Welcome to class. Today we are going to talk about the British sociologist and a person of sociology of education, who had an impact and who initiated a lot of discussion because of his work on codes; class, control and codes. I am talking about Basil Bernstein; he is one of the founding fathers of modern sociolinguistics.

And in that series of founding fathers of sociolinguistics or founding pillars of sociolinguistics as an independent discipline, we are going to quickly do a brief survey of Basil Bernstein's contribution to the field and to what extent he generated a lot of debates and also associated criticism with his work. So, we will talk about the British sociologist and linguist, Basil Bernstein, today.

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Basil Bernard Bernstein was born on 1st November 1924 and he died on 24th September 2000. He was a British sociolinguist and sociologist known for his work on society, class, control and codes. So, he is known for his work on sociology of education. He worked on the connection between the manner of speaking and social organization. Bernstein was born on 1st November 1924 into a Jewish immigrant family in the East End of London.
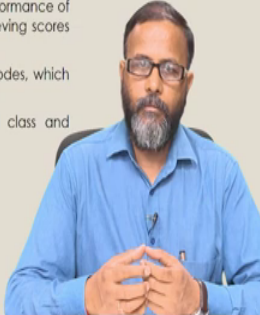
In 1960, Bernstein began his graduate work, he enrolled at the University of London where he completed his PhD in linguistics. He joined the institute of education at the University of London and worked there for the rest of his career. He became Karl Mannheim Chair of sociology of education at the institute of education in University of London. In 1983, Bernstein was awarded the honorary degree, Doctor of the University by the Open University Milton Keynes, England.

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His major contribution is the theory of class and language codes. As an educationist he was a keen observer of the fact that the children from lower class; socioeconomic class fared poorer as compared to children from middle class, socioeconomic class in terms of language. They did fairly well and had almost equal scores in other subjects like mathematics and other subjects.

But as far as language was concerned and the subjects based on language competencies, the students or the children from lower class, lower socioeconomic strata performed very badly compared to the children from middle socioeconomic class and this triggered a theory, this triggered a hypothesis that he put forward.

In the 1960s, the construct that he gave was of 'restricted code' and 'elaborate code' pertaining to different classes of speakers. So, Bernstein made a significant contribution to the study of communication with his sociolinguistic theory of language codes which was developed to

explain inequalities based on social class and found in language use; so, the two different codes for two different classes.

And he tried to account for the poor performance of the students from lower socioeconomic class and he gave up constructs like a restricted code and elaborate code. This construct drew a lot of attention among his scholars in Britain and a very brief attention of American sociolinguists as well.
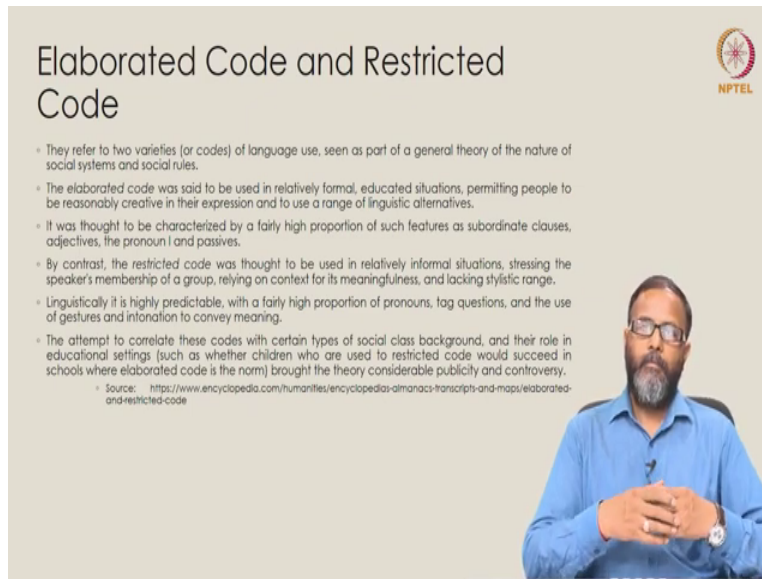
These two constructs, elaborate code and restricted code vis-à-vis class became the theme of a lot of other works that followed, though not all the works related to this theme upheld the hypothesis of Bernstein. Some of them severely criticized him for a lot of other reasons but there is no doubt that these two constructs, elaborate code and restricted code drew a lot of attention from scholars. So, what is the theory?

So, the theory holds that there are elaborate and restricted codes within the broader category of language codes. And in his theory, Bernstein asserts a direct relationship between societal class and language use. So, as you can understand, the sixties was the decade when other people in other parts of the world were also concerned about correlation between social structures, social class and linguistic structures.

And as an educationist and a person of sociology of education, Bernstein also tried to find a valid explanation for the poor performance of young children from lower socioeconomic strata and a little better performance by children from middle socioeconomic strata. So, he also tried to correlate the performance of these students in language-based courses, their use of language vis-à-vis the class they belong to.

And the assumption was that the home domain is primarily responsible for their performance in the school. So, students from middle socioeconomic strata have better exposure and experience with linguistic structure, its richness and variety as compared to the children from lower socioeconomic strata where they do not have that degree of exposure, experience and use at home. So, this led to constructing the ideas like restricted code and elaborate code.
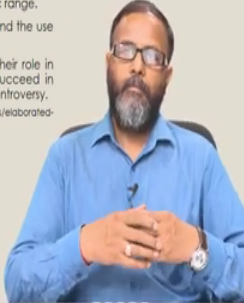
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Moving on, the construct that Bernstein put forward refers to two varieties of language used, seen as part of general theory of nature of social system and social rules. So, the 'elaborate code' was said to be used in relatively formal educated situations permitting people to be reasonably creative in their expressions and to use a range of linguistic alternatives. So, this code contains a high degree of formality, richness of expression, variety of linguistic categories and sufficient in itself to explain the meaning it intends to.

It is thought to be characterized by a fairly high proportion of such features as subordinate clauses, adjectives, pronouns and passives. So, if you see, this elaborate code is sufficient in itself and does not presume any background knowledge of the content it shares. So, the speakers have a wide range of linguistic structures at their disposal. We can find a variety of expressions and they are relatively used in educated and domain-aware society; where people are educated, aware and very expressive.

So elaborate code is expressive in nature, whereas by contrast, the 'restricted codes' are thought to be used in relatively informal situations stressing the speaker's membership of a group relying on context for its interpretation of meaning and it lacks a style and range of linguistic expressions, a wide range of linguistic expressions. So, within the same language community, linguistic community, speech community, we find two varieties of codes within the same language.

One which is rich in expressions, which has a wide range of linguistic structures, which is used in educational domains and is self-sufficient to explain the intended meaning. Whereas in contrast to elaborate code, restricted code offers limited linguistic variations, or varieties of expressions. They have limited use of linguistic categories, and use more simple sentences for example, unlike elaborate code where you have complex sentences, subordinate clauses.

Restricted code has limitations and restrictions in the sense that in order to derive meaning out of it you need to be very closely connected in the group. So, it is an intra-group membership and you have to, within that group you have to rely on the context so shared context and shared understanding will allow you to derive meaning out of the variety used in restricted code, that is why it is called restricted code because it restricts the membership. It assumes shared understanding of the context.

Linguistically it is highly predictable with a fairly high proportion of pronouns, tag questions and the use of gestures and intonation to convey meaning. So unlike elaborate code which is sufficient in itself because it is very elaborate with a wide range of linguistic expressions, variety of linguistic categories and structures, restricted code relies on the shared understanding of the context.

And it requires understanding of the context and shared meaning among the smaller group of people who use it. The attempt to correlate these codes with certain types of social class, background and their role in educational settings such as whether children who are used to restricted code would succeed in schools where elaborate code is the norm brought the theory considerable publicity and controversy as well.

Because, Bernstein tried to correlate this lower performance, low performance of such students who belonged to lower socio-economic strata of the society and he tried to attribute it to the restricted code. The richness of language available at home and around the students around the children who use restricted code, it basically refers to the deficit, linguistic deficit, that they had in their environment.

And when they come to school whether the elaborate code is a norm, high degree of formality, richness of expressions, a variety of linguistic structures and categories used, elaborate range of vocabulary used, then they find it a little intimidating and hostile. And their performance is

restricted because of their experience of restricted code around them, in their environment at home.

So, through this correlation between the performance of students and their social background between the students of lower socioeconomic strata and students of middle socioeconomic strata and their relative performances and categorizing this correlation in terms of linguistic structures and social structures, Bernstein invited a lot of attention, curiosity, debate and of course criticism.
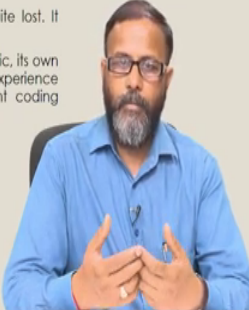
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Now, in differentiating between 'restricted' and 'elaborate' codes, it is noted that elaborate code can stand on its own. It is complete and full of details: most people overhearing a conversation would be able to understand it. However, restricted code is shorter, condensed and requires background information and prior knowledge of the context. So basically, he is referring to deficit, linguistic deficit among the children from lower social strata which is primarily responsible for their poor performance in language-based courses.

This is even as they perform fairly well at par with middle students from middle socioeconomic strata in mathematics and other subjects, and this clearly indicates something to do with their social background. So, their language use, their code and their background are correlated. Their performance can be attributed to their background. A person overhearing a conversation full of

restricted code would be quite lost and it would be easily identifiable as an insider's conversation.

If you quote Bernstein 1971, what he says, I quote from him: "clearly one code is not better than another, each process has its own aesthetics, its own possibilities. Society however, may place different values on the orders of experience elicited, maintained and progressively strengthened through the different coding systems". So, he is referring to the two patterns of coding in two different classes.

So, code and class, he correlates code and class. So, the way it is coded, encoded in one class it is different in another class and this class hierarchy or a stratification can be projected onto their language use patterns and performances in school. So, Bernstein's contribution in sociolinguistics relates to sociology of education and language use where he comes up with a correlation between code and social class.
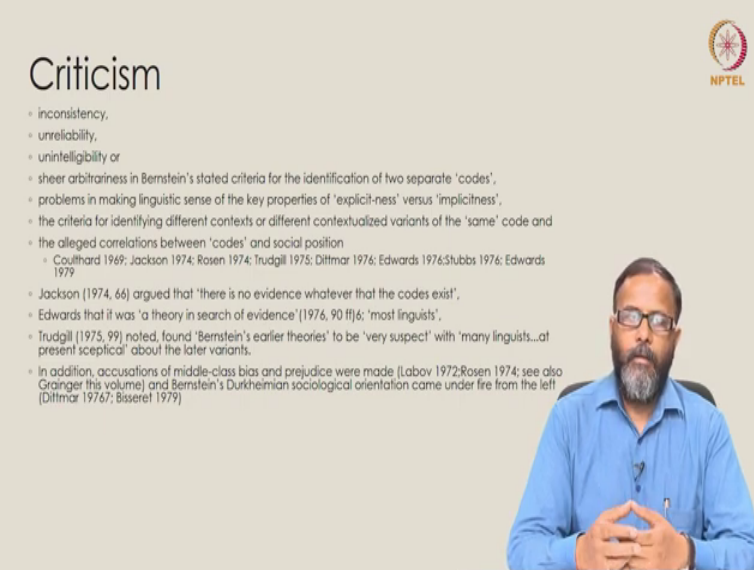
And he says that the class which has a rich, elaborate and expressive code within the same language, has a different pattern of language use and that coding is primarily responsible for the performance of the children from this class in their language-based class courses. So, he names these kinds of codes based on two different classes. The elaborate code, which is rich in vocabulary in linguistic categories which is rich in expressions. It has a wide range of varieties of linguistic items and is self-sufficient to make sense of it. However, the language or the code used by social; lower socioeconomic strata of the society is restricted in nature. Limited range of vocabulary, limited range of varieties of linguistic items, a lot of presumptions required, shared understanding of the context required, tag questions and very restricted in nature and not opened for the outsiders to interpret the meaning without having shared understanding.

So, it restricts their language use. When the students from this class, lower social strata reach their school this has a bearing upon their performance in language-based courses. So, Bernstein was basically an educationist and he worked on the sociology of education and he worked on this language aspect to demonstrate the possible reasons, the attributes of poor performances of the working-class students who belonged to lower socioeconomic strata of the society.

And comparatively, children from the middle socio-economic strata, middle class performed fairly well and better than their counterparts from lower socioeconomic strata, the working class.

And this distinction and correlation between code and class earned him a reputation of being a sociolinguistically oriented linguist and an educationist. His work received a lot of appreciation, a lot of attention at the same time huge criticism by the fellow linguists both in Britain and in America.

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So, if you look at the criticism, the basis of criticism, people accused him of being inconsistent in his explanation of the correlation of the code and class. They found it unreliable, and also unintelligible. People found this distinction of class and language use and correlation between class and code arbitrary and it was seen as causing problems in making linguistic sense of the key properties of explicitness versus implicitness, restricted versus elaborate and such differences.

Because the features were all misleading (so it was believed), he was criticized for being unintelligible, unreliable and inconsistent in his explanation of this correlation. He was also criticized for the criteria for identifying different contexts or different contextualized variants of the same code and the alleged correlation between codes and the social position.

And the people who led the criticism were Coulthard, Jackson, Rosen, Trudgil, Dittmar, Edwards, Stubbs and others: they criticized his work. Jackson, 1974 argued that there is no evidence whatsoever that the code exists, he questions even the existence of the code. Trudgil

noted Bernstein's earlier theories to be very suspect as did many other linguists who were skeptical about the later variants.

In addition, accusations of middle-class bias and prejudice were made against Bernstein, the Durkheimian sociological orientation came under fire from the left scholars as well. So overall, when you see the contribution of Basil Bernstein, you can recall the similar kind of work happening in America with people like Labov; who was also trying to correlate the language structures with the social structure.

Recall his Martha's Vineyard Island study or the social stratification of English in New York city study. So, Bernstein's work in Britain in education linguistics drew considerable criticism but at the same time we cannot write it off, or his contribution to shaping the field of sociolinguistics, because for a decade his theory of code and class dominated research and for a brief account it had influence in American linguistic tradition as well.

So, Bernstein is considered one of the founding fathers of sociolinguistics who gave a very significant theory of social class and code. He tried to establish a correlation between the code and the class in terms of understanding, the performance of children from lower socioeconomic strata and working class in the school and he tried to establish that there is a correlation.

Because if you look at the performance of children from middle class; middle socioeconomic strata, in language-based courses and the performance of students from lower socioeconomic strata, or the working class in language-based courses, the gap is very-very high, but in non-language-based courses they all perform fairly equally. So, there is something to do with their patterns of language use, their performance and their social background and this is what Bernstein established; code, class and control. So, this is his contribution to modern sociolinguistics.

However, he was criticized for being inconsistent, unreliable, unintelligible and he was also accused of middle-class bias. And the thing is that it was seen as an unnecessary intervention of drawing a line between two classes and attributing the poor performance of students to their social background. It was seen as an irresponsible approach towards looking at this problem.

So, despite these criticisms, Bernstein's contribution to the discipline remains important, significant and it opens up a new chapter of debate on the correlation between social class, social structure and linguistic structure. We will continue discussing other scholars from other countries and their contributions like Susan Ervin Trump, Tripp, John J Gumperz, Charles Ferguson, Joshua Fishman, Ellen Grimshaw, and Uriel Weinreich in our coming lectures. So, this is it for now, thank you very much.