Theoretical Consideration of Re-marking the Boundaries: 
The Possibility of Subverting the Mechanism of Discourses Producing and Reproducing Social Discrimination

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1. Introduction

Language plays a major role in the reproduction and naturalisation of dominant/oppressed relationships. In this sense, language can be seen as the apparatus that regulates and manipulates our perceptions of the world. In this paper, I would like to show a theoretical framework I have constructed on the workings of language, more specifically, on the linguistic mechanism that constructs what are called 'truths' and 'common sense' in society which in turn function to maintain various kinds of social discrimination. Then I shall consider the possible ways to weaken the dominant/oppressed relationships.

Let me explain the structure of this paper. I shall first of all define the key terms such as Discourses, Dominant Discourses, Institutionalised Discourses and ideologies. I shall then construct my model of Discourses by developing and refining Gee's, Foucault's, Hall's and others' ideas about the workings of language. Next, I shall discuss how acquisition of the Dominant Discourses is closely linked to the construction and maintenance of social inequalities. Lastly I shall present my concept of 'boundary ambiguity' between binary oppositions as a key to overcoming socially dominant/oppressed relationships.

2. Discourse(s)

In order to examine the workings of language in its social and political contexts, first of all I would like to adopt Gee's notion of 'Discourse(s)' (with a capital 'D'). By 'Discourse(s)', which is a countable term, Gee (1996) refers to "saying-writing-doing-being-valuing-believing" combinations. Gee's general definition of Discourses entails the following two points. First, a Discourse is a kind of 'identity kit' which comes with the appropriate costume and instructions on how to act, talk, and often write, so as to take on a particular social role that others will recognise (Gee, 1996, 127). An individual is a text that can only be a meaningful entity, both to him/herself and to others, by being interpreted and identified
correctly in society.

Second, Discourses are ways of displaying membership in a certain social group or social network in which people associate with each other around a common set of interests, goals, and activities through words, actions, values and beliefs. A Discourse is, "composed of ways of talking, listening, (often, too, reading and writing), acting, interacting, believing, valuing, and using tools and objects, in particular settings at specific times, so as to display and recognise a particular social identity" (Gee, 1996, 128). This suggests that in each social group there are certain determined or preferred ways of saying and behaving. In other words, each Discourse has its own norms that members are supposed to observe.

A Discourse is a socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, and of acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or 'social network', or to signal (that one is playing) a socially meaningful 'role'. (Gee, 1996, 131)

A Discourse can be seen as a community which has a consensus about particular binary divisions, that is, about who is a good member and who is not, what is normal and what is not. It is also a community with particular Discourse-bound rules and norms about how its members ought to behave. People speak, think, act and even interpret the world within a framework of thinking that each Discourse compels. Through having access to and ample interaction in a Discourse which shares certain community rules, people learn to interpret texts or the world in certain ways. Thus any Discourse promotes certain concepts, viewpoints and values while simultaneously marginalising, down-grading or de-legitimating others. A Discourse makes its members believe that the way of representing the order of things which endows its limiting perspective is inevitable, natural, universal and coterminous with reality itself. Then what we think cannot possibly be purely original or unique. It must be systematised, at least partly, by the Discourses we belong to. In short, it is the Discourse(s) one belongs to that partly construct one's view of the world. What we regard as 'reality' can no longer be considered as simply given set of facts. Rather it is the result of a particular way of constructing so-called reality.

I wish now to relate Gee's notion of Discourse(s) to Foucault's work on 'disciplinary power' and the 'Panopticon'. In Discipline and Punish (1977) Foucault examines how 'disciplinary power' is exerted in the psychiatric asylum, the penitentiary, the reformatory, the approved school and the hospital. We may further elaborate the idea of Discourse(s) by appropriating Foucault's idea of 'Panopticon', which was originally the late eighteenth, early nineteenth century utilitarian philosopher Bentham's design for a confinement mechanism which makes inmates constantly visible. Foucault argues that the major effect of the Panopticon is, "to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power" (Foucault, 1977, 201), and thus, "the inmates should be caught up
in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers” (Foucault, 1977, 201).

The efficiency of power, its constraining force have (sic), in a sense, passed over to the other side--
to the side of its surface of application. He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows
it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon
himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he
becomes the principle of his own subjection. (Foucault, 1977, 202-203)

We may appropriate this image to the workings of Discourses by arguing as follows: (1) A member
of a Discourse is always exposed to the gaze of other members; (2) Since each Discourse has its own
consented norms, a member self-disciplines his/her own behaviour in order to avoid being labeled as
deviant and being marginalised within the Discourse. In other words, an individual is an inmate of the
Discourse(s) to which s/he belongs, and s/he is always observed by others and him/herself within the
Discourse. In this sense, a Discourse(s) is an apparatus for observing and manipulating its members' behaviour and thoughts.

Then the crucial question is: how does an individual come by the Discourses s/he is a member
of? Gee (1996, 137-141) argues that one masters certain Discourses not through 'learning' but through
'acquisition', basing this idea on Krashen's theory of second language acquisition, which distinguishes
'acquisition' from 'learning'. 'Acquisition' is similar to the way children develop ability in their first
language. It is a subconscious process occurring through natural communication. On the other hand,
'learning' is 'knowing about' a grammar or rules of a language. 'Learning' involves conscious knowledge (metaknowledge) gained through formal teaching (Krashen, 1982). Gee (1996) applies this distinction
to the mastering of Discourses by distinguishing acquisition from learning:

Discourses are mastered through acquisition, not through learning. That is, Discourses are not
mastered by overt instruction, but by enculturation ('apprenticeship') into social practices through
scaffolded and supported interaction with people who have already mastered the Discourse. (Gee,
1996, 139)

If one has no access to the social practice, one can not enter the Discourse, and one can not acquire it.
For example, just because an individual has overtly learnt a great deal about linguistics through lectures
and reading texts, it does not mean s/he has become a linguist. What is necessary for the individual is to
talk, write, value and behave like a linguist, and make others recognise him/her as such. One is required
to practice and to be apprenticed with mainstream linguists who are already in the Discourse. Through
this process, one may eventually acquire the Discourse of linguists (Gee, 1996, 139-140).
3. **Primary Discourses and secondary Discourses**

Each of us becomes a member of multiple Discourses in the process of socialisation. According to Gee, there are two broad sorts of Discourses in any society: primary and secondary. Primary Discourses are, "those to which people are apprenticed early in life during their primary socialisation as members of particular families within their sociocultural settings" (Gee, 1996, 137). One's primary Discourse forms one's taken-for-granted understandings of who one is and who people like one are, as well as what sorts of things people like one do, value, and believe when not in public. In other words, all humans acquire one Discourse automatically, which is, their primary Discourse as their first social identity, in the process of enculturation.

In small and intimate societies like families and peer groups, it is enough for people to communicate with each other within their own 'primary Discourses'. For example, in the U.S., African-American people from lower socioeconomic groups may speak BVE (Black Vernacular English) within their communities, and white middle-class people may speak a so-called standard type of English within their communities. However, the difference between African-American working-class people and white middle-class people is not due merely to the fact that they use different dialects of English. Rather, these people "use language, behaviour, values, and beliefs to give a different shape to their experience" (Gee, 1996, 141).

On the other hand, in modern global industrial societies, one needs to communicate with non-intimates beyond the early-home and peer-group socialisation by using one's 'secondary Discourses'. 'Secondary Discourses' are the Discourses developed in association with, and by having access to and practice with (or apprenticeships in) social institutions such as schools, workplaces, stores, government offices, businesses, churches and so on (Gee, 1996, 142). Secondary Discourses constitute the recognisability and meaningfulness of one's public acts. Needless to say, there are many 'secondary Discourses', and which 'secondary Discourses' we need to or are able to acquire depends on which social networks we belong to. Here it is important to note that:

These secondary Discourses all build on, and extend, the uses of language and the values, attitudes and beliefs we acquired as part of our primary Discourse, and they may be more or less compatible with the primary Discourses of different social groups. (Gee, 1996, 142)

So in terms of ease of acquisition, it is a great advantage when any particular secondary Discourse is compatible with our primary one. Conversely, when no such compatibility exists, acquisition will be more difficult or even impossible.

I have now summarised Gee's idea of the two sorts of Discourses: primary and secondary Discourses. While I agree that there are two different types of Discourses that an individual needs to
acquire, I would argue that Gee's model of primary Discourse seems to be rather simplistic. Gee seems to assume only one primary Discourse for an individual as he argues that "all humans, barring serious disorder, become members of one Discourse free, so to speak--their primary Discourse" (Gee, 1996, 141). However, as I shall argue, one's primary Discourse(s) cannot be regarded as monolithic. Such a view ignores the politics of social categorisation of one's identity which is far more complexly embedded in the individual's primary Discourses.

Moreover, while Gee's model of primary Discourse takes account of one's socioeconomic position such as class (e.g. middle class, working class) and race (e.g. white, black), it does not refer to other social categories such as gender (e.g. man, woman), ethnicity (e.g. Anglo-Saxon, Celt) or nationality (e.g. American, Japanese). It is generally necessary to take such social categories into account when considering one's primary Discourse(s), since these are frequently related to the maintenance of existing social discrimination. Lacan, for example, argues that one's sense of self is inextricably tied in with gender and sexuality: an individual is compelled to recognise sexual difference in terms of the presence or absence of the phallus, to acknowledge him/herself as a gendered being, and to take up a position as masculine or feminine in social relationships with other human beings (Lacan, 1977). In addition, contrast to much earlier Marxist criticism, contemporary Cultural Studies theory argues that the main social and political categories that matter for analysis are not just class but also gender and race (Turner, 1990, 216-217).

In order to consider how certain forms of social discrimination are seemingly so naturally maintained in our modern age, I shall formulate a hypothesis about the two kinds of Discourses, primary and secondary, as follows. Primary Discourses for an individual are socially and politically given Discourses of identity based on one's biological and social categorisation such as male, female, white, non-white, middle-class, working-class, European, Western, Asian, American, Japanese, Japanese-American and so on. Moreover, in the light of the current spread of certain dominant languages throughout the world, one's given linguistic background, especially the category based on one's native tongue such as native English speakers and native Japanese speakers, also begins to function as one of the influential social and political categories. Surely all these categories above are not simply natural. They are socially constructed and reproduced through history and they are culturally specific.

Some may object that I am developing a rather essentialist and determinist discussion here. That is to say, I am speaking as if one's primary backgrounds determined one's way of being. In fact, when considering how deeply social discrimination is rooted and maintained in society, the categories mentioned above do tend, to a greater or lesser degree, to influence one's fundamental way of seeing and being in the world. What interests me is not only why and how some forms of social discrimination occur; rather, I am concerned with how existing social discrimination has been reproduced and maintained through the workings of Discourses.
Thus we should recognise that an individual belongs to multiple primary Discourses rather than one. For example, an individual may belong to the primary Discourses of woman, Japanese, native Japanese speaker and so on at all the same time. These Discourses of identity are not something the individual consciously acquires or learns. Rather, these categories are initially given, or thrust on him/her by society according to his/her biological and familial nature. Whether s/he likes it or not, an individual is often categorised in terms of his/her biological characteristics, and s/he is consequently required to behave according to the social stereotype of these categories. Thus it can be said that an individual cannot choose his/her primary Discourses because his/her primary Discourses are defined and given by others or society. S/he acquires his/her primary Discourses automatically and subconsciously, some from birth or very early in life, others later on. But once acquired, an individual belongs to his/her primary Discourses permanently or at least for a long term. Each primary Discourse has its own rules and norms that members are supposed to observe. Although these rules are usually unwritten and implicit, members of a Discourse are supposed to internalise them as the frame of reference for their behaviours and for their interpretations of the world.

It is possible for individuals to resist these rules and norms imposed by their given primary Discourses. For example, a member of the Discourse of woman, who is supposed to behave and speak in a so-called 'feminine' way, can actually choose to behave and speak in a so-called 'masculine' way. However, her behaviour may likely be seen as deviant within the Discourse of woman; if a girl speaks in a 'masculine' way, her mother and other people around her may often instantiate the power of normalisation by advising her not to speak in such a way.

Since each member in a Discourse does not usually want to be regarded as deviant by the others, s/he behaves as the Discourse demands, that is, s/he adheres to the mechanism of self-discipline. As far as an individual behaves as his/her primary Discourses requires, s/he is considered normal and good in society, which allows him/her to live comfortably without conflict and even allows him/her to actually profit from the situation. On the other hand, once an individual is considered deviant, s/he will be punished or stigmatised by the rules of the Discourse. In that sense, a person's primary Discourses work rather like the Panopticon, binding him/her very strongly in terms of his/her fundamental thinking and behaviour to the controlling norms.

Despite the view of multiple primary Discourses being an advance of Gee's rather monolithic conception, it must be pointed out, nevertheless, that each of the primary Discourses mentioned above is not a homogenised whole: all women, for example, do not share exactly the same experiences; all Japanese do not live the same lives. Although each primary Discourse in fact includes diversity, it is usually represented as a homogeneous figure. In this respect, a primary Discourse is an imagined community that binds its members to some sort of idealised norm.

In contrast to these primary Discourses, I shall define the secondary Discourses of an individual,
following Gee (1996), as one's socially acquired Discourses of identity. They broadly include various levels from Discourses of everyday social interactions at schools, stores, and offices to those of academic disciplines, businesses, and those of all sorts of professions and social positions. An individual acquires these secondary Discourses by enculturation within the various communities and institutions of which they are a part. Secondary Discourses constitute an individual's nurtured identity which s/he acquires through usually conscious participation into the Discourses. Unlike primary Discourses, an individual may belong to secondary Discourses either permanently or just temporarily. However, while s/he is a member of them, secondary Discourses work as a Panopticon to regulate his/her thought and behaviour in a similar way to primary Discourses.

An individual's secondary Discourses form the constructed identity which overlays his/her primary identity based on the primary Discourses. This means that if the values and beliefs contained within a certain secondary Discourse are compatible with those contained within an individual's primary Discourses, s/he can easily and smoothly acquire the secondary Discourse. On the other hand, if a certain secondary Discourse carries different or even opposite values and beliefs from those of his/her primary Discourses, s/he may well feel strong conflict in acquiring the secondary Discourse. In such cases, successful acquisition of the secondary Discourses essentially requires the person to convert his/her familiar and given paradigm of seeing the world to conform with the newer way. This conversion may involve mental or even physical discomfort for an individual. While some may succeed in acquiring the conflicting secondary Discourses, in many cases the values and beliefs that his/her primary Discourses embed limit the person's capacity to do so.

The evidence in support of the above claim can be found everywhere. For example, a woman, who by definition has as one of her primary Discourses the Discourse of woman, may be socialised to acquire the secondary Discourse of (a normal and good) wife without much tension, but she may feel stronger conflict when acquiring the secondary Discourse of feminism which constitutes a Discourse of resistance in current society. Both the primary Discourse of woman, and the secondary Discourse of wife that is built upon the primary Discourse, conceal or naturalise women's subordination to men in society, and justify the existing social status quo. The Discourse of feminism, by contrast, seeks to reveal how women's subordination is constructed and maintained and how unequal the social power relations are.

An indication of how powerful primary or dominant secondary Discourses can be is the fact that even the members of the Discourse of feminism often fail to or do not feel fully free to choose an alternative way of life from the members of the conventional Discourse of woman, even though they understand the unequal man/woman power relations. A woman, for instance, may think that sexual relations with men or the system of marriage may be at the heart of women's oppression. Yet she may still wish to marry and have children and a family. A woman may do most of the housework, even reluctantly, in her marriage, although she may think that by so doing she is helping to reinforce and
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Certainly there may be women who are members of the Discourse of feminism who are actually practicing the norms of the Discourse of feminism without any feelings of conflict or perplexity, and there may also be non-white, non-Western people, who are members of the Discourses resisting Western dominance of the world, who never really feel any sort of inferiority complex towards Westerners or imperialising languages such as English. But how should we consider cases in which members of the Discourse of feminism reluctantly or even willingly yield to social structure, thus helping to maintain unequal power relations? Likewise, how can we understand cases in which some members of the Discourse denouncing English linguistic imperialism continue to learn and use English and thus unwillingly cooperate with the perpetuation of English dominance? In response to these questions it is worth citing Gramsci's remarks about one's fundamental choice of action.

This contrast between thought and action, i.e. the co-existence of two conceptions of the world, one affirmed in words and the other displayed in effective action, is not simply a product of self-deception. Self-deception can be an adequate explanation for a few individuals taken separately, or even for groups of a certain size, but it is not adequate when the contrast occurs in the life of great masses. In these cases the contrast between thought and action cannot but be the expression of profounder contrasts of a social historical order. It signifies that the social group in question may indeed have its own conception of the world, even if only embryonic; a conception which manifests itself in action, but occasionally and in flashes--when, that is, the group is acting as an organic totality. But this same group has, for reasons of submission and intellectual subordination, adopted a conception which is not its own but is borrowed from another group; and it affirms this conception verbally and believes itself to be following it, because this is the conception which it follows in "normal times"--that is when its conduct is not independent and autonomous, but submissive and subordinate. (Gramsci, 1971, 326-327)

If an individual's acquisition of certain resistant secondary Discourses against his/her primary Discourses and/or dominant secondary Discourses cannot always influence one's final conduct, the reason cannot be explained unless we hypothesise some stronger structure that constrains the values and beliefs of secondary Discourses and the power relationship between them. That must be attributed to the ideological function of primary Discourses forcibly given to individuals by society.

4. Dominant primary Discourses and Dominant secondary Discourses

As I have discussed, an individual cannot choose his/her primary Discourses, since they are given by the society into which s/he is born and enculturated. By contrast, at least theoretically speaking,
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an individual can choose his/her secondary Discourses, since they are not initially given but open to everybody. In fact however, the freedom of choice of secondary Discourses is not always guaranteed for all individuals. I would like to state that a relationship of dominance exists between Discourses which operates to produce and reproduce certain kinds of dominant individuals and groups.

On the level of individuals' primary Discourses, theoretically, there should be no superiority/inferiority relationship among the Discourses. However, in reality, members of some primary Discourses have been awarded the status of belonging to the social mainstream. This differential status of primary Discourses is a social construct. Which Discourses are accorded high status is temporally and spatially variable and can change in accordance with time and culture. In modern society in particular, primary Discourses such as those of males, Westerners, whites, middle-classes and native English speakers seem to enjoy social mainstream status in much of the world. By enjoying such status they simultaneously marginalise other primary Discourses. Let me call the above Discourses Dominant primary Discourses.

In the same vein, on the secondary Discourses level, there also exist the Dominant secondary Discourses. These are the secondary Discourses of schools, academic worlds, the bureaucracy, businesses, politics, the mass media and so forth. In other words, there are the socially powerful secondary Discourses that construct mainstream ideas in society. It is significant to note that the kind of secondary Discourses which an individual is able to acquire or become a member of without conflict, is more or less determined by his/her primary Discourses. It would not be totally inappropriate to claim that many of the socially powerful secondary Discourses are male-dominant, Western-dominant, white-dominant, middle-class-dominant and English-language-dominant in the current situation. Since secondary Discourses are built upon primary Discourses, the more compatible the values and beliefs of a secondary Discourse with those of one's primary Discourses, the more easily and fluently one may acquire the secondary Discourse. On the whole, individuals who belong to the greatest number of Dominant primary Discourses can more smoothly acquire the Dominant secondary Discourses, thereby becoming more influential in society. Dominant people reproduce dominant people through their use of Dominant primary and secondary Discourses. Hence which secondary Discourses one is to acquire, or which social status an individual is to attain is to some extent programmed by one's biological and familial background, that is, one's primary Discourses.

However, I would not like to suggest that members of non-Dominant primary Discourses can never acquire Dominant secondary Discourses. It is certainly possible, since there are some women, non-white people, and people with lower socioeconomic backgrounds who actually play an active role in the business, academic and political fields. Members of non-Dominant primary Discourses are surely able to acquire Dominant secondary Discourses, but they are destined to go through much more conflict and difficulty when acquiring them than members of Dominant primary Discourses.
5. **Dominant Discourses**

Control over Dominant secondary Discourses will lead individuals to obtain social goods such as money, power and status, since these individuals have the power to define the rules of the game in society. Moreover, it should be noted that it is these Dominant secondary Discourses that directly work to produce and reproduce certain Discourses that are often referred to as 'truth' or 'common sense' which are widely accepted and believed in society. Gramsci defines common sense which is "a product of history and a part of the historical process" (Gramsci, 1971, 325-326):

> Common sense is not something rigid and immobile, but is continually transforming itself, enriching itself with scientific ideas and with philosophical opinions which have entered ordinary life. [. . .] Common sense creates the folklore of the future, that is as a relatively rigid phase of popular knowledge at a given place and time. (Gramsci, 1971, 326)

We could replace 'common sense' with 'truth' in the above quotation, since what is regarded as truth is also constructed through history, and is specific to and changeable according to place and time. For example, in the sixteenth century, the Latin language was widely considered to be the most valuable, beautiful and useful language in the world, whereas the English language was considered to be an inferior and inelegant tongue. However, at present, the English language enjoys the status of being the most preferred and widely used language. The Discourses called 'truth' or 'common sense' in society are, primarily, politically and historically constructed and reproduced by the members of Dominant secondary Discourses such as bureaucrats, journalists and academics, with the support and approval of science or pseudo-science. By being continuously and repeatedly (re)written and (re)uttered by other members in society, and by formulating the basis of other numerous related Discourses, these Discourses gain the status of 'obviousness', or of being 'taken-for-granted' and thus enjoy a wide consensus in society. Finally they become deeply rooted as unchallengeable knowledge, at least until the balance of power in society changes.

I would like to refer to these Discourses, which are often called truth or common sense, as the 'Dominant Discourses' in society. Dominant Discourses are the Discourses that everyone in society is expected to believe without much doubt. One of the important aspects of Dominant Discourses that I would like to point out here is that members of Dominant Discourses always attempt to present them as something neutral, natural and inevitable. Indeed the word 'truth' suggests "credible, or at least capable of winning credibility as a statement of fact" (Hall, 1982, 75). In the social game of Discourses, it is not relevant whether a Dominant Discourse represents the absolute fact or not. Rather, Dominant Discourses, or the Discourses of 'truth' or 'common sense', have "the effect of sustaining certain 'closures', of establishing certain systems of equivalence between what could be assumed about the
world and what could be said to be true" (Hall, 1982, 75).

In his studies of the mass media, Hall (1982, 74-76) discusses what he calls its 'recognition effect'. Reality is to be understood as the result or effect of how things are signified. The effect of ideology in a media message is to conceal itself, allowing the message to appear as a natural and spontaneous presentations of reality. Propositions about the world embedded within a news report, for example, on the superiority of capitalism over other social systems, are taken or read as merely empirical statements or facts of the case by non-oppositional readers. People not only understand reality as a result or effect of how things are signified, but also recognise specific representations of reality as obvious. The pragmatic circle of knowledge closes as this recognition effectively validates the representation. If we interpret Dominant Discourses as something similar to media messages, we can easily appreciate the significance of following words.

But this recognition effect was not a recognition of the reality behind the words, but a sort of confirmation of the obviousness, the taken-for-grantedness of the way the discourse was organised and of the underlying premises on which the statement in fact depended. If one regards the laws of a capitalist economy as fixed and immutable, then its notions acquire a natural inevitability. Any statement which is so embedded will thus appear to be merely a statement about 'how things really are'. (Hall, 1982, 75)

That Dominant Discourses as well as media messages are usually presented as natural, neutral and inevitable facts is the means by which to gain consensus both by the dominant and subordinated people. Meanwhile, Hall's phrase "the underlying premises" implies that there is some deeper level structure that is embedded in the mechanism of Dominant Discourses. I shall consider the structure in the next section.

How can a Dominant Discourse in society warrant itself as the only account of a certain circumstance, and sustain a limit, ban or proscription over alternative, competing or resisting explanations? I would like to stress again here that (1) one who has acquired Dominant primary Discourses will be most likely to gain Dominant secondary Discourses, and that (2) members of Dominant secondary Discourses will mostly produce the Dominant Discourses in society. Seen from the other way round, it can be inferred that the Dominant Discourses in the current world may be more likely to reflect the values and beliefs of male, white, Western, English speakers while simultaneously restricting alternative or resistant values and beliefs. Thus Dominant Discourses work to reproduce the very definitions of the situation which favoured and legitimated the existing structure of things in the first place.
6. Institutionalised Discourses

I have previously pointed out that there are Dominant primary Discourses and also that in modern society generally the primary Discourses of the male, Western, white, middle-class, native English speakers seem to have gained mainstream social status. The substantial aspect to emphasise here is that this very existence of Dominant primary Discourses essentially suggests the logic of norm/deviant or norm/other 'binary oppositions'. It has often been argued that for thousands of years so-called 'Western' thought has been founded upon the logic of binary oppositions, the logic of 'either/or' (Burr, 1995, 107). In contrast, Daisetz Suzuki (1997, 20) argues that in Japanese Zen thought, there has been no such concept as binary oppositions. However, actually it is true that so-called 'Japanese thought', traditionally, has also been based on the idea of binary oppositions such as uchi (= us, inside) / soto (= you, outside) and honne (= real intention) / tatemae (= professed intention). What is more, in the modern period when the Western way of thinking is dominating the world as the academic and scientific standard, thinking with and discussing from the viewpoint of binary oppositions seems to be rooted in the various Dominant Discourses in Japan and elsewhere. For example, the methodology of some social science fields such as sociolinguistics in Japan has been premised on the male/female binary opposition as well as Western sociolinguistics. Thus thinking in terms of binary opposition seems to be a rather universal characteristic of human social organisation. Such binary oppositions, in which one term is usually given a more privileged position than its opposite, are typical of ideologies. They deceive people into believing in the existence of greater value on one side of the dichotomy rather than the other, when in fact neither term can exist without its other (Burr, 1995, 107).

Thus we are led to think of male as the norm and non-male (= woman) as deviation, to think of white as superior to non-white, and to value native English speakers above speakers of other languages in many contexts in the current world. We are disciplined to think with binary oppositions such as self/others, above/below, here/there, tall/short and big/small. Among all the various binary oppositions that exist, I would like to deal with some of those relating to certain ongoing forms of social discrimination such as sexism, racism and linguicism, specifically: man/other (= woman), white people/others (= non-white people) and the English language/other languages. These binary oppositions have greatly served, and continue to serve, the reproduction of unequal social relations in order to maintain and justify the social status quo. In other words, these binary oppositions, along with others, lie as the deep structure of social life and work to regulate our way of perceiving our world. These influential binary oppositions are already inclusive within the structure of people's primary Discourses (i.e. Dominant primary Discourses/Non-Dominant primary Discourses) as I pointed out earlier. I would like to call these binary oppositions 'Institutionalised Discourses', in the sense that they function to sustain the various conventional institutions of society.

I would suggest that Institutionalised Discourses function at a deeper level than Dominant
Discourses. What I mean by deeper level is that Institutionalised Discourses strongly bind our practice of Discourses in society. The relationship between Dominant Discourses in society (or the Discourses of 'truth' or 'common sense') and Institutionalised Discourses (binary oppositions) that I shall discuss is that Dominant Discourses are like the 'surface structure' that is always presented visibly and explicitly whereas Institutionalised Discourses are like the 'deep structure' that implicitly controls Discourses in society in order to perpetuate the existing social situation. Dominant Discourses are repeatedly articulated and uttered by both dominant and even suppressed members of society in order to make sure of consensus, while Institutionalised Discourses are not articulated explicitly because arguments such as 'Men are superior to women.' and 'Native English speakers are superior to others.' are seen as ethically wrong in terms of 'political correctness'.

Institutionalised Discourses will be reinforced whenever Dominant Discourses gain consensus and approval by members in society. For example, the Dominant Discourse that 'Men and women speak differently', which is depicted as a neutral, scientific truth, may function to reinforce the man/woman Institutionalised Discourse and the accompanying discrimination against women. Likewise, the Dominant Discourse that 'The English language is the World Language', which is presented by some as common sense, may work to reinforce the English speaker/non-English speaker Institutionalised Discourse that supports linguicism and racism.

Let me cite Harland's argument about language here which may be suggestive in considering what I mean by Institutionalised Discourses.

The individual absorbs language before he can think for himself: indeed the absorption of language is the very condition of being able to think for himself. The individual can reject particular knowledges that society explicitly teaches him, he can throw off particular beliefs that society forcibly imposes upon him--but he has always already accepted the words and meanings through which such knowledges and beliefs were communicated to him. [. . . ] They lie within him like an undigested piece of society. (Harland, 1987, quoted in Turner, 1990, 15)

The formation of the categories in language through which one understands one's experience begins before one can resist them. Put another way, for example, an individual who is a member of the secondary Discourse of feminism, can reject particular knowledge that the primary Discourse of woman explicitly teaches her, she can throw off particular beliefs that the Discourse of woman forcibly imposes upon her--but she has always already accepted the words and meanings through which such knowledge and beliefs were communicated to her. In living in society one finds it difficult not to reproduce the assumptions and the version of the world that Institutionalised Discourses represent. Thereby for example in regard to the Dominant Discourse of
sociolinguistics that 'There is such a thing as women's language', some traditional linguists have tended
to argue from the viewpoint that women's language is inferior to men's, whereas feminist linguists'
resistance against this has been the viewpoint that women's language is just different from men's.
However, we notice that both the traditional linguists and the feminist linguists argue within the common
frame of the man/woman Institutionalised Discourse.

Let me summarise my model of Discourses diagrammatically. For the convenience of discussion, I
divide the Discourses into those operating primarily at the individual level and those at the societal level.
Primary and secondary Discourses (both Dominant and Non-Dominant) are attributed to the individual
level, whereas Dominant Discourses, Non-Dominant Discourses and Institutionalised Discourses are
attributed to the societal level. The model of an individual's primary and secondary Discourses is
shown in Figure 1. In contrast, at the societal level, Institutionalised Discourses are the ideologically-
invested binary oppositions which make one term dominant and form the basis of Dominant Discourses.
Dominant Discourses certainly reflect the values and beliefs of dominant people, whereas Non-
Dominant Discourses reflect those of non-dominant people. The model is shown in Figure 2. However,
in fact there is no clear-cut division between the individual level and societal level, since as I have
already argued, Dominant Discourses in society are produced by Dominant secondary Discourses and
thus Dominant Discourses in society and an individual's Dominant secondary Discourses are in many
cases compatible to each other and mutually reinforcing. Dominant Discourses are not guaranteed to
possess their dominant status. They are always more or less overtly contested by other Non-Dominant
Discourses. In contrast, while Non-Dominant Discourses are suppressed Discourses, they surely
contain the possibilities of resistance. Depending on social circumstances Non-Dominant Discourses
could become Dominant Discourses, and a Dominant Discourse could lose its dominant status. In
the same vein, when a Dominant Discourse becomes deeply rooted and naturalised in society, it could
become an Institutionalised Discourse. Also, I would like to argue that it may be possible for certain
Institutionalised Discourses to be subverted by our conscious resistance.

![Figure 1: The relationship between an individual's primary Discourses as base identity and
secondary Discourses as constructed identity](image-url)
Figure 2: The relationship between Dominant Discourses as the surface structure and Institutionalised Discourses as the deep structure

7. Ideology

So far, I have deliberately avoided defining the contested term 'ideology', although I have sometimes used the word in the preceding discussion. It is appropriate here to consider what ideology stands for and how the term relates to the model of Discourse and the idea of binary oppositions. Regarding the latter, Jameson noted that "the fundamental gesture of all ideology is exactly such a rigid binary opposition between the self or familiar, which is positively valorised, and the non-self or alien, which is thrust beyond the boundaries of intelligibility" (Jameson, 1981, quoted in Eagleton, 1991, 126). This being the case, Institutionalised Discourses, which are binary oppositions, may be viewed as essentially connected to ideologies.

Many scholars see the concept of discourse as superceding that of ideology. Notably, Foucault (1972) analyses relations of domination through the concept of discourse without focusing on the workings of ideologies. For Foucault, the term 'ideology' (especially the view of ideology as false consciousness) is problematic as it assumes that there is some underlying truth or reality. Foucault's basic position is that there exists no truth, only numerous versions or constructions of the world, and that which version receives the stamp of truth depends on culturally and historically specific factors. This certainly relates to 'relativism', which asserts that "there exists only numerous versions of events, all of which must theoretically be accorded equal status and value. Because there can be no truth, all perspectives must be equally valid" (Burr, 1995, 81). However, I would not agree with the notion of relativism in two respects. Firstly, because if we accept the notion of relativism, logically we must afford equal ethical value to, for example, the Discourse of murder and the Discourse of altruistic self-sacrifice. Thus within the framework of relativism it seems impossible to claim that one construction about the world is ethically good and others are false. However philosophically coherent this position might be therefore, it seems distinctly ill suited as a practical basis for social life.

Secondly, what I am trying to do is to demonstrate the way in which the mechanism of Discourses serves to produce and perpetuate inequitable power relations in society. It is actually impossible to do this without depending on some notion of reality or truth that Discourses are overshadowing. As a way
of understanding this point, let us consider a certain society composed of just 100 people and that the richest and the most powerful 25 people of all happen to speak a certain language, X. One Discourse might describe the situation as one in which language X is helping the powerful to dominate the society economically and politically. An opposing Discourse might proclaim that the status and role of language X is irrelevant since most of the people (75 percent) in the society live without any influence of it. As can be seen, what a Discourse gives an individual is a particular ideological speaking position from which to interpret and represent the world. This is a matter of the relationship between Discourses and reality. I would assert that without accepting the existence of ideology we cannot apprehend the politics of Discourses in society, because ideology "provides a framework for understanding that ideas and language constitute a different order of things than the material world" (Holborow, 1999, 8).

In the domain of Cultural Studies, ideology is considered to be one of the most important categories. Hall (1982) rejects the traditional Marxist's 'false consciousness' idea of ideology: Rather he sees ideology as the central category that connects the media to society. His idea of ideological dominance may be seen as analogous to my idea of the politics of Dominant Discourses and Institutionalised Discourses, or that of the surface structure and deep structure of language practice.

One had also to see that dominance was accomplished at the unconscious as well as the conscious level: to see it as a property of the system of relations involved, rather than as the overt and intentional biases of individuals; and to recognise its play in the very activity of regulation and exclusion which functioned through language and discourse before an adequate conception of dominance could be theoretically secured. (Hall, 1982, 85)

Institutionalised Discourses can be regarded as functioning to legitimate dominance at the unconscious level, whereas Dominant Discourses which are generated from the Institutionalised Discourses operate at the conscious level. It should now be seen that social dominance is secured not through ideological compulsion exerted by the dominant group, but by a combination of the maintained rule of powerful people with the active or inactive consent of the powerless people. Gramsci's idea of 'hegemony' could well explain the situation. Hegemony comprises:

1. The "spontaneous" consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is "historically" caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production.
2. The apparatus of state coercive power which "legally" enforces discipline on those groups who do not "consent" either actively or passively. This apparatus is, however, constituted for the whole
Gramsci’s idea of hegemony is crucial in the sense that “hegemony is understood as accomplished, not without the due measure of legal and legitimate compulsion, but principally by means of winning the active consent of those classes and groups who were subordinated within it” (Hall, 1982, 85). Hegemony reveals the mechanism of the free consent of the suppressed to the leadership of the dominant people.

It [hegemony] circumscribed all those processes by means of which a dominant class alliance or ruling bloc, which has effectively secured mastery over the primary economic processes in society, extends and expands its mastery over society in such a way that it can transform and re-fashion its ways of life, its mores and conceptualization, its very form and level of culture and civilization in a direction which, while not directly paying immediate profits to the narrow interests of any particular class, favours the development and expansion of the dominant social and productive system of life as a whole. (Hall, 1982, 85)

Seen in this light, the concept of hegemony helps explain why Dominant Discourses in society, which result in reinforcing Institutionalised Discourses, can maintain their dominant status. Dominant Discourses are reproduced and maintained not by the dominant people only but through collaboration between the dominant people and the oppressed people.

The relationship between Dominant Discourses, Institutionalised Discourses and ideology should be seen in this way: Institutionalised Discourses, which are the underlying assumptions of Dominant Discourses, become connected to certain ideologies under certain conditions. For example, while a Dominant Discourse that 'English is the World Language' or that 'Men and women speak differently' may well contain some kind of truth, there may exist untrue underlying assumptions such as that 'English is a superior language' (= English/other languages Institutionalised Discourse) or 'Men are superior' (= man/woman Institutionalised Discourse) in some contexts. When Discourses are used to produce certain discursive effects, or to serve the interests of the hegemonic groups in society, they should be regarded as ideological. Ideology is a matter of who is saying what to whom for what purposes at what time. Thus Institutionalised Discourses contain certain ideologies in certain contexts. For example, within the man/woman Institutionalised Discourse an androcentric ideology is inscribed. Within the Institutionalised Discourses of English/non-English and white/others an Anglocentric ideology is inscribed itself. These ideologies in Discourses work to accomplish and maintain hegemony by rationalising, legitimating, universalising and naturalising themselves. Discourses entailing certain definite premises about the
world are ideological, not because of the manifest bias or distortions of their surface contents (= Dominant Discourses), but because they were generated out of a particular limited ideological set (= Institutionalised Discourses) that work to produce particular discursive effects. It is in this way that social discrimination is produced and reproduced.

8. Boundary ambiguity

Is it inevitable that the current non-dominant groups such as women, poor people, non-white people, and non-English speaking people endure social discrimination perpetually? In this section, I would like to consider the possibility of resistance. Gramsci's idea of hegemony aims to explain social domination as something that is won through struggle. The idea of hegemony does not imply that social domination is achieved by ruling people directly manipulating the worldview of powerless masses. Rather, it suggests that in order for leadership to be gained, the dominant group has to engage in negotiations with opposition groups and their values. Sometimes there also have to be some changes made in the values and beliefs of the dominant group in order to make the opposing groups accept their leadership. As a consequence of its accommodating elements of opposing class cultures, a certain dominant culture, for example bourgeois culture, ceases to be purely 'bourgeois'. Instead, it becomes a mobile construction of cultural and ideological elements derived from both dominant and non-dominant groups, which are, but only provisionally and for the duration of a specific historical conjuncture, affiliated to dominant bourgeois values, interests and beliefs. Thus the transformed ideological system will draw its elements from varying sources, all contributing to a common worldview, that is, Dominant Discourses, that passes for the natural expression of the whole bloc of dominant and consenting groups (Turner, 1990, 195-198).

Gramsci's concept of hegemony is optimistic in the sense that it does imply the possibility of change. If hegemony is something to be won through struggle, and there are always negotiations between the Dominant Discourses and the Non-Dominant Discourses, or opposing Discourses, it suggests that the hegemony of the current Dominant Discourses and that of underlying Institutionalised Discourses are not entirely stable and thereby can be undermined in some ways. There is a potential possibility of resistance.

Gee (1996, 146-147) argues that much of the power of resistance has been born of people who have failed to acquire a given Discourse, that is, people who are socially 'maladapted'. As argued earlier, all individuals become a member of many Discourses simultaneously. However, there sometimes conflicts and tensions exist between one's primary and secondary Discourses, or between one's various secondary Discourses. These conflicts and tensions are particularly strong for people whose primary Discourses are non-dominant in society yet try to acquire Dominant secondary Discourses. For example, women tend to be in a suppressed position in many societies. Through their process to master the primary Discourse,
women acquire the women's Discourse which is dictated by society to inferiorise and suppress women's abilities, and to make women behave femininely. Once they fully master the Discourse, they have no conscious awareness of their being members of the Discourse. Therefore, they may naturally behave as if they were second class citizens in society without doubt.

On the other hand, some women who are in the process of acquiring, say, the Discourse of business persons (= a Dominant secondary Discourse in society) and the Discourse of feminism (= a Non-Dominant secondary Discourse in society) at the same time, may feel a conflict between the ordinary women's Discourse, the Discourse of business persons, which is usually influenced by male-dominated rules, and the Discourse of feminism, which opposes male-dominated society and the mechanism of Dominant Discourses. As they acquire the feminist Discourse as a Non-Dominant secondary Discourse, they become more and more aware of the problems of the primary Discourse of woman and the Discourse of business persons as a Dominant secondary Discourse. Acquisition of the feminist Discourse could well adversely affect their fluency of ordinary women's Discourse and of the Discourse of the business world. In such a case they risk becoming socially 'maladapted' in the women's Discourse and the Discourse of the business world.

According to Gee (1996, 146-147), there is an advantage to being maladapted. These marginalised people can gain insights (meta-knowledge) into the given Discourse in a way that members within the Discourse cannot. It is this meta-knowledge which can enable the marginalised people to recognise the ideological workings of the mechanism of Discourses instead of unconsciously accepting the values of Dominant Discourses. For example, those who acquire both a Discourse of feminism and that of linguistics objected to the view of the Dominant Discourse of linguistics that 'women are more talkative than men' by presenting counter evidence. Likewise, through postcolonial Discourse non-white people began to accuse Western whites of their discriminatory orientalism. Thus much of the power of resistance can be manifested through 'maladapted' people, as can be seen in the women's liberation movements and black people's civil rights movements. We can then expect people who are maladapted to the Dominant secondary Discourses to challenge the natural status of truth or common sense, or Dominant Discourses.

I have once agreed with the above idea of Gee that suggests that Dominant Discourses can be subverted by presenting counter Discourses or Discourses of resistance. However, my recent studies have led me to the position that this strategy is not actually enough to subvert the Institutionalised Discourses. Earlier, I have pointed out that there exist certain Institutionalised Discourses, notions of ideological binary oppositions, that have been rooted deeply in our thoughts and thus operate to regulate the politics of Dominant Discourses in our society. Therefore even if we try to challenge a certain Dominant Discourse by a counter Discourse, this still has the danger of trapping us within the hands of the ideological Institutionalised Discourses.
I would then have to argue that unless we undermine the Institutionalised Discourses, or the deep structures, rather than Dominant Discourses, or the surface structures, substantive changes can never be achieved. It may in fact sound enormously difficult to change the deeply-rooted Institutionalised Discourses which are linked to certain ideologies. However, here I would like to present my concept of 'boundary ambiguity' which might have the possibility of subverting our accustomed way of thinking.

My concept of 'boundary ambiguity' is primarily inspired by Japanese Zen thought, which is an expression of Buddhism. D. Suzuki (1997; 20; 26; 59), a Japanese Zen theorist, argues that there are so-called 'Western ways of thinking' and 'Eastern ways of thinking'. According to him, the absolute difference between them lies in the concept of binary oppositions. The Western way of thinking is based on the thought of dualism such as light/darkness, self/others, subject/object, affirmation/negation. In contrast, he argues that in the traditional Eastern way of thinking, there is no such thing as dualism. It negates the notion of binary oppositions. There is no division between the two terms: the subject is the object, and affirmation is negation. All our knowledge tends to be concerned with dualities. However, "so long as this world, as conceived by the human mind, is a realm of opposites, there is no way to escape from it and to enter into a world of emptiness where all oppositions are supposed to merge" (D. Suzuki, 1996, 184). Suzuki emphasises that the Western way of thinking has an interest in the world which is already divided in two, whereas the Eastern way of thinking, has an interest in the world which has not yet been divided. Therefore, while Western thinking always gives privilege to one term which gives rise to social discrimination, Zen thought does not accept a boundary between two given terms. There is no opposition nor boundary between two given terms in traditional Eastern thought (D. Suzuki, 1997, 20; 26).

In fact, Suzuki's theory of Zen is too vague and abstract to fully grasp conceptually. Also his argument is not without problems. He tends to make categorical statements by simply identifying Japanese Zen thought with some generalised conception of the Eastern way of thinking. Moreover, it is ironical that he himself, who should negate the existence of binary oppositions based on the Zen thought, uses binary categories such as the 'Eastern' way of thinking and the 'Western' way of thinking in his argument. As I have pointed out earlier, thinking with binary oppositions seems to be universal, rather than just specific to so-called Western thought. Thus perhaps the boundary between so-called Western thought and Eastern thought may be ambiguous. Nevertheless, I would not like to dismiss his theory as just inadequate. Rather, I would like to appropriate some of his Zen theory in order to elaborate my concept of 'boundary ambiguity': Suzuki's Zen thought does not accept the boundary between two given terms. It suggests that any given binary oppositions are not absolute concepts. Let me then define my conception of boundary ambiguity as the state in which there is no clear-cut boundary between two given terms.

How can we demonstrate the state of boundary ambiguity between binary oppositions? In other
words, how can we undermine and weaken binary oppositions? Perhaps one way is to highlight the 'hybridity' that always occurs at the boundary between two given categories. Hybridity is a notion that has been given great prominence in the work of the postcolonial critic Bhabha. He defines postcolonial culture as hybrid by going beyond binary oppositions and essentialism.

The problem is not of an ontological cast, where differences are effects of some more totalizing, transcendent identity to be found in the past or the future. Hybrid hyphenations emphasize the incommensurable elements--the stubborn chunks--as the basis of cultural identifications. What is at issue is the performative nature of differential identities: the regulation and negotiation of those spaces that are continually, contingently, 'opening out', remarking the boundaries, exposing the limits of any claim to a singular or autonomous sign of difference--be it class, gender or race. Such assignations of social differences--where difference is neither One nor the Other but something else besides, in-between--find their agency in a form of the 'future' where the past is not originary, where the present is not simply transitory. It is, if I may stretch a point, an interstitial future, that emerges in-between the claims of the past and the needs of the present. (Bhabha, 1994, 219) (emphasis added)

I would hypothesise that by continuously re-marking (rather than 'remarking') the boundaries between categories; that is to say, by showing that the boundary is not always fixed but changeable and thus that the boundary between two categories is in fact ambiguous and undecidable, it may be possible to undermine binary oppositions. Ambiguous boundaries are something which:

- can no longer be included within philosophical (binary) opposition, but which, however, inhabit philosophical opposition, resisting and disorganising it, without ever constituting a third term, without ever leaving room for a solution in the form of speculative dialectics. (Derrida, 1981, 43)

Thus it may be possible to subvert the Institutionalised Discourses by using the concept of boundary ambiguity in considering such binary oppositions as man/others (= woman) and the English language/other languages. What is necessary to show by paying attention to the boundary is (1) that a boundary between a certain binary opposition changes according to the contexts and is thus ambiguous; (2) that in fact many people and things reside around the boundary in a binary opposition rather than residing in either of the two opposites. In this way I shall be able to attempt to weaken the concept of binary oppositions in general and the operation of certain binary oppositions underlying the Institutionalised Discourses.

Certainly, it must be pointed out that the strategy of re-marking the boundaries might have a
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possibility of bringing about some undesirable results: that is to say, even though the boundaries between the categories become ambiguous, binary oppositions themselves might not be dissolved altogether. Rather it could result in even greater prestige being attached to the superior term and further oppression might be given to the inferior term. Even so, however, if we can continue to always re-mark the boundaries, and thus to widen the ambiguity between binary oppositions, there is still a hope that the Institutionalised Discourses may be at least weakened, if not totally disappear.

9. Conclusion

I have attempted to formulate a theory of my own on the workings and politics of language. Reviewing the theories on language by Foucault, Gee, Hall and others, I established my hypothesis on the mechanism of Discourses in society with critical appropriation of their theories. My model of the mechanism of Discourses that works to maintain the dominator/dominated relationships is as follows. First of all, 'Dominant Discourses', which are usually referred to as 'truth' or 'common sense' in society are the surface structure: by 'surface structure', I mean Dominant Discourses are explicitly and repeatedly articulated by people so that everyone in society may acquire them.

Behind the surface structure, or Dominant Discourses, there is the 'deep structure'. I name the deep structure 'Institutionalised Discourses' in the sense that they have rooted in society as institutions in current society. Institutionalised Discourses are the particularly influential and ideological 'binary oppositions' that people seem to take for granted such as 'man/other (= woman)', 'West/other (= East)', 'English language/other languages', and 'white people/other people (= non-white people'). Institutionalised Discourses are always implicit and hidden, and they work to maintain social discrimination by manipulating the Dominant Discourses. In other words, the Dominant Discourses are generated out of the Institutionalised Discourses.

If so, we cannot undermine the dominant/oppressed relationships just by presenting the counter Discourses that oppose the Dominant Discourses, as theoretically these counter Discourses are also generated out of the Institutionalised Discourses. Therefore what we should do to overcome social discrimination is to weaken the very Institutionalised Discourses. My strategy to weaken the Institutionalised Discourses is to show 'boundary ambiguity' between the binary oppositions. If we can prove the boundary between the categories is in fact ambiguous and constantly re-marked, and that each category is not pure but actually mixed and hybrid, the division between the categories that maintains and reinforces the social inequality might become less significant.

What I would like to show with my model is that (1) there is a mechanism of Discourses which reinforces the categorisation of things in order to maintain social discrimination in the world and that (2) even so, there may be some possible ways to partially weaken the dominant/suppressed relationships. Therefore, having formulated my own theory of the Discourses, it is necessary to apply it to the
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various dominator/dominated relationships in the world so that I can demonstrate that my theory of the Discourses can be somehow universally applied and that I can consider ways to undermine the dominant/suppressed relationships. I have actually applied my model of the Discourses to several cases in my earlier works. I dealt with the 'women speak differently from men' claim in sociolinguistics as a Dominant Discourse, and the 'man/woman' binary opposition as an Institutionalised Discourse containing androcentric ideology. I conducted my own survey on the young Japanese people's use of honorifics, and my findings could suggest that there is not much difference between men's language and women's language amongst young people contrary to the claim of the Dominant Discourse in sociolinguistics. In conclusion, evidence points towards the boundary between men and women in terms of language use being ambiguous and re-marked at all times, as language use between the sexes is hybrid.

On the other hand, I focused on the 'English as the World Language' claim as a Dominant Discourse, and the English/other languages, West/East, white/others and Anglo-Saxon/others binary divisions as embedded Institutionalised Discourses. By examining the English and Japanese writings, I showed that whereas a great many English words were acculturated into Japanese lexicon, little by little, Japanese words were adopted into English lexicon. Therefore, I argued that languages are in a way dependent on each other. If languages continue to influence other languages in some ways, it can be possibly said that the boundaries between languages are re-marked. In this way, if we can re-mark the boundary between English and other languages constantly, the Institutionalised Discourses of English/other languages may become weaker in the future.

In contrast, I considered the 'language and education policy' Discourse as a Dominant Discourse in Singapore and the embedded coloniser/colonised Institutionalised Discourse. My actual survey suggested that the Dominant Discourse has planted the feeling of language insecurity in the minds of Singaporeans: whereas they regard English as their own language, they think of their own English as inferior and British English as the norm. Hence I argued that the appreciation of 'Singlish' might be a potential strategy to undermine the coloniser/colonised Institutionalised Discourse for Singaporeans. Singlish is a language mixed with English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil which is unique to, and indigenous to, Singapore. Singlish can be seen as re-marking the boundary between many languages. I would argue that having a language of their own with confidence and pride rather than pursuing the norm imposed by the coloniser is vital to weakening the coloniser/colonised Institutionalised Discourse.

The issues I have dealt with are rather broad: they include sexism, linguicism, racism, ethnicism and colonialism. Certainly there are many more sorts of dominant/oppressed relationships, which I would like to consider in the light of my theory on the mechanism of Discourses in my future work.

Notes

1. Unless one transforms one's sex, nationality, or skin colour and so on.
2. In this respect, Spivak (1988) argues as follows: "Can the subaltern speak? What must the elite do to watch out for the continuing construction of the subaltern? The question of "woman" seems most problematic in this context. Clearly, if you are poor, black, and female you get it in three ways. (294)"

3. Indeed it is often argued that what Japanese academics are doing is importing Western academic methodologies and philosophies. So it can be said that Japanese academic researchers are very much influenced by the Western way of thinking, of doing research. In the same vein, Gaonkar (1996) points out the domination of Western theories in the domains of social sciences and humanities in the world. He argues that when researchers from the East go to the West to acquire Western theories, they are required to acquire not only Western theories but also Western ways of thinking and Western ways of writing (Discussion meeting of B. Lee, Gaonkar and Sakai, 1996).

4. See for example, Swacker (1975) and Bernard (1972).

5. See for example, Said (1978).


7. Zen originally began as a particular sect of Buddhism, an essentially meditative one, but in its development it radically transformed the traditional Buddhist discipline of meditation. In Zen thought, the dualism between meditation and activity is abolished (Barrett, 1996, vii).

8. D. Suzuki argues that, "emptiness is not a negative idea, nor does it mean mere privation, but as it is not in the realm of names and forms it is called emptiness, or nothingness, or the Void" (Suzuki, 1996, 190).


10. See Mizokami (2002).


References


