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# LANGUAGE, DISCOURSE, AND CULTURAL MODELS: THREE LEVELS OF LANGUAGE SHIFT AND MAINTENANCE

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**ABSTRACT.** This paper explores the situation of language conflict and language shift among the Hñähñú Indians of Mexico. It attempts to broaden our understanding of language shift by focusing not on the outcome, but on the process of dislocation, as manifested in verbal interaction. This study of language use combines ethnography with discourse analysis. It argues theoretically and demonstrates empirically how language structure, discourse strategies, and cultural models form constitutive components of the language displacement process. I conclude that the mechanisms of language shift are defined less by domain analysis of the distributions of Spanish and Hñähñú than by clashes of cultural models and discourse styles.

1. LANGUAGE SHIFT AND MAINTENANCE. Language retention and language shift have been central topics in sociolinguistic theory and methodology since its birth. Various academic traditions have explored different aspects of these complex historical processes. In a century largely dominated by functionalism and structuralist synchronism it has not been easy, however, to develop an understanding and the necessary methodological tools to grasp a view of the historical, inherently process-driven character of all human action and speech.

With his model of language shift and maintenance, Fishman (1964, 1966, 1980, among other works) established the field of modern sociology of language. Based on statistical analysis of large-scale surveys such as census data, Fishman as well as Lieberman (1972, 1980, 1982), Veltman (1983, 1988, 1989), and others, identified macro-societal patterns of linguistic behavior, such as immigrants' shift to English as their primary language of use, sometimes within less than two decades after arrival in the United States, and the loss of their native language within two or three generations. Although statistical analysis can demonstrate these OUTCOMES over extended periods of time, it cannot give much information about the PROCESS involved, i.e. its internal phases, differentiation, and motives.

From a different perspective, Labov (1972a, 1972b, 1980) and variationist sociolinguistics have addressed the question of language change in the 'apparent time' model. Systematic differences in phonological and morphosyntactic speech patterns observed in members of three different generations are projected on a time axis to reconstruct historical linguistic change and its social motivation.

The work of Lambert (e.g. 1972) and his associates in social psychology, as well as many sociolinguistic studies, have drawn attention to the roles of attitude and linguistic consciousness in language acquisition and loss. A more recent approach in the field of social psychology, Giles' model of ethnolinguistic vitality identifies a reduced number of factors influencing maintenance and shift, including status, demography, and institutional support (e.g. Giles, Bourhis, & Taylor 1977).

In the realm of psycholinguistics and educational research, language loss has been studied by separating linguistic behavior, attitudes, and the competence of individual speakers. In an investigation with Mexican-background high school students in California, Hakuta, Pease-Alvarez, and their co-researchers asked whether the observed 'move to English reflects use and preference for English, or the loss in proficiency in the native language' (Hakuta et al. 1993:2; see also Hakuta & D'Andrea 1992, Pease-Alvarez & Hakuta 1993). They show convincingly that competence in Spanish with regard to vocabulary, grammar, and narrative skills is maintained despite evidence for a shift toward the use of English and gains in English proficiency (Hakuta et al. 1993:14). Their study thus reveals a significant divergence between proficiency and shift in use, complementing macro-sociological approaches that usually identify use shift with language loss. Both perspectives hold, though, that loss occurs in the next generation because the transmission is interrupted.

Another tradition not often associated with sociolinguistic and anthropological approaches to language loss explores the diachronic dimension of pragmatics, discourse analysis, and text linguistics. The work of historians like Guilhaumou (1989) and Robin (1973) employ the techniques of 'analyse du discours' to investigate changes in whole discourse patterns and their relation to ideology, e.g. the tribunals and assemblies of the French Revolution. Others study the historical change of text types like the sports report moving from the newspaper to radio and then to television broadcasting (cf. Schank 1981); similarly, Schlieben-Lange (1983, 1984) works in historical sociolinguistics of the 'longue durée', investigating pragmatic and cultural changes of discourse types over time on the basis of serial analysis of text types.

Although these quite different approaches identified a small number of macro-societal factors that are relevant to language shift (migration, industrialization, and urbanization, among others), there is a general feeling among scholars that, on the whole, they have deployed relatively little explanatory and predictive power as to the processes under study themselves (see Fasold 1984:217, Kulick 1992).

Since Gumperz' seminal article on social networks and language shift (1977, revised in Gumperz 1982), a series of new studies have surfaced that, in my view,

have considerably improved explanatory power (Gal 1979, Dorian 1981, Hamel & Muñoz Cruz 1982, 1988, Schmidt 1985, Hill & Hill 1986, Hamel 1988a, Kulick 1992). These studies have elaborated on theoretical arguments why weak predictability—based on the principle of causality—of macro-sociological perspectives was not so much a question of methodological refinement, but rather a fundamental, theoretical problem about the relationship between macro-societal factors and linguistic behavior. More and more scholars agree that causality could not simply be derived from correlations and that research should focus instead on the 'intervening processes' (Gal 1979:3) that make people redefine and redistribute their value system across their linguistic repertoire, and in certain cases abandon their native language. Many studies developed in this perspective ground their research in ethnography, interactional sociolinguistics, network structure analysis, and a range of qualitative methods centered on attitudes, reflexivity, linguistic consciousness, (re)interpretations, verbal interaction, and strategies.

As part of this new body of research, my research on language contact between Spanish and Mexican Indian languages focuses on the markers of shift that can be traced in verbal interaction. It belongs to the field of language loss studies that investigate shift in use and do not take into account attrition or other changes in competence of individual skills (cf. Hakuta et al. 1993). In fact, individual speakers are not taken into account as such in sociolinguistic network analysis (cf. Milroy 1980), but only as participants in specific speech events. The focus is on the collective bilingual repertoire and on the ways an indigenous community mobilizes its communicative resources and develops discourse strategies to solve transactional tasks that have to be solved with communicative means in specific speech events.

The methodology for this research can be broken down into several steps. First, ethnographic analysis of the speech community identifies key speech events and yields a general scheme of language use and distribution in these speech events. It sets the ground for generating hypotheses about specific fields of language conflict and change. In a second step, multi-layer discourse analysis of selected speech events describes which discursive resources are actually invested to address specific communicative needs. It reveals how different components of discourse structure including language distribution build up specific discourse strategies. In a third step, different discourse strategies, speech events, and types of speech events are compared to identify indicators of language maintenance and loss processes and to show how language change can be observed *in situ* and *in actu*, i.e. in the process of interaction itself. Finally, a framework based on distinguishing LANGUAGE STRUCTURE, DISCOURSE STRUCTURE, and CULTURAL MODELS helps to identify two basic modalities of language shift in progress in the case under study.

Thus, the analytic procedure focuses not only on surface structural phenomena, but also on underlying discourse strategies and structures and on cultural patterns and procedures, and each of these is considered a central component of language shift. These dimensions have traditionally been neglected in models of

language loss in the sociology of language (Fishman), variationist sociolinguistics (Labov), and social psychology (Giles).

2. **SOCIOCULTURAL CHANGE AND COMMUNICATIVE REPERTOIRE.** In the central highlands of Mexico, the Valle del Mezquital is home to some 80,000 members of the Hñähñú (or Otomí<sup>1</sup>) people who live predominantly in communities of 400 to 1,500 inhabitants. Over 90% of the population in the higher, arid areas of the valley is indigenous; 70% of that portion is considered to be bilingual, and some 25% is monolingual in the native language.

Over the past 30 years, native communities in this area have undergone a process of socioeconomic change perhaps more radical than at any time in their history. Induced by outside pressure, a growing number of households gave up their traditional settlement patterns based on scattered hamlets, and built villages of brick houses centered around a plaza where a new primary school with its basketball court by and large replaced the church as the community center. This urbanization brought with it a new infrastructure of dirt roads, electricity, and water supplies. Precarious subsistence farming forced a growing number of young men and women to seek employment as migrant workers in the regional centers, in Mexico City, or in the United States. Because these workers generally maintain close ties with their communities, a constant flow of money, new patterns of consumption, and other cultural practices find their way into the villages along with the Spanish language. No doubt radio broadcasting and incipient television reception play a significant role in the cultural change. The primary school has definitively found its place as an institution of prestige that nourishes the expectations of social mobility and integration through the transmission of Spanish and other skills of mainstream society.

From a macro-sociolinguistic perspective, the language situation in the Mezquital Valley can be described as the relationship between two conflicting historical tendencies of language change. First, the presently dominant tendency is characterized by **SUBSTITUTIVE DIGLOSSIA** (in the sense of Catalan sociolinguistics, see Vallverdú 1973, Boyer 1991), i.e. a conflicting, non-stable relationship between Spanish as the dominant language and Hñähñú as the subordinate language. Spanish is making inroads in the vernacular's geographical extension, its functional domains, and its lexical and grammatical structure. On the other hand, ethnographic observation reveals a tendency for cultural and linguistic resistance in the close network structures of traditional kinship and farming, in everyday communication, and in the traditional *cargo* system of local organization. All these elements tend

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<sup>1</sup>The Hñähñú are better known as 'Otomí', meaning 'bird arrow' or 'bird hunter', a Nahuatl name imposed during Aztec domination before Spanish colonization. Today the group is recovering its own name, Hñähñú, meaning 'sons of the Hñú people'. Hñähñú has now become the official name of the sixth largest indigenous group in Mexico, with some 280,000 members according to the 1990 census

to favor maintenance of the subordinate language (Hamel 1988a, Hamel & Muñoz Cruz 1988).

The most significant macro-societal factors in the displacement of Hñähñú coincide with those in other well-researched cases where language shift actually took place (cf. e.g. Gal 1979, Fasold 1984, Fishman 1989, 1991, Kulick 1992). As noted earlier, however, there are good reasons not to establish a direct, causal relationship between macro-societal factors and linguistic data to predict the communities' sociolinguistic behavior in the future. Before the 'why'-question of language shift can be addressed from an integrative, broader perspective than before, we have to explore in more detail and depth the 'how'-question, the process and mechanisms through which language shift actually takes place. My assumption is that language in interaction is the place where shift is anticipated, enacted, and consolidated, and that a fine-grained multi-layered discourse analysis can therefore shed light on the relationship between socioeconomic factors and linguistic data.

Ethnographic observation suggests that the recent changes in settlement patterns, migrant work, and political organization have led to a significant increase in and a qualitative transformation of certain kinds of speech events. For instance, more everyday communication takes place due to people living closer together. In addition, more and more governmental and private institutions interfere with community life, and new committees, cooperatives, *cargos* (posts), and electoral procedures have emerged. Whereas in the past a single traditional authority, the *cacique*, made many decisions, today almost all important resolutions are established collectively. The resulting meeting types are key ethnographic events for community organization. In addition, new literacy needs have emerged within the predominantly oral, vernacular culture, affecting the communicative repertoire of the local communities.<sup>2</sup>

An initial schema of speech events based on a general pattern of language distribution over key speech situations is presented in Table 1. At the two poles of the continuum, Groups A and D, categorical rules of language choice apply. In Groups B and C, both languages occur in different relations of predominance. The optional rules of language choice explain the occurrence of a series of code alternations, such as code switchings, transfers, code shiftings, and non-assimilated loans, as well as relatively context-free (e.g. competence-related) choices of a preferred language.

Table 1 can also be read as the diachronic projection of an idealized historical process of language shift. Starting from a point in the past when the indigenous language <sup>was</sup> obligatory for all communication in the community (Group A), language shift moves on to a later stage when Spanish breaks into some Hñähñú domains and transforms categorical into optional rules of language choice (Groups B and C). Finally, situations foreshadowing definite language loss appear where

<sup>2</sup>On the development of literacy practices in this area, see Hamel (1996).

TABLE 1. *Language distribution in key speech events*


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GROUP A. PREDOMINANCE/EXCLUSIVENESS OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE  
 Categorical rules of language choice  
*Activities that strengthen the inner life of the community:* everyday conversation, family work, organization of traditional field work, mutual help, *faenas*, rituals, local organization

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GROUP B. TENDENCY: INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE → INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE/SPANISH  
 Optional rules of language choice, code switching  
*Sociopolitical organization of the community:* meetings of local authorities, committees, juridical sessions (conciliations), exercise of official duties inside the community, trade inside the community, family communication, primary school through third grade, parent interviews

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GROUP C. TENDENCY: INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE/SPANISH → SPANISH  
 Optional rules of language choice, code switching  
*Organization of internal production with external participation in sociopolitical events beyond the realm of the community:* regional agencies, regional coordination, everyday conversation (participants' preferences), primary school grades four through six, interviews with some parents, mass media (Radio Mezquital), everyday communication in industrial enclaves

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GROUP D. PREDOMINANCE/EXCLUSIVENESS OF SPANISH  
 Categorical rules of language choice  
*Activities that foster assimilation:* work processes out of area, migrant work, regional meetings and assemblies, official duties, primary school feasts and official meetings, secondary school, health service, all written communication

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the indigenous language is totally excluded, as happens nowadays with many formal and regional events (Group D).

An important point is that all these speech events occur at the same time in history, i.e. they correspond to a synchronic pattern reflecting a societal repertoire. More traditional events appear alongside new communicative needs, and old ethnic cultural models conflict with modern patterns of action introduced from the national society. This synchronic heterogeneity of discourse units, the simultaneousness of the unsimultaneous, in Mannheim's and Bloch's sense, serves as the basis for a diachronic interpretation.

Similar to Labov's model of apparent time, coexisting speech varieties are projected on a time axis as if they represent different chronological stages. As distinct from Labov, though, it is not individual speakers from different generations that are compared here, but specific SPEECH EVENTS, i.e. sociological units with their own internal heterogeneity. Also, while Labov considered phonological varia-



tion, this study examines discourse units. The fundamental idea, however, remains: the synchronic heterogeneity of language serves as a basis for explaining historical language change (Weinreich, Labov, & Herzog 1968).

As Table 1 illustrates, traditional ethnographic analysis of speech events limits the study to surface descriptions of language use, as in domain analysis. Although it allows one to assess the presence, coexistence, or absence of the languages in question, it does not enable one to interpret the functions and effects of language choice and alternations. Nor can it describe and interpret the complex modalities of language conflict and shift because many of their components do not appear on the language surface. Thus, to unravel the concrete, interactive functioning of these kinds of language processes, we have to use a combined approach of discourse analysis that deals separately with various aspects of discourse constitution. The combined approach includes the formal organization of interaction (conversation analysis), action structure (frames or action schemas, speech acts, pragmatics), and communicative schemas (such as argumentation and narrative). Language choice and switching phenomena are analyzed as a further level of discourse organization. Additional aspects of discourse constitution can be included as distinct levels of analysis where needed (Hamel 1982, 1988a).

3. MODALITIES OF LANGUAGE SHIFT. Our corpus comprises speech events in various settings. The analysis focuses on key events, including the organization of collective farm work, local administration (Hamel 1988a, Sierra 1992), the juridical system (Hamel 1990, Sierra 1990, 1995), and bilingual education (Hamel 1988b, Francis & Hamel 1992). The analysis reveals that the processes of language conflict and shift occur on at least three levels of cognitive and discourse organization (see Table 2).

Level 1, cultural models, takes elements and ideas from a range of fields. Starting with the ethnographic tradition of 'ways of doing things' and Goffman's (1974) frame analysis, it also draws on Bourdieu's *habitus* concept (e.g. 1979, 1980) and encompasses developments in cognitive anthropology and related fields (Holland & Quinn 1987, D'Andrade & Strauss 1992). It refers to overarching, endurable categories that cannot be reduced to discourse structures, although in many cases there are corresponding discourse units in Level 2. In my own research (see the examples to follow), this level includes procedures and models of farming and other problem-solving devices, or conflict and conciliation management. They may materialize in social and ethnic styles that are commonly related to a specific *habitus* and may activate a range of discourse strategies. Two problems arise here. One is how to operationalize this level without recurrence to discourse categories. The other is how to distinguish it in each case from the level of discourse structures. Even so, I chose to introduce this level beyond the more traditional dual framework of discourse vs. linguistic structure (e.g. Gumperz 1982) for two reasons: (a) because of its enduring, *habitus*-type characteristics that exceed specific dis-

TABLE 2. *Discourse levels of language conflict and shift*


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LEVEL 1. CULTURAL MODELS: CULTURAL PATTERNS AND PROCEDURES (CM)	Components of cultural models: concepts and definitions of speech events, procedures (e.g. of politeness, problem solving), conflict or conciliation management (e.g. discourse styles of bureaucratic procedure vs. ethnic styles in intercultural communication), overarching discourse styles, habitus
<hr/>	
LEVEL 2. FUNCTION: DISCOURSE STRUCTURES (DS)	Techniques for the organization of interaction (e.g. turn taking, sequencing), pragmatic categories such as verbal action schemes, techniques for argumentation and narration, discourse strategies
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LEVEL 3. FORM: LINGUISTIC CODES AND STRUCTURES (LC)	Units on all levels of systemic linguistic analysis: phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics

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course structures and (b) because I found a number of cases where a rupture between these cultural models and given discourse structures occurs and in which this divergence is relevant (again, see the following examples).

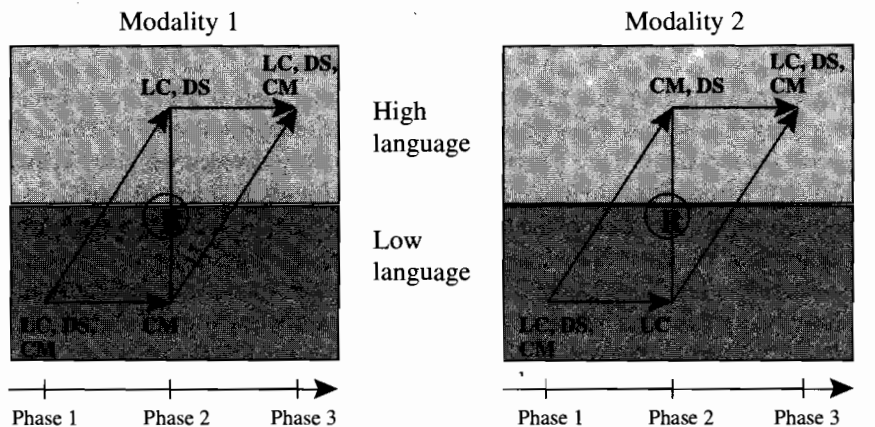
Levels 2 and 3 are more or less self-explanatory. Many relevant phenomena, like code switching and borrowings, may be analyzed on Level 2 (function) and Level 3 (form). Traditionally, language shift or loss is investigated only on the third level of analysis, the object of structural or generative linguistics. As we shall see, however, changes on the linguistic surface can often be explained only if levels of discourse and cultural organization that underlie surface structure are taken into account.

In this study, among the most revealing findings about these mechanisms was the discovery that language shift very often operates through ruptures at different levels of the discourse organization depicted in Table 2. Such dislocations transform the cultural basis of interpretation for the ethnolinguistic group, i.e. they interfere with the group's cultural models and lead to breaches between the language used and the historical experience the group has accumulated over time (cf. Lang 1980).

As shown in an idealized form in Figure 1, in the Mezquital Valley, at least two different modalities of language/can be distinguished. Each of these modalities operates through three phases with a different language dislocation in the three levels of discourse organization introduced in Table 2.

3.1. MODALITY 1. In Phase 1, the three levels of discourse organization coincide within the indigenous universe. This situation corresponds approximately to Group A speech events in Table 1.

In Phase 2, changing conditions will at first force speakers to adopt new linguistic codes and discourse structures from the dominant language. This typically happens in three domains of central relevance to social organization and language

FIGURE 1. *Modalities of language shift*

(LC=linguistic codes; DS=discourse structures; CM=cultural models; R=rupture)

conflict: bilingual education, local and regional administration, and contact situations between the communities and external agents (e.g. bureaucracy, service institutions, banks, and such). In this middle phase of Modality 1, the new linguistic codes and discourse structures remain inherently incomprehensible because the Indian speakers cannot establish a relationship between their own historical and biographical experience and the new codes and structures.

In Phase 3, the breach is overcome, reunifying cultural patterns, discourse structures, and linguistic codes in the realm of the dominant language and mainstream culture. Language and discourse phenomena that were incomprehensible now become accessible, since at this stage indigenous speakers have acquired from the dominant society the cultural models, i.e. the cultural base of interpretation, for their linguistic codes and discourse patterns.

In sum, the Indian language and its discourse structures and cultural models are gradually excluded in a complex process consisting of three phases in which one or two discourse levels are replaced at a time. In the long run, this process leads to a situation where the indigenous language is abandoned and, according to Mexican ethnicity ideology, a given community is no longer considered indigenous, but 'rural' (*campesina*) in generic terms.

The third phase is no doubt the most idealized in this framework. Often it is never reached in terms of homogeneously imposing cultural models from the mainstream society on a large scale. Frequently new syncretic models emerge and stabilize over time in a hybrid area somewhere in between the high and low language fields, as is sustained by researchers in sociolinguistics (cf. Hill & Hill 1986) and anthropology (cf. Bonfil Batalla 1990). Nevertheless, in many cases it can be shown that the cycle of language shift is completed when a new coherence is es-

tablished among cultural models, discourse structure, and linguistic surface structure in the realm of the dominant language.<sup>3</sup>

3.1.1. CASE 1: SETTLEMENT OF DAMAGES IN THE COOPERATIVE. To illustrate Modality 1, let us consider as an example a contact situation from Group C in our language distribution pattern (Table 1). This situation involves a bank employee participating in a meeting of the peasant council in the village of Pozuelos. The setting is the inner courtyard of a peasant house used as a regular meeting place in the village. The participants are RB, employee of the agricultural bank; B and C, indigenous peasants, members of the 'ejido'; and K, indigenous peasant and primary school teacher. The topic is the procedure for settling damages for a lost harvest.

To provide a bit of background, the last harvest was lost due to lack of rain. Because the harvest was insured, a damage settlement was claimed. One of the conditions for settlement is that the peasants must have sown between two pre-established dates (July 15th and 25th, and July 1st and 8th). Harvest insurance is a new procedure for the indigenous peasants in Pozuelos. The year before, they lost indemnities because they did not know how to present their claims. This year the agricultural bank granted a loan for the seeds, and this loan money can only be recovered if the insurance company settles damages. The bank employee, whose bank is of course interested in a damage settlement, calls for this meeting to help the peasants prepare the damage claim, just a week before an insurance agent is to visit the village to investigate the situation. In sum, a potential conflict of interests between two institutions (the insurance company and the bank) is at stake, a setting which is altogether alien to the peasants' experience.

The following transcription illustrates two out of eleven individual interviews with slightly varying content (the text in Hñähñú is italicized).

#### SEGMENT 1

1. RB Entonces usted don Vidal. Así son dos hectáreas. No se, no se reportaron.  
'Well then, don Vidal. So it's two hectares. They weren't reported.'
2. No sé si ya sembró. ¿O sembraron?  
'I don't know whether you sowed already. Or did you sow?'
3. B Sí, ya sembré ahorita.  
'Yes, I've sown just now.'
4. RB Pero después del 15 de julio. Entons' va a decir usted cualquier día.  
'But after July 15. Then you will tell them any day.'

<sup>3</sup>I am grateful for comments and critique I received from Arlene Stairs, Werner Kallmeyer, John J. Gumperz, and others on this aspect of the framework, an aspect which I do not consider to be settled definitely. By no means is this framework meant to be deterministic in the sense that it predicts a NECESSARY outcome of the process. Its aim is to reconstruct a process as it can be shown retrospectively in empirical data.

5. Después del 15 de julio, del 15 al 25 de julio, pero cualquier día.  
'After July 15, July 15 to 25, but just any day.'
6. B *Haha.*  
'Yes.'
7. RB Presenta usted, para que le reconozcan.  
'You tell them, to make them accept it.'
8. B *Haha, haha, haha.*  
'Yes, yes, yes.'
9. RB Porque si no, no le van a reconocer nada. ¡Ventura Mendieta Sánchez!  
'Because otherwise they won't acknowledge anything. (NAME)!'

## SEGMENT 2

10. RB Por ahí, ¡Teotonio Angeles Hernández!  
'There now, (NAME)!'
11. C ¡Presente!  
'Here!'
12. RB Son dos hectáreas. Nos reportó una. Una no está sembrada.  
'There are two hectares. You reported one to us. One hasn't been sown.'
13. C *Haha.*  
'Yes.'
14. RB Si está sembrada es después del 15.  
'If it has been sown it was after the 15th.'
15. C Sí. El 15.  
'Yes. The 15th.'
16. RB Así es. Y sembró del primero al ocho de julio.  
'Very well. And you sowed between July 1st and 8th.'
17. C Sí.  
'Yes.'
18. RB ¿Se acuerda? Del primero al ocho de julio.  
'Remember? From July 1st to 8th.'
19. C Sí.  
'Yes.'

20. RB No la vayan a regar. Cuando la rieguen, todo esto se va abajo, ¿eh?  
'Don't mess it up. If you do, it'll all come down on you, okay?'
21. C Sí.  
'Yes.'
22. K *Oxqui punfri nu ra fecha porgue nu b-u ya con con que-a hinda  
recibi.*  
'Don't forget the date, because otherwise with, with, they won't  
accept it.'
23. C *Haha.*  
'Yes.'
24. RB ¡Absalón Pérez B.!  
'(NAME)!'

3.1.2. ANALYSIS OF CASE 1.<sup>4</sup> The standard procedure of the multi-layer analysis focuses on the formal organization of interaction (conversation analysis, i.e. turn-taking, conditional relevance, etc.), the action structure (pragmatics, i.e. action schemas, speech acts, strategies, etc.), and the communicative schemas (e.g. argumentation, narrative, etc.). Language choice and switching phenomena are analyzed as a further level of discourse organization. In addition, to integrate and summarize the analysis with respect to language shift in process, I describe general strategies of 'minorization' (or ethnic demotion), the establishment of hegemony, and the rupture between cultural patterns and discourse structure. My analysis proceeds in the following order: (1) sequential structure, (2) action structure, (3) social relations, (4) language distribution, (5) traces of language shift.

SEQUENTIAL STRUCTURE. The bank employee calls on one peasant after the other to analyze each case. All other peasants are present. A look at the local management of the sequential structure reveals that RB controls the distribution of turns throughout the session. By calling on each peasant, he selects him as the next speaker (lines 9, 10, 24) and principal interlocutor for this segment. No self-selection takes place except by K, the teacher (22), who intervenes as a cultural broker and translates the instruction into Hñähñü. RB maintains the institutional control over the initiation of each pair sequence (summons - reply). He establishes conditional relevance very directly through the content of the list (number of reported hectares, sowing dates). His organizational control is marked by a loud, official voice, and a fast, executive-type speed and voice modulation; he shouts each peasant's name in accordance with the custom in such (and bigger) meetings.

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<sup>4</sup>The analysis can be presented in only summarized form in this paper. The normal procedure is to examine minutely a number of events, turn by turn, on all levels of analysis, and to establish systematic structural comparisons as a next step.

**ACTION STRUCTURE.** This analysis involves identifying verbal interaction patterns or frames, speech acts, and strategies. From a pragmatic perspective we consider ways in which turns and utterances are constituted as actions and how they enact interaction patterns.

RB establishes the action structure of the event based on a general pattern of business meetings with a fixed agenda and a chairperson. The verbal interaction pattern (VIP) contains the following underlying structural units: (1) opening and establishment of the agenda, (2) calling the roll, (3) discussion of business, (4) conclusions, resolutions, and (5) formal closings. Within (3) a small VIP is enacted and repeated with each peasant (P), altogether 11 times:

1. Calling a name (RB) and verifying presence (RB + P)
2. Stating reported information (RB)
3. Verifying, clarifying information (RB + P)
4. Instructing future action concerning report (RB)
5. Dismissal through initiation of next VIP (calling new name) (RB)

Segment 1 represents the standard procedure for this type of interchange. RB utters instructions for the peasant's future action in the form of directive speech acts—orders, instructions (lines 4, 5, 7), telling B very bluntly how to act at the meeting with the insurance agent. Then he adds a justification (7) that adopts the illocutionary force of a warning (9).

Segment 2 contains two expansions, or elaborations within the standard procedure. First, an exhortation in the form of a pattern expansion (18-21) is intended to develop a shared perspective of the issue. On the level of the constitution of action, RB defines the situation as a counseling event with this utterance. From the point of view of social relations, RB's turns (18, 20) also contain a proposal to establish a relationship of complicity, which is accomplished through its uttering and the peasant's ratification (21, 23).

The second expansion consists of a pattern reinforcement uttered by the peasant teacher (K), who acts as a cultural broker and repeats the instructions in Hñähñú (22). He focuses on the decisive question of the sowing date.

**SOCIAL RELATIONS.** Social relations are in general terms asymmetrical: RB is a member of the dominant society, is the expert, and controls the session recurring to a series of discursive resources (list, etc.); in contrast, the peasants are members of the nondominant society, are not experts in this situation, and do not control the session. Different from many other inter-ethnic encounters in these communities, however, all participants are making an obvious effort to build up a working relationship of cooperation and to keep the objective and subjective tension (Bourdieu 1980) as low as possible. Although the bank employee maintains control during the whole session, no conversational sanctions against the indigenous speakers are observed. RB makes a significant effort to establish a relationship of complicity, which is more evident in Segment 2 than in Segment 1 and which consolidates over time. Finally, K acts as cultural broker, the mediator between two cultures.

LANGUAGE DISTRIBUTION. Language choice and distribution fit neatly into the picture of cooperation. Spanish dominates throughout the event, but Hñähñú is never excluded. Participant-oriented language choice obliges the Indians to use Spanish in their interactions with the monolingual bank employee. In spite of their obviously limited competence, there are no signs of stigmatization vis-à-vis their ethnic dialect of Spanish or their use of Hñähñú among themselves. The competent bilingual teacher intervenes as an interpreter when communication is at risk.

TRACES OF LANGUAGE SHIFT. Our discourse analysis reveals some basic mechanisms of language shift *in actu* as part of an overall process of language minorization. It is precisely the kind of hegemonic constellation (in a Gramscian sense) described above that sets the stage for language minorization and displacement. Given the overall power relations, limited competence in Spanish and task-related deficiencies in the indigenous discourse repertoire are exhibited as 'objective' shortcomings, without the need to resort to stigmatization or metadiscursive discrimination. Such inter-ethnic conditions create a favorable climate for the indigenous people to adopt frames, discourse techniques, and pragmatic conventions from the dominant society, as can be observed in this example.

In many instances the peasants' general insecurity becomes evident, as is manifested by hesitation phenomena and other conversational cues. The data suggest that they find it difficult to interpret the technical relations between sowing dates and damage claims, and to decipher the underlying discourse patterns (DS) they have to rehearse in Spanish (LC), since they do not correspond to their cultural models (CM) of farming experience (see Figure 1). According to their own cultural base, sowing and harvesting is determined by a different time logic related to the climate, to rain and drought, and not to fixed calendar dates. The breach between language and discourse structures on the one hand, and historically accumulated experience (the cultural model), on the other, is clearly demonstrated in this instance of adopting new discourse techniques needed for a successful damage claim.

The convergence of the three discourse levels in the dominant universe (phase 3) is virtually foreshadowed in the behavior of the teacher and other cultural brokers, since they have at least in part acquired the cultural models crystallized in the discourse and language structures that make them comprehensible.

3.2. MODALITY 2. A second modality that can be reconstructed from the data starts with the shift in cultural models.

In Phase 1, the three discourse levels again coincide within the realm of the indigenous culture before Spanish makes its inroads.

In Phase 2, the cultural models (CM) and in part the discourse structures (DS) of the national society are introduced first, whereas the indigenous language (LC) remains present on the surface. Examples of this phase can be found in intra-ethnic institutional (or semi-institutional) speech events on the community level, such as dispute settlements, committee meetings, or general assemblies where certain obligatory rules of native language use apply predominantly (Group A of Table



1). Members of the new leadership such as teachers and migrant workers typically introduce new procedures for political and social organization such as agendas and roll calls for meetings, the nomination of chairpersons or steering committees, written reports, summaries, and elections, among others.

Phase 3 corresponds to complete shift to the dominant language and culture. Once the cultural models (CM) and discourse patterns (DS) are well established and a cognitive reorientation has taken place, the loss of the native language on the surface level (LC) can occur more easily, given the asymmetric power relations that obtain between the two language groups. At this point, Spanish seems much more appropriate than the Indian language to satisfy the new communicative needs. Thus, also through this modality the production and appropriation of social experience may ultimately converge within the national culture and language, unless a process of language awareness and resistance emerges as sometimes occurs in language shift situations (cf. Hill & Hill 1986).

3.2.1. CASE 2: COMMUNITY ASSEMBLY FOR INSTALLATION OF NEW JUDGE. This case corresponds to Phase 2 of the second modality. The indigenous language (LC) is maintained as the legitimate means of communication, although Spanish breaks in through side sequences and in specific episodes (Group B of Table 1). The assembly as a whole is a fairly new event (CM), which contains some traditional ethnic discourse units; in the decisive episodes, however, new discourse structures (DS) (chair, roll calls, oral report based on written text, etc.) dominate the course of action.

At this general assembly, all citizens of the village of Decá are summoned to participate in the annual ritual event of handing over the judge's office to the new office bearer elected in a previous assembly. The main point on the agenda is the handing over of the judgeship. The judge is at the same time the mayor, the highest authority in the community. Previous to the act itself, the outgoing judge renders an activity report which has to be discussed and approved. Then the judge's office is handed over, among other topics on the agenda. The participants in this event are the outgoing judge (OJ, a teacher), the secretary, the new judge (NJ, a peasant), the assembly chairperson, and some 100 citizens, family heads, mainly peasants.

By way of background, the annual election and installation of the judge in two subsequent assemblies constitute highlights in the community's political life because the nomination of candidates, the election itself, and the report of activities presented by the outgoing judge open a space for sometimes controversial debates on local politics, value systems, and community norms.<sup>5</sup> In former times, the selection of the new office bearer was performed through a much less public procedure in the Hñähñú villages, such as the nomination by the predecessor or the council of the elderly. At the time of our data collection in the early 1980s, how-

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<sup>5</sup>Within our research project, see Sierra (1992) for a detailed analysis of this kind of speech event.

ever, a more democratic system had been adopted, without all procedural details already having been defined, as we shall see.

The analyzed speech event comprises three key episodes: the debate about the nomination of a chair for the meeting (for the first time in this village), the report of activities presented by the outgoing judge, and the handing over of office. The structure of the last two episodes is presented in Figure 2, in which the sequential structure depicts what actually took place in the assembly and the action structure shows the various stages of the event.

A first segmentation of the transcript reveals a number of noteworthy phenomena. First, the main active participants (mostly school teachers and other cultural brokers) engage in extended and complex conversational activities to establish, open, carry through, and close the assembly. Second, a number of explicit focusing accomplishments occur to establish and re-establish order according to the overall verbal interaction pattern of the meeting. Some of the obstacles that hamper the orderly development of the meeting show up very clearly in the complex interlinking of the sequential structure on the surface and the underlying verbal action structure shown in Figure 2.

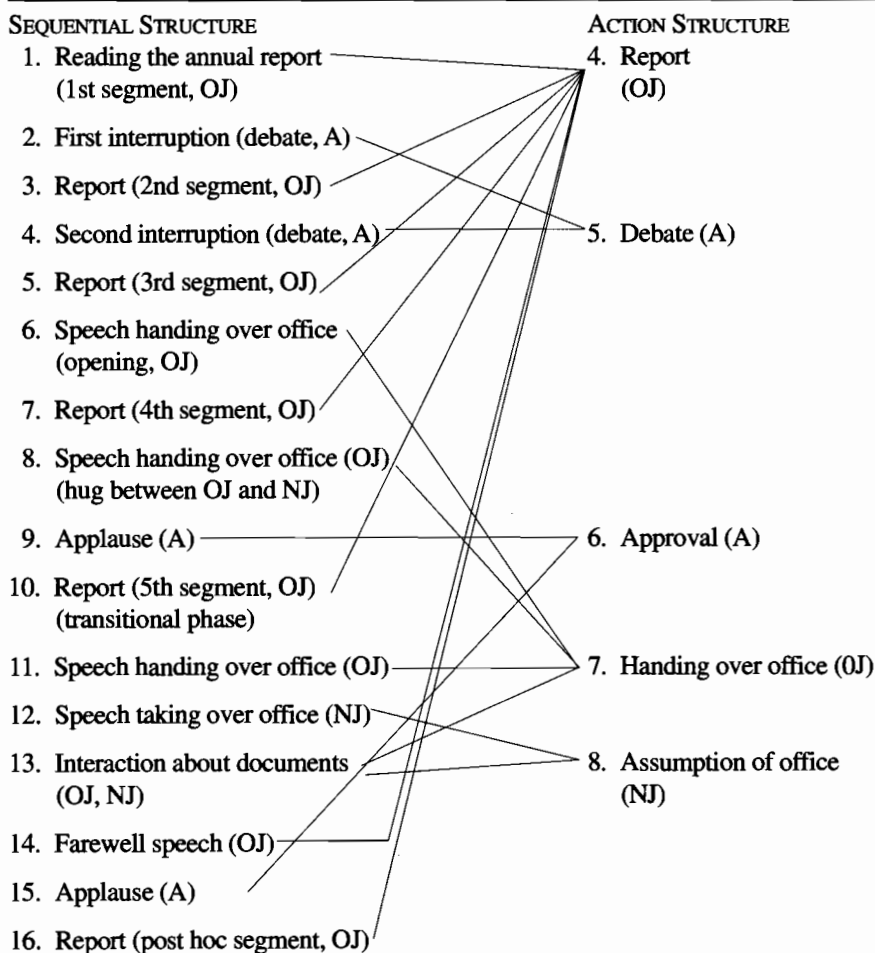
ANALYSIS OF CASE 2.<sup>6</sup> The assembly is based on a verbal interaction pattern which contains, in a simplified version, the following steps (step numbers correspond to the right column of Figure 2): (1) establishment of opening conditions; (2) formal opening; (3) agreement on the agenda, election of a chairperson, and beginning; (4) activity report (OJ); (5) debate; (6) approval (or disapproval); (7) handing over the office (OJ); (8) assumption of office (NJ); (9) handing over other offices (secretary, treasurer, etc.); (10) formal resolutions and closing. Only steps 4 to 8 are shown in Figure 2.

Comparing the segments identified in the two columns of Figure 2, we can see that striking intersections occur between certain steps in the action structure (report, debate, approval, handing over the office) and the sequential structure. The report is interrupted several times by activities belonging to other steps of the action structure that violate the sequential logic. As a matter of fact, the report continues even AFTER (segment 16 of the sequential structure) the official transfer of office has happened, at a time when the outgoing judge is no longer in office.<sup>7</sup>

A complex pattern of post-diglossic language distribution (Table 1, Group B) can be observed, where domain boundaries are weakened through the leakage of functions and mixing of forms. Although Hñähñú still acts as the legitimate lan-

<sup>6</sup>In this case, the full analysis will be reduced to a structural comparison between the sequential structure (level 1) and the action structure (level 2).

<sup>7</sup>A methodological objection could be raised that this case might represent a variant of a pattern specific to Hñähñú culture. Detailed analysis reveals, however, that the chairperson's interventions are not ratified and typically occur when the report gets stuck. Furthermore, all active participants engage in conspicuous focusing activities that reveal the 'inappropriate' embedding of the sequences in question (see Hamel 1988a).

FIGURE 2. *Speech situation: Handing over the judge's office*

(OJ=outgoing judge, NJ=new judge, A=assembly)

guage of communication in the assembly, Spanish is already making inroads into the event. In many side sequences among the leading figures of the assembly, as well as through code shifting into Spanish in the report and other formal episodes, the dominant language is present.

These phenomena characterize the assembly as an event undergoing a fundamental process of change. Many of its constituent parts and procedures are not yet well established. Public elections and installation in office represent new cultural patterns imported from the national society. And detailed discourse analysis

reveals how difficult it is to establish the corresponding discourse structures, such as verbal interaction patterns, as general frames of orientation. Here again we encounter the breach among the levels of discourse organization typical for processes of language shift identified in Table 2. In this case illustrating the second modality, the process starts with the introduction of cultural models (CM) and, in part, discourse structures (DS) from the national society, whereas the indigenous language (LC) is maintained on the surface level in Phase 2 (as depicted in Figure 1). Once more, the perspective of total shift is prefigured in the behavior of the cultural brokers, who demonstrate through numerous code-switchings and transfers a sustained preference for Spanish in this kind of event.

In both modalities of language shift, the distribution of language codes, discourse structure, and cultural models reveals a rupture between socio-historical production and the discursive appropriation of experience. Such a procedure of cultural and linguistic fragmentation has proven to be an efficient strategy of language policies that tend to oppress subordinate ethnolinguistic cultures (see Hamel 1988c, 1992, 1993a, 1993b, 1994a, 1994b).

4. SOCIOLINGUISTIC THEORY AND METHOD. At the beginning of this paper I argued that a deeper understanding of language shift would imply a change in focus from the analysis of large-scale OUTCOMES of language shift to the PROCESSES themselves. Three related issues surface from my analysis which call for debate and further research: (1) the sociolinguistic relationship between the languages; (2) the phases, dynamics, and mechanisms of language shift; and (3) the relation between macro-societal factors and linguistic behavior.

4.1. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HEGEMONIC AND SUBORDINATE LANGUAGES. To comprehend more fully the mechanisms of language shift, we first have to reconceptualize the relationship between 'high' and 'low' languages and the corresponding frameworks of interpretation. As reflected in the classical concept of diglossia (Ferguson 1959, Fishman 1967, 1980), sociolinguistics often defines this relationship in terms of structural and functional attributes of the languages themselves. That is, languages or dialects possess high or low status and are labeled as having  $\pm$ morphological complexity,  $\pm$ prestige,  $\pm$ literacy, and so forth. Languages appear thus isolated from discourse, culture, and their speakers. The underlying concept of languages in contact (since Weinreich 1953) or conflict (as in Catalan sociolinguistics, cf. Vallverdù 1973, 1980) constitutes a metonymic metaphor, a reduction that excludes the speaker. Yet it is not languages that are in contact but speakers, users, language communities for whom the languages may be the objects and sometimes instruments of a social relationship of conflict and struggle. And very rarely do the frontiers and conflict lines coincide neatly with the language boundaries involved. Therefore, a framework is needed that (re)incorporates the pragmatic dimension of discourse and the actors, and differentiates among various dimensions of language structure, discourse, and culture.

The findings of my research—as well as of other studies (e.g. Gal 1979, Kulick 1992)—lead to the conclusion that the mechanisms underlying the language conflict, shift, or maintenance processes are less defined by patterns of language distribution over domains than by clashes between cultural models, discourse strategies, and discourse styles. These phenomena are based on communicative repertoires and speakers' resources, among which language choice and code-switching are a central but not exclusive component. Hence the division lines of conflict and shift do not necessarily coincide with language boundaries on the surface. Social relations of domination which refer directly to the cultural conflict are produced both in Spanish and in the indigenous language. For instance, a member of parliament of Hñähñú heritage from the PRI political party may develop a dominant discourse in the Indian language. And many acts of protest and resistance may be presented in Spanish, but based on ethnic cultural patterns.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, it is doubtful whether such a complex sociolinguistic reality can be explained appropriately within a dualistic framework of clearly separated language domains, as suggested by the classical concept of diglossia, or through a dichotomous model of power relation, as in Catalan sociolinguistics (Ninyoles 1969, Vallverdú 1973, 1980, 1981; see also Boyer 1991). A theoretically more appropriate model starts not with the languages as abstract entities, but with the social relations of power and dominance between communities and their members, relationships which are often realized under the modalities of hegemony and subalternity (in the neo-Gramscian sense, cf. Cirese 1979). Although the two languages in question proto-typically appear as central foci in such a framework,<sup>9</sup> the relations of power are constituted and reproduced with variable discursive resources. It is only on the basis of a great number of repetitive procedures in the reproduction of discourse patterns and strategies that overarching, more stable discourse styles emerge and consolidate as general forms of *habitus* (Bourdieu 1980). In this perspective, the old debate about 'languages in contact' vs. 'languages in conflict' loses much of its relevance since it only refers to surface phenomena that do not necessarily reflect the underlying relations of power. In our case, as in many others, the construction of hegemony and the mechanisms of language displacement work most efficiently when no open conflict is in sight.

4.2. MECHANISMS OF LANGUAGE SHIFT. Many recent qualitative studies on language shift and related topics (e.g. Gal 1979, Hill & Hill 1986, Kulick 1992) apply a combination of discourse analysis and indirect elicitation methods (such as interviews, matched guise techniques, and surveys on language choice) to obtain

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<sup>8</sup>This appears very neatly in the discourse developed in Mexico by the indigenous EZLN (Zapatist Army of National Liberation) in their negotiations with the federal government throughout 1994 and 1995.

<sup>9</sup>This occurs mainly on the level of diglossic ideologies, cf. Gardy & Lafont (1981), see also Woolard (1992) and Silverstein (1992).

data on the intervening cognitive and pragmatic triggers of language shift. Although it is certainly useful to complement different approaches to such a complex topic as language shift,<sup>10</sup> it is possible to fully exploit the resources of discourse analysis to identify the markers of language shift in the verbal interaction itself, without resorting to indirect, evaluative data from the realm of linguistic reflexivity. Keeping these two procedures separate, at least during an early stage of the research, it is then possible to combine and integrate their results.

The structural provisions for language shift are rooted in the remarkable synchronic heterogeneity of the indigenous communicative system. Its broad repertoire of coexisting resources serves as a starting point for a gradual redistribution of coexisting variants based on a reassessment of values and meaning potentials (status, efficiency, ethnic loyalty) attached to each of the languages concerned. A systematic comparison of different speakers' verbal behavior in each speech event, of discourse strategies across events, of types of speech events, and of different communities allows us to construct an apparent time axis of the historical process of change in language choice patterns, discourse patterns, and cultural models. As a typical procedure we encounter relatively long lasting processes of negotiation, beginning with the first occurrence of a new pattern in a few speakers' repertoire and culminating in a general acceptance and use of the new pattern by the local speech community. Sometimes participants explicitly discuss a new procedure or refer to novel terms or patterns in stretches of metadiscursive speech.<sup>11</sup> In most cases, however, the degree of innovation of a given item, its evaluation, and its relative acceptance will have to be reconstructed through the procedures and levels of discourse analysis shown earlier.

The examples analyzed in this paper highlight the great complexity typical of many language conflict and shift situations. As a matter of fact, it proved impossible to restrict the analysis to the linguistic codes and structures on the surface as is usually done in traditional sociolinguistics, since decisive phenomena of shift occurred on the levels of discourse structures and cultural models. As we have seen, a typical process of language shift is often triggered by new discourse patterns and cultural models introduced while the minority language is still preserved on the surface.

Language shift is therefore not simply accomplished through a change in recurring language choice patterns through which one language replaces the other,

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<sup>10</sup>Our research project included an extensive study on attitudes and linguistic consciousness (Muñoz Cruz 1987, Hamel & Muñoz Cruz 1982, 1988) whose results confirm and complement the present findings.

<sup>11</sup>Such comments are relatively easy to obtain in interviews and other elicitation procedures (Hill & Hill 1986, Muñoz Cruz 1987). Although these comments are useful to generate hypotheses or to confirm other analyses, it is only when they happen in naturally occurring speech events that they acquire their full significance for the discourse approach applied here.

but by complex processes of transformations that encompass many levels in the group's universe of discourse: varieties inside each language, speech interaction patterns, ways of argumentation, the acquisition of literacy, and procedures of creating social relations.

In both modalities of language shift, the phase dislocations among the three levels (culture, discourse, language) in the Hñähñús' communicative universe led to a contradiction between the historical production of experience (e.g. farm work, political organization) and its linguistic-discursive appropriation. This first step of cultural fragmentation belongs to the typical repertoire of language policy strategies that enforce the minorization of a subordinate indigenous group. The process occurs largely behind the backs of the speakers (cf. Januschek & Maas 1981). It operates even more efficiently because it works as a strategy without a 'strategic calculus',<sup>12</sup> as a process that is not planned consciously and in which the minority group members participate actively. The most significant and probably enduring effect of language displacement is achieved when a given discourse in the dominant language, which initially remained incomprehensible for the minority language speakers, becomes comprehensible because they have by and large adopted the forms of appropriation of the social experience inherent in this discourse. Such a process can be observed with many Hispanic groups in the United States, where cultural models, discourse structure, and language use split and disintegrate in complex ways.

4.3. MACRO-SOCIETAL FACTORS AND LANGUAGE SHIFT. The beginning of this paper discussed the central issues concerning the relationship between macro-societal factors and linguistic behavior, and the resulting explanatory and predictive power of models of language shift. Perhaps these questions could now be reformulated in a more precise way.

The explanatory power of traditional models in the sociology of language, variationist sociolinguistics, and social psychology is limited by their conceptual reduction to surface language structure and by the early separation of social and linguistic data, which are then correlated. These approaches preclude a perspective that understands social and linguistic phenomena not as separate paradigms, but rather in their mutual, interactive constitution and in the production of social significance, which may lead an ethnolinguistic group to abandon step by step its linguistic, discursive, and cultural system of communication.

Direct correlations between macro-sociological and linguistic data serve at best as a starting point for hypothesis generation, as does our ethnography of key speech events (Table 1). Rather than interpreting language shift as a direct, causal effect of socioeconomic change, this study views shift as the outcome of intervening

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<sup>12</sup>'Stratégie sans calcul stratégique', in Bourdieu's sense of strategy (cf. Encrevé & de Fornel 1983).

cognitive and pragmatic instances, such as the REORIENTATION of the minority speakers towards new languages, their cultural models, and pragmatic conventions. In the long run, such a reorientation may lead to a change in ethnic status. Among the most important articulating instances that surfaced in this study were a repertoire of ethnic and mestizo (dominant) discourse strategies and discourse styles that activate the ensemble of the speakers' communicative resources in a given event and orient them toward the participants' tasks and objectives.

It seems to me that the line of research initiated by Gumperz (1977) and Gal (1979) has contributed considerably to an understanding of language shift processes. My work attempts to broaden this understanding. It combines ethnography with detailed discourse analysis and focuses on the markers and traces of language shift *in actu* and *in situ* found in verbal interaction itself. The approach attempts to argue theoretically and demonstrate empirically the ways in which language (surface) structure, discourse structure, and cultural models form constitutive components of language shift that cannot be separated or excluded from research without risking considerable reductions in the scope of the analysis and the explanatory power of the models. Finally, it sketches a preliminary, very idealized framework which shows how processes of language shift function, perhaps typically, through ruptures and phase dislocations among the three levels of analysis. Although it maintains considerable theoretical and methodological differences with established models in the sociology of language, variationist sociolinguistics, and social psychology, this approach could be considered complementary to these models in our striving for a deeper understanding of language shift and language loss processes.

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