquires knowledge of sentences, not only as grammatical, but also as appropriate. He or she acquires competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner. In short, a child becomes able to accomplish a repertoire of speech acts, to take part in speech events, and to evaluate their accomplishment by others. This competence, moreover, is integral with attitudes, values, and motiva-

tions concerning language, its features and uses, and integral with competence for, and attitudes toward, the interrelation of language with the other code of communicative conduct (cf. Goffman, 1956, p. 477; 1963, p. 335; 1964). The internalization of attitudes towards a language and its uses is particularly important (cf. Labov, 1965, pp. 84–5, on priority of subjective evaluation in social dialect and processes of change), as is internalization of attitudes toward use of language itself (e.g. attentiveness to it) and the relative place that language comes to play in a pattern of mental abilities (cf. Cazden, 1966), and in strategies – what language is considered available, reliable, suitable for, *vis-à-vis* other kinds of code.

The acquisition of such competency is of course fed by social experience, needs, and motives, and issues in action that is itself a renewed source of motives, needs, experience. We break irrevocably with the model that restricts the design of language to one face toward referential meaning, one toward sound, and that defines the organization of language as solely consisting of rules for linking the two. Such a model implies naming to be the sole use of speech, as if languages were never organized to lament, rejoice, beseech, admonish, aphorize, inveigh (Burke, 1966, p. 13), for the many varied forms of persuasion, direction, expression and symbolic play. A model of language must design it with a face toward communicative conduct and social life.

Attention to the social dimension is thus not restricted to occasions on which social factors seem to interfere with or restrict the grammatical. The engagement of language in social life has a positive, productive aspect. There are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless. Just as rules of syntax can control aspects of phonology, and just as semantic rules perhaps control aspects of syntax, so rules of speech acts enter as a controlling factor for linguistic form as a whole. Linguists generally have developed a theory of levels by showing that what is the same on one level of representation has in fact two different statuses, for which a further level must be posited. The seminal example is in Sapir (1925) on phonology, while the major recent examples are in the work of Chomsky and Lamb. A second aspect is that what is different at one level may have in fact the same status at the further level. (Thus the two interpretations of 'He decided on the floor' – the floor as what he decided on/as where he decided – point to a further level at which the sameness of structure is shown.) Just this reasoning requires a level of speech acts. What is grammatically the same sentence may be a statement, a command, or a request; what are grammatically two different sentences may as acts both be requests. One can study the level of speech acts in terms of the conditions under which sentences can be taken as alternative types of act, and in terms of the conditions under which types of act can be realized as

alternative types of sentence. And only from the further level of acts can some of the relations among communicative means be seen, e.g. the mutual substitutability of a word and a nod to realize an act of assent, the necessary co-occurrence of words and the raising of a hand to realize an oath.

The parallel interpretations of 'he decided on the floor' and 'she gave up on the floor' point to a further at which the sameness in structure is shown.

Rules of use are not a late grafting. Data from the first years of acquisition of English grammar show children to develop rules for the use of different forms in different situations and an awareness of different acts of speech (Ervin-Tripp, personal communication). Allocation of whole languages to different uses is common for children in multilingual households from the beginning of their acquisition. Competency for use is part of the same developmental matrix as competence for grammar.

The acquisition of competence for use, indeed, can be stated in the same terms as acquisition of competence for grammar. Within the developmental matrix in which knowledge of the sentences of a language is acquired, children also acquire knowledge of a set of ways in which sentences are used. From a finite experience of speech acts and their interdependence with sociocultural features, they develop a general theory of the speaking appropriate in their community, which they employ, like other forms of tacit cultural knowledge (competence) in conducting and interpreting social life (cf. Goodenough, 1957; Searle, 1967). They come to be able to recognize, for example, appropriate and inappropriate interrogative behavior (e.g. among the Araucanians of Chile, that to repeat a question is to insult; among the Tzeltal of Chiapas, Mexico, that a direct question is not properly asked (and to be answered 'nothing'); among the Cahinahua of Brazil, that a direct answer to a first question implies that the answerer has no time to talk, a vague answer that the question will be answered directly the second time, and that talk can continue).

The existence of competency for use may seem obvious, but if its study is to be established, and conducted in relation to current linguistics, then the notions of competence and performance must themselves be critically analysed, and a revised formulation provided.

The chief difficulty of present linguistic theory is that it would seem to require one to identify the study of the phenomena of concern to us here with its category of performance. The theory's category of competence, identified with the criterion of grammaticality, provides no place. Only performance is left, and its associated criterion of acceptability. Indeed, language use is equated with performance: 'the theory of language use – the theory of performance' (Chomsky, 1965, p. 9).

The difficulty with this equation, and the reasons for the making of it, can be explained as follows. First, the clarification of the concept of performance offered by Chomsky (1965, pp. 10–15), as we have seen, omits almost everything of sociocultural significance. The focus of attention is upon questions such as which among grammatical sentences are most likely to be produced, easily understood, less clumsy, in some sense more natural; and such questions are studied initially in relation to formal tree-structures, and properties of these such as nesting, self-embedding, multiple-branching, left-branching, and right-branching. The study of such questions is of interest, but the results are results of the psychology of perception, memory, and the like, not of the domain of cultural patterning and social action. Thus, when one considers what the sociocultural analogues of performance in this sense might be, one sees that these analogues would not include major kinds of judgement and ability with which one must deal in studying the use of language (see below under appropriateness).

Second, the notion of performance, as used in discussion, seems confused between different meanings. In one sense, performance is observable behavior, as when one speaks of determining from the data of performance the underlying system of rules (Chomsky, 1965, p. 4), and of mentalistic linguistics as that linguistics that uses performance as data, along with other data, e.g. those of introspection, for determination of competence (p. 193). The recurrent use of 'actual' implies as much, as when the term is first introduced in the book in question, 'actual performance', and first characterized: 'performance (the actual use of language in concrete situations)' (pp. 3–4). In this sense performance is 'actual', competence underlying. In another sense, performance itself also underlies data, as when one constructs a performance model, or infers a performative device (e.g. a perceptual one) that is to explain data and be tested against them (p. 15); or as when, in a related sense, one even envisages the possibility of stylistic 'rules of performance' to account for occurring word orders not accounted for by grammatical theory (p. 127).

When one speaks of performance, then, does one mean the behavioral data of speech? or all that underlies speech beyond the grammatical? or both? If the ambiguity is intentional, it is not fruitful; it smacks more of the residual category and marginal interest.

The difficulty can be put in terms of the two contrasts that usage manifests:

1. (underlying) competence v. (actual) performance;
2. (underlying) grammatical competence v. (underlying) models/rules of performance.

The first contrast is so salient that the status of the second is left obscure.

In point of fact, I find it impossible to understand what stylistic 'rules of performance' could be, except a further kind of underlying competence, but the term is withheld. [. . .]

It remains that the present vision of generative grammar extends only a little way into the realm of the use of language. To grasp the intuitions and data pertinent to underlying competence for use requires a sociocultural standpoint. To develop that standpoint adequately, one must transcend the present formulation of the dichotomy of competence: performance, as we have seen, and the associated formulation of the judgements and abilities of the users of a language as well. To this I now turn.

IV

There are several sectors of communicative competence, of which the grammatical is one. Put otherwise, there is behavior, and, underlying it, there are several systems of rules reflected in the judgements and abilities of those whose messages the behavior manifests. (The question of how the interrelationships among sectors might be conceived is touched upon below.) In the linguistic theory under discussion, judgements are said to be of two kinds: of *grammaticality*, with respect to competence, and of *acceptability*, with respect to performance. Each pair of terms is strictly matched; the critical analysis just given requires analysis of the other. In particular, the analysis just given requires that explicit distinctions be made within the notion of 'acceptability' to match the distinctions of kinds of 'performance', and at the same time, the entire set of terms must be examined and recast with respect to the communicative as a whole.

If an adequate theory of language users and language use is to be developed, it seems that judgements must be recognized to be in fact not of two kinds but of four. And if linguistic theory is to be integrated with theory of communication and culture, this fourfold distinction must be stated in a sufficiently generalized way. I would suggest, then, that for language and for other forms of communication (culture), four questions arise:

1. Whether (and to what degree) something is formally *possible*;
2. Whether (and to what degree) something is *feasible* in virtue of the means of implementation available;
3. Whether (and to what degree) something is *appropriate* (adequate, happy, successful) in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated;
4. Whether (and to what degree) something is in fact done, actually *performed*, and what its doing entails.

A linguistic illustration: a sentence may be grammatical, awkward,