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3

Speech Codes Theory

Restatement, Revisions, and Response to Criticisms

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Speech codes theory is an original theory of human communication as considered from a cultural perspective. It was first published in prototypical form with an introduction to the concept of speech codes and a presentation of four empirically grounded principles about speech codes (Philipsen, 1992). Then it was presented as a formal theoretical statement with five empirically grounded propositions, four of which were carried over intact from the earlier version (Philipsen, 1997).

The present chapter has two purposes. One is to fill a gap. We do that here by re-presenting speech codes theory with six propositions. Five of these are carried over from the two previous presentations. One has been added on the basis of recently published empirical research that explicitly addresses the theory and that exposes a gap in it that we fill with the new proposition. Our second purpose is to respond to criticisms of the theory that have been published since its presentation in 1997

as a formal theoretical statement (Griffin, 2003; Stewart, 1997).

We begin with some background on speech codes theory, specifically with a consideration of the purpose of the theory, some of its defining characteristics as a theory, and the concept of code. Then, we re-present the theory with the newly added proposition. Finally, we turn to the published criticisms of the theory and our responses to them.

BACKGROUND TO SPEECH CODES THEORY

Why Speech Codes Theory Was Created

Speech codes theory was created for two purposes.

One purpose was to distill some of what might be learned from a large body of field-work research on culturally distinctive ways of speaking. When the first version of speech codes theory was written, there had been established a large body of fieldwork about cultural ways of speaking that had been conducted and published under the auspices of the ethnography of speaking (Hymes, 1968). Some 250 of these studies were cited in Philipsen and Carbaugh (1986). Focusing on selected exemplars from that body of work, Philipsen (1992, 1997) formulated a synthesis of (some of) what had been learned from studies of communicative conduct in its local and sociocultural contexts. Speech codes theory was that synthesis.

A second purpose was to provide a focus for further research and discussion. A distillation of what had been learned from extant data, cast in theoretical form, enhanced the likelihood that future research could be directed to the development of empirically grounded theory about communication. Cloaking that distillation in the mantle of theory enhanced the likelihood of evoking a critical response to those ideas.

Three Defining Characteristics of Speech Codes Theory

Speech codes theory is a particular type of theory of communication, and so we begin by setting forth three of its defining characteristics. We illustrate these characteristics by reference to Carbaugh (1999), a study that was conducted in a manner consistent with the precepts of speech codes theory.

One, speech codes theory is grounded in the observation of communicative conduct in particular times and places. For example, as part of a larger and long-term ethnographic project, Carbaugh (1999) reported, and interpreted, some uses by Blackfeet Indians (in the U.S.) of the word *listen* and the expression *sit down and listen*. Specifically, Carbaugh observed and reported in considerable, and considered, detail how a Blackfeet man used "listen" and "sit down and listen" in the course of teaching traditional Blackfeet ways, to outsiders as well as to Blackfeet people. Speech codes theory is concerned with such observed communicative conduct as its object of noticing, describing, interpreting, and explaining.

Two, speech codes theory posits a way to interpret or explain observed communicative conduct by reference to situated codes of meaning and value. For the Blackfeet, Carbaugh (1999) showed that the Blackfeet use of "listen" and "sit down and listen" expresses a complex system of meanings and values. These are meanings and values that pertain to Blackfeet places, to what it means to be a proper Blackfeet person, and to Blackfeet notions of the efficacy of communicative conduct in realizing their ideals. At the same time, when Carbaugh began to notice, describe, and interpret Blackfeet words, he drew from his previously acquired knowledge of Blackfeet beliefs, customs, and motives to provide his account of how it is that Blackfeet use of these implies a deeply cultured system of Blackfeet messages about communicative conduct. As the code of meaning and

value was formulated, there was created the possibility for the interpretation and explanation of new instances of observed and experienced communicative conduct in the context of that community's discursive life. At the heart of speech codes theory is a concern with formulating local codes of interpretation and conduct and, in turn, with using those codes, as formulated, to interpret and explain situated communicative conduct.

Three, although the theory is based on studies of particular ways of speaking (e.g., those of Blackfeet), it provides a general understanding of communicative conduct. It is general in three ways. First, the theory presents a characterization of the nature of all speech codes. Propositions 1, 2, and 3 of the theory are empirical generalizations drawn from a consideration of a large body of descriptions of culturally distinctive speech codes. Second, speech codes theory contains a general answer to the question of how an observer might systematically try to learn about the particularities of particular, local ways of speaking. Proposition 5 of the theory provides an explicit and general answer to that question. Third, speech codes theory presents a general answer to the question of how speech codes relate to communicative conduct. In this way the theory enters the ongoing, interdisciplinary conversation about the use and force of codes in social life (Eliasoph & Lichterman, 2003; Harrison & Huntington, 2000; Swidler, 2001). It does this, in Proposition 4, with an argument as to how, in general, people use speech codes to interpret the meanings of communicative conduct, and in Proposition 6, with a specific proposition about the discursive force of speech codes.

The Concept of
Code in Speech Codes Theory

Code is a key concept in the theory. Some critics misinterpreted the use of the word *code,* taking it to represent a rigid, fixed, one-to-one match of signal to point of meaning, as in Morse code. In the earlier formulations of code, the concept was treated deliberately and explicitly as something very different from these fixed senses of code. Here we reiterate the sense in which it was, and is, used in speech codes theory. Philipsen (1997) put it this way: "A speech code, then, is a system of socially-constructed symbols and meanings, premises, and rules, pertaining to communicative conduct" (p. 126). We discuss below two aspects of speech codes that are crucial to an understanding of how the concept of code is used in speech codes theory.

One, speech codes are constructs that observer-analysts formulate explicitly in order to interpret and explain communicative conduct in a particular speech community. The observer-analyst notices that participants in the discursive life of a speech community use particular resources to enact, name, interpret, and judge communicative conduct, and the analyst uses what she or he has noticed in order to construct a hypothesis as to the existence and nature of a system of resources that these participants use to do that enactment, naming, interpretation, and evaluation. That hypothesis is the observer-analyst's formulation of what in speech codes theory is called a speech code.

Two, the situated resources—symbols and meanings, premises, and rules pertaining to communicative conduct—that participants use to name, interpret, and judge communicative conduct are constructed by human beings in the course of social life. What humans construct, they can also deconstruct, or ignore, alter, and adapt to new purposes. Thus, these resources that people use are contingent, not deterministic; and they are open, not fixed. Proposition 6 in speech codes theory is addressed explicitly to the issue of whether speech codes are deterministic. Furthermore, Proposition 6 is addressed to how speech codes shape or influence communicative conduct.

THE SIX PROPOSITIONS
OF SPEECH CODES THEORY

In the present version of the theory there are six propositions. Each of these six propositions was built upon an extensive record of fieldwork data. Likewise, each is formulated so as to be amenable in principle to empirical evaluation, whether the evaluation takes the form of further substantiation, empirical elaboration, or empirical challenge. In this section, for each of the six propositions, we state the proposition, formulate the question that the proposition answers, state what we believe makes the proposition important theoretically and practically, and discuss the status of the extant evidence bearing on that proposition. The new proposition appears as Proposition 2, with the next four propositions now renumbered accordingly.

Proposition 1. Wherever there is a distinctive culture, there is to be found a distinctive speech code. Proposition 1 answers two questions about cultures. Before we state those questions, it will be important to be explicit about the definition of culture used in speech codes theory. The theory defines culture as a code and not as a geographic, political, or social unit. Such codes consist of a system of symbols, meanings, premises, and rules. These can be symbols, meanings, premises, and rules about many aspects of life; for example, types of people, ways of thinking, firewood, politics, and communicative conduct. Thus, when we speak of a culture we speak not primarily of a time or place, but of a code that was constructed, and is used, in some time or place.

If one thinks about such codes as we have described above, two questions can be asked. The first is: Does every culture (i.e., every socially constructed code) include symbols, meanings, premises, and rules about communicative conduct? This is a question about cultural systems in general—do all of them contain a subset that maps the domain of communicative conduct? The second is: Do such codes differ in terms of the particular words, meanings, premises, and rules about communicative conduct that they include? Proposition 1 responds to both of those questions in the affirmative. It implies that everywhere people construct codes of life, the codes they construct include symbols, meanings, premises, and rules about communicative conduct. And it states directly that everywhere that people have constructed codes of communicative conduct, those codes—those systems of symbols, meanings, premises, and rules about communicative conduct—are distinctive.

Why is this proposition important to scholars, teachers, or practitioners of communication? It is important precisely because scholars, teachers, or practitioners of communication encounter cultures as codes, whether in research or in other modes of living. That is, in any given time and place where people have interacted enough to have formed systems of symbols, meanings, premises, and rules about something, they have also formed symbols, meanings, premises, and rules about communicative conduct. And in each time and place that such systems of symbols, meanings, premises, and rules about communicative conduct have been formed, those systems are distinctive. Thus to understand a particular culture, to teach it to someone else, or to use it in daily life, requires that one learn that culture as its own thing, because it is not precisely the same as other cultures. To study a particular speech code, to teach it to someone else, or to use it in daily life, requires that one learn that speech code, not assume what it will be, because it is not precisely the same as other speech codes.

When speech codes theory was first published, in 1992 and in 1997, there was a large body of empirical evidence based on ethnographic fieldwork that supported Proposition 1. Much of this evidence is contained in the more than 250 studies cited in Philipsen and Carbaugh (1986). Selected portions of this

evidence are reviewed in detail in Braithwaite (1990), Carbaugh (1989), Goldsmith (1989/ 1990), Katriel (1986), and Philipsen (1989a, 1989b). Just prior to and since the publication of speech codes theory in 1997, there was a substantial body of new work published that supports Proposition 1 (including Carbaugh, 1996, 1999; Covarrubias, 2002; Fitch, 1998; Fong, 1994, 1998; Katriel, 1993; Miyahira, 1999; Winchatz, 2001).

Proposition 2. In any given speech community, multiple speech codes are deployed. Proposition 2 is concerned with speech codes as they are situated in a given place and time. Specifically, it responds to the question of whether there are, in any given speech community, two or more speech codes that are deployed by participants in social interaction.

Why is this proposition important to scholars, teachers, or practitioners of communication? It is important precisely because when scholars, teachers, or practitioners of communication encounter a speech code, whether in research or in other modes of living, they encounter it as something that articulates, in one way or another, with another code or with other codes. As will be shown below, this fact has important consequences for the learning, teaching, and practice of communicative conduct. In order to examine those consequences, it will be necessary to review some of the speech codes research that led to the formulation of Proposition 2.

Speech codes scholars have, in many instances of their research, found that they, and the people whom they studied, experienced, within the same life-world, different codes or at least traces of different codes pertaining to communicative conduct. Below we mention some examples of such findings.

Studies of the speech community labeled "Teamsterville" (Philipsen, 1975, 1976, 1986, 1992) emphasized a single local speech code. Nonetheless, that code was explicitly juxtaposed, in the speech of Teamstervillers, and in

the ethnographic report of that speech, to another code or other codes. For example, Teamstervillers themselves defined their own ways of speaking by contrasting them with the ways of speaking of people who lived in the same city as they did but who lived in a different part of it, either north of their neighborhood (white people who were wealthier than Teamstervillers) or south of them (black people who were poorer than they were). They also thereby defined their own ways of speaking in contrast to the speech of people whom they described as being of a different social type from them (economically or racially). The juxtaposition of different ways of speaking, and of Teamstervillers' awareness of them, is made particularly stark in Philipsen (1986), a study of the critical engagement by outsiders of Teamsterville ways and critical engagement by Teamstervillers of the ways of the outsiders. One reader of Philipsen (1986) explicitly acknowledges that the interpretation presented there is grounded in "multiple codes of interpretation" (Rosteck, 1998).

Likewise in the early studies of "Nacirema" ways of speaking (Katriel & Philipsen, 1981; Philipsen, 1992, chaps. 4 & 5), there is evidence that the U.S. respondents whose communicative conduct was studied characterized their own communicative conduct by contrasting it with other ways of speaking. For example, the respondents M and K, in Katriel and Philipsen (1981), characterized their use of "communication" as different from the way of speaking of their parents or of the way of speaking of a former spouse. Likewise on a popular television show, the host and guests would characterize their present way of speaking ("really communicating") by reference to another way of speaking and another code of communicative conduct that they had now discarded.

Several fieldwork studies of ways of speaking in particular speech communities have contributed to a growing sense among speech codes scholars of the importance of focusing

on the coexistence and interanimation of two or more codes in the same life-world. These include Baxter (1993) on two speech codes in the deliberations of a faculty and administration in a college, Huspek (1993, 1994, 2000; Huspek & Kendall, 1993) on the oppositional but essentially interdependent nature of two codes in a variety of field settings, Ruud (1995, 2000) on management and performer codes in the San Jose Symphony organization, Ruud and Sprague (2000) on two codes in an environmental dispute in California, Sequeira (1993) on two codes for personal address in the same church congregation and the negotiations of meanings that were attendant to the use of those two codes, Fitch (1998) on multiple codes for interpreting the use of personal address forms in Colombia, Winchatz (2001) on two systems of using and rationalizing the use of the personal pronoun of address *Sie* (English "you") in contemporary Germany, and Covarrubias (2002) on the use, contrapositionally, by workers in a Mexican company of two codes for the use of the personal pronouns of address *tu* and *usted.*

Early, as well as recent, speech codes studies report the presence and the mingling of two or more codes in the life of one community or in the life-worlds of particular people. Such possibilities were not denied but neither were they explicitly provided for in the earlier formulations of speech codes theory. Yet the emerging empirical record referred to above, as well as the theoretical arguments advanced by Huspek (particularly Huspek, 1993, 1994) led some scholars to address this gap directly. Here we turn to one recent study that was conducted with the extant propositions of speech codes theory clearly in mind, that acknowledges the heuristic influence of the theory (and of Huspek, 1993, 1994), and that set out in advance to examine a situation in which there would be two speech codes deployed within the same sustained discursive event.

Coutu's (2000) study of the discourse surrounding the publication of Robert S.

McNamara's 1995 book, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam,* explicitly employs speech codes theory (Coutu, 2000, p. 181) coupled with oppositional codes theory (see Huspek, 1993, 1994) to highlight the "organization of diversity" (Hymes, 1974, p. 433) present in speech communities or life-worlds. She found that, in the social discourse in and in response to McNamara's book, two competing codes are deployed—what she refers to as the codes of rationality and of spirituality. As Coutu wrote: "Although McNamara and his hearers shared one speech code, they each also endorsed distinctive speech codes to be used when discussing Vietnam" (p. 183). She argues that the codes, rather than representing two cultures, are two codes, oppositional in many of their meanings, present within the same speech community (pp. 182–183). In her study, Coutu capitalizes on the complexity of speech codes theory to illustrate the possibility of multiple codes within one community or life-world. In so doing she draws on much of the same literature as does Philipsen (1992, 1997), but develops a different perspective than he did on the presence of multiple codes within one community of discourse.

Proposition 2 says that speech codes do not appear in social life in isolation from other speech codes, but rather that they appear in social life with other speech codes. We have pointed here to multiple studies in the speech codes tradition that have reported, within one speech community, the deployment of more than one speech code. Many of these findings of multiple speech codes deployed within the same speech community were produced without the researcher explicitly looking and listening for multiple codes (although using a descriptive model, that of the ethnography of speaking, that provided for that possibility). We have also featured here one study in the speech codes tradition that explicitly set out to examine the discourse of a speech community with the possibility of finding two

or more different speech codes deployed. Taken as a whole, we use this body of evidence to generate a new proposition for speech codes theory. Proposition 2 is that new proposition.

Proposition 3. A speech code implicates a culturally distinctive psychology, sociology, and rhetoric. Proposition 3 answers a question about the content of speech codes. To frame the question, one can ask about what is referred to, and furthermore what is suggested in, the symbols, meanings, premises, and rules of a speech code. Do such words, etcetera, refer neutrally or simply to aspects of communicative conduct or do they implicate something further? Proposition 3 answers that question by saying that the elements of a speech code implicate something more than communicative conduct narrowly conceived; they also implicate meanings about human nature (psychology), social relations (sociology), and strategic conduct (rhetoric). Specifically, wherever there is a situated vocabulary in use that pertains to communicative conduct (e.g., terms for talk), or a situated system of premises or rules pertaining to communicative conduct, there can be found in these situated vocabularies and systems of premises and rules, symbols and meanings that not only designate aspects of communicative conduct narrowly conceived but also aspects of the nature of persons, social relations, and the role of communicative conduct in linking persons in social relations.

Why is this proposition important to scholars, teachers, or practitioners of communication? It is important precisely because scholars, teachers, or practitioners of communication hear, in everyday talk, speech about communicative conduct. Such speech contains code elements, that is, symbols and expressions, and statements of premises and rules, about communicative conduct. Proposition 3 of speech codes theory states that in their reference to matters of communicative conduct, these code elements express and imply

notions of human nature, social relations, and strategic conduct, and that wherever and whenever one hears talk about communicative conduct one also hears talk about persons, society, and rhetoric. So that when one hears someone say that "communication" is necessary for a "relationship," as is said in much speech in the contemporary United States, one can hear in such talk traces of a code of personhood, social relations, and strategic action. Proposition 3 says that it is always the case that such talk about communicative conduct implicates meanings about persons, society, and rhetoric.

Proposition 3 also says that words and expressions about communicative conduct, and the notions they imply about persons, social relations, and strategic action, are *distinctive* across cultures. It says that wherever there is a distinctive culture, there is a distinctive system of symbols, meanings, premises, and rules about communicative conduct, and that these implicate a distinctive system of meanings about human nature, social relations, and strategic conduct.

Proposition 3 of speech codes theory can be confirmed or disconfirmed on the basis of empirical evidence. As with Proposition 1, however, there are few or no direct tests of this proposition, but rather an accumulation of evidence over time that is consistent with it. Such evidence consists of studies in which a scholar finds, in a given speech community, evidence of distinctive words and expressions pertaining to communicative conduct, and then shows that and how these words and expressions implicate a distinctive local psychology, sociology, and rhetoric. As with the evidence for Proposition 1, there was a substantial body of evidence available prior to the publication of speech codes theory in 1997, and there has been a substantial body of new evidence published in the years since. The sources cited for Proposition 1 apply to Proposition 3 as well. Philipsen (1975, 1976, 1986), Katriel and Philipsen (1981), Rosaldo

(1982), and Carbaugh (1988) provide early empirical cases that were crucial to the building of Proposition 3. Carbaugh (1989) is an important cross-case synthesizing paper in support of the proposition.

Proposition 4. The significance of speaking is contingent upon the speech codes used by interlocutors to constitute the meanings of communicative acts. Proposition 4 is concerned with the use (and force) of speech codes in the interpretive process. Specifically, it is concerned with how a participant in communicative conduct will interpret her or his own and others' communicative acts. If one thinks of a behavior that oneself or another emits or produces, one can also then ask what that behavior counts as, either to the producer or to someone else who observes or receives it. Does one's movement of the eyebrow, for example, count as a wink or as some other sort of movement and, if as a wink, then as what does that count, as an expression of conspiratorial solidarity, an invitation to intimacy, and so forth? Proposition 4 provides part of the answer to the general question thus implied: That what a given behavior counts as, for a given receiver and interpreter of it, is contingent upon the speech code that the interpreter uses to constitute it as one sort of action or another.

Proposition 4 is important to scholars, teachers, or practitioners of communication because it addresses something fundamental to the communication process—how people construe the meanings of communicative acts. It suggests that people construe the meanings of communicative acts as actions, at least in part, through the use of a speech code. Thus it makes interpretations of communicative acts, in terms of what action an act is taken to have performed, contingent upon the code(s) used to interpret them. For example, the Blackfeet man who taught Carbaugh (1999) about the action of "listening" in particular Blackfeet places, enjoined Carbaugh to "listen" and then explained to him what it meant to "listen," that is, how to do it, but also what its existential significance is to one who does it, at least from the standpoint of the code that the Blackfeet man articulated on that and other occasions. Carbaugh reports that, prior to his learning the Blackfeet code, he would have constituted—heard and interpreted the acts he associated with listening—very differently from the way he eventually could constitute them having learned something of the Blackfeet code.

The evidence for Proposition 4 is based on several ethnographies of speaking, including Rosaldo (1982), Philipsen (1986, 1992), Carbaugh (1993), Pratt and Wieder (1993), and Winchatz (2001).

Proposition 5. The terms, rules, and premises of a speech code are inextricably woven into speaking itself. The question that Proposition 5 answers is as follows: Where should one look or listen to find evidence of a speech code? The answer that Proposition 5 provides is: Observe communicative conduct, because symbols, meanings, premises, and rules about communicative conduct are woven into communicative conduct. This proposition asserts that the key to noticing and describing speech codes is to watch communicative conduct and listen to it. Furthermore, the proposition directs the observer to pay attention to particular things. These are (1) meta-communicative words and expressions (e.g., words and expressions about communicative conduct), (2) the use of such words and expressions in particularly consequential interactive moments (rhetorical moments, one might say), (3) the contextual patterns of communicative conduct (e.g., as can be noticed and described in the terms of Hymes's descriptive framework [Hymes, 1961, 1968, 1972]), (4) and such special forms of communicative conduct as rituals, myths, and social dramas.

Proposition 5 was built up empirically, by learning from the published experience of

ethnographers of speaking who have discovered and formulated speech codes on the basis of their fieldwork experience. It is formulated in such a way as to be subject to empirical critique and revision, that is, by learning from the experience of ethnographers of speaking who, using the framework, report in their studies ways to challenge its adequacy or to improve it by making it more parsimonious or more adequate to real cases of inquiry.

Philipsen (1976), Katriel and Philipsen (1981), Katriel (1986), and Carbaugh (1989) were instrumental in developing the strategy (initially suggested by Hymes, 1968) of attending to cultural vocabularies as a site for finding the deployment of culturally distinctive speech codes. Katriel and Philipsen (1981), Katriel (1986), and Philipsen (1986, and 1992, chap. 5) were instrumental in the construction of the portion of the descriptive strategy that relies on the use of such cultural forms as ritual, myth, and social drama as heuristic aids in the discovery and formulation of particular speech codes. Philipsen (1987) put together various elements of the strategy, and these are constructed as an integrative framework in Philipsen (1992, 1997).

Proposition 6. The artful use of a shared speech code is a sufficient condition for predicting, explaining, and controlling the form of discourse about the intelligibility, prudence, and morality of communicative conduct. The question that Proposition 6 answers is: How do speech codes influence communicative conduct? The answer that Proposition 6 provides is that (1) social actors *use* speech codes to label, interpret, explain, evaluate, justify, and shape their own and others' communicative actions; (2) when social actors use *shared* speech codes to frame their efforts to shape the conduct of others, such use is effective in shaping the responses of others; and (3) the rhetorical force of speech codes is *contingent* on the coherence, social legitimacy, and rhetorically artful use of the code so employed.

Proposition 6 is important to scholars, teachers, and practitioners of communication because it points to an important activity in human social life—the efforts by humans to shape the communicative conduct of themselves and of others. Proposition 6 furthermore points to a way that codes (or cultures) are used in humans' efforts to shape the communicative conduct of themselves and of others. It shows that such efforts are not necessarily successful in getting people to conform to codes but can be successful in shaping how people talk about the intelligibility, prudence, and morality of communicative conduct. It also shows why efforts to get people to talk about the intelligibility, prudence, and morality of conduct have the results that they do—it depends on the nature of the code used and on how artful the user is in using the code to shape her own or others' conduct.

There is a great deal of empirical evidence of various types that supports the claim that people experience a great deal of social pressure to make their behavior conform to social codes (Albert, 1964; Carbaugh, 1987; Coleman, 1989; Enker, 1987; Philipsen, 1975; Richman, 1988; Schwartz, 1973; Swidler, 1986; Turner, 1988). There is also a great deal of empirical evidence that humans who do indeed pay lip service to a cultural code do not always use it to guide and interpret their conduct (Hall, 1988/1989). There are several explanations for the slippage between culture and conduct: the open texture (Hart, 1961), essential incompleteness (Garfinkel, 1972), internal inconsistency in implications for action (Bilmes, 1976), indeterminacy (Wieder, 1974), susceptibility to change (Geertz, 1973), and multiplicity in the life-world (Huspek, 1993; Philipsen, 1992) of cultural codes.

Proposition 6 of speech codes theory enters the debate about the force of culture in conduct in two ways. First, its previous presentations (Philipsen, 1989a, 1992, 1997) acknowledge that cultures (and, by extension, socially constructed codes) are not fixed,

unitary, and deterministic, but rather are dynamic, exist in life-worlds in which there are two or more cultures or codes that are used and that have existential force, and are resources that social actors deploy strategically and artfully in the conduct of communication. Second, speech codes theory nonetheless argues for the importance of culture in individual lives, in social life, and in scholarly efforts to understand individual lives and social life. It does this with Proposition 6, which captures what we believe is an empirically warranted resolution of the extant discussion. Proposition 6 presents a limited, but defensible and irreducible, role of culture in shaping communicative conduct.

There is a great deal of empirical evidence that supports Proposition 6's emphasis on a limited but important role of culture in the shaping of conduct. A great deal of anecdotal evidence could be pointed to as well, but here we will point instead to a few exemplary studies that have demonstrated a limited but important shaping effect. Bilmes (1976) shows that although social actors do not use codes deterministically, they nonetheless do employ them in pressing their case in community deliberations. Hopper (1993) shows that people who do not necessarily shape their actions to conform to their idea of what is culturally acceptable conduct, nonetheless appeal to cultural notions of acceptability in the process of retrospectively framing and evaluating their conduct as they explain it to others. Miller (1990) shows how justifications of conduct that are framed in the terms of a socially legitimated code are treated as more persuasive than those that are not so framed. What these studies have in common is an explicit acknowledgment of the limits of codes to shape conduct while such codes nonetheless are deployed strategically in communication about conduct and deployed in ways that have consequences for social interaction. Proposition 6 is designed to reflect this nuanced understanding of the role of codes in shaping communicative conduct.

We have here stated, clarified the presentations of, and assessed the state of evidence for the previously formulated propositions of speech codes theory. We have also, based on a consideration of an accumulating empirical record, formulated and presented a further theoretical proposition.

RESPONSES TO PUBLISHED CRITICISMS OF SPEECH CODES THEORY

Two sets of criticisms of speech codes theory have been published. One of these was authored by Stewart (1997), who wrote his criticisms as part of a commentary chapter in the volume in which Philipsen (1997) appeared. The second was authored by Griffin (2003) in prefatory materials for a chapter about speech codes theory that appears in his book that exposits and assesses several major theories of communication. Here we respond to what we distill to be the two key criticisms that these authors have expressed.

Criticism 1. Speech codes theory does not account for manifestations of power in discourse. This is a matter of omission in the theoretical assumptions, methodological framework, and examination of fieldwork materials.

The assumptive foundation of speech codes theory is derived from the assumptive foundation of the ethnography of speaking (see Hymes, 1968, and Philipsen, 1992). One of the cornerstones of that foundation is openness to the possibility that any dimension of social life, including power, be observed as manifested in discourse. Furthermore, the ethnography of speaking, and by extension speech codes theory, is grounded in a sociolinguistic perspective that explicitly acknowledges the universal possibility in any body of discourse of manifestations of power, solidarity, intimacy, and other fundamental dimensions of social life (see, for but one example,

Brown & Gilman, 1960, on the pronouns of power and solidarity, a study that ethnographers of speaking acknowledge as a fundamental source of insight into the possibilities of sociolinguistic enactment and social meaning). To say that the database on which speech codes theory is grounded is constructed from studies that were conducted without an open eye and a listening ear turned toward discourses of power is not consistent with our reading of the orienting literature.

For most speech codes researchers, their open eyes and listening ears are directed to what the people being studied, in a given inquiry, insert into the discourse they produce and find in the discourse they experience. Such researchers are concerned, fundamentally, with the means of communication that people use and experience and with the meanings those means have for those who use and experience them. Accordingly, we look at and listen to their conduct for evidence of what they do and of how they experience the communicative conduct of their life-world. For example, in his analysis of a social drama surrounding a speech by Chicago Mayor Richard Daley, Philipsen's (1986) interpretation of the speech points explicitly to the importance, in the Teamsterville code that is invoked and evoked in that speech, of, first, the honor-linked value of power. But he also finds evidence in that speech of such other honor-linked values as wealth, magnanimity, loyalty, precedence, sense of shame, glory, courage, excellence, and piety (p. 256). Indeed in interpreting the values that dominate the speech, Philipsen considers a very specific alternative to power as the dominating motive of the speaker and the speech, but concludes that power was the key motive or catalyst for rhetorical action in this particular case (p. 256). By following a model that directs the observer to give voice to the people being studied, rather than to the voice of the author herself or himself, power was found and invoked by the ethnographer on the basis of the evidence of the case itself, not on the basis of an a priori commitment to find that power is a dominant motive in all discourse.

The critics' charges, as we have heard or read them, are quite general and thus it is difficult to answer them in any concrete way. We can, however, point to multiple studies in the ethnography of speaking tradition and in the speech codes tradition that examine discourse and either (1) find evidence there of power as a dominant force in discourse (Philipsen, 1986, and Rosaldo, 1982, to cite just two key examples) or (2) systematically consider power as a key phenomenon but do not find the people being studied giving power the dominant interpretive role (Coutu, 2000; Covarrubias, 2002). We would welcome critiques of specific findings and claims as a productive starting point for constructive improvement of speech codes theory.

Criticism 2. Speech codes theory treats culture as overly deterministic. A corollary to this is that it reifies culture as a static entity.

Published expositions of the theory (including the present chapter) eschew any simplistic notion of cultural determinism or of cultures as static entities. Philipsen (1992) states, for example, "To say that speaking is structured is not to say it is absolutely determined. It is patterned, but in ways that its creators can circumvent, challenge, and revise" (p. 10). In the same paragraph Philipsen (1992) invokes Hymes's (1974) well-known characterization of a speech community as an "organization of diversity" (p. 433). Later, Philipsen (1997) states that "the people I observed did not behave as cultural automatons" and that "humans not only follow but also flout their cultures" (p. 147). That is, in each of the first two presentations of speech codes theory, as in the present restatement, there have been explicit statements that eschew notions of culture as static or deterministic.

Speech codes theory does, however, make a strong statement about the force of codes in

shaping communicative conduct. To support this statement, which appears here as Proposition 6, a wide array of empirical data is cited that shows that culture does play an important role in shaping communicative conduct, and a wide array of empirical data and theoretical arguments is cited or summarized that shows that the role culture plays in shaping conduct is not simplistically deterministic. The discursive force proposition of the theory was formulated to raise the level of discussion of the matters of codes as static entities and deterministic forces. Specifically, a very specific, empirically grounded, and empirically testable proposition about these matters was formulated. As with our response to the first criticism indicated above, here we suggest that one effort at productive criticism would be to engage the specifics of speech codes theory, in this instance, the discursive force proposition, Proposition 6.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter we summarized and restated speech codes theory. Furthermore, we reviewed a substantial body of evidence that leads us to propose changing the theory by increasing its core propositions from five to six. This makes a substantial change and, we believe, improvement in the theory as a resource for interpreting and explaining culturally shaped communicative conduct and for guiding further study of speech codes. This change in the theory follows upon a substantial body of published field data that, we believe, warrants the proposed change in the theory. Finally, we distilled, and responded to, various published criticisms of the theory. In addition to pointing out what we believe to be some weaknesses in the principal criticisms lodged against the theory, we have emphasized that it is amenable to change in response to specific criticisms, either of the speculative-ratiocinative sort or of the sort warranted by an accumulation of case-based field evidence.

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PART III

Theories Focusing on Cross-Cultural Variability in Communication