

CROSS-CULTURAL POWER RELATIONS IN ACADEMIA: THE NEED FOR EMANCIPATION¹

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0. OBJECTIVES

This paper is about cultural racism, or, seen from another, but more precise perspective, about what I will define as *culturism*. In a somewhat recent editorial in *Discourse & Society*, entitled "Academic nationalism", Teun A. Van Dijk brings into the forefront of the debate on racism the necessity to introduce critical investigation into too often forgotten forms of racism, ethnocentrism and nationalism such as the ones one finds in elite discourse. As he puts it: "In many, sometimes subtle, forms these systems of dominance and inequality may be expressed and enacted everywhere in society, not least among the elites. Also in the academia." (1994: 275). Although the example of cultural racism I will be dealing with here does not correspond exactly with what Van Dijk is referring to, i. e. academic research and publishing, it is expressed in or has something to do with academia, it negatively represents 'others' and is used to set and "legitimate the exclusion, the inferiorization and marginalization of those who are Different, and especially those who have a different colour or different culture." (*idem*).

The text I will be analysing (Annex A), representing one type of prejudiced discourse and one type of discursive practice, is a document from a department of a British university, entitled *Guidelines for the Acceptance of Visiting Scholars*, which, believing in the title (although as we shall see, one should not do that), is a set of

premises by which the Department guides itself in the acceptance/refusal of applications of *overseas academics who wish to spend a period* as visitors to the Department.

In my analysis I assume that the type of inferiorization and marginalization of the 'other' shown linguistically in the text is culturally specific to Britain and has its origins in a historical process that has not been peaceful: "(...) the loss of, or retreat from, empire has forced governments to define the nation's responsibilities more narrowly. (...). This transformation from empire to nation has not been as traumatic for Britain as might have been expected. It has not, however, been an entirely smooth transition." (Goulbourne, 1991: 88). Furthermore, although I work with a linguistic sample, it is important to emphasise the fact that the expression of the type of prejudice I am dealing with here is not shown through language only and can easily be recognisable in other sociocultural practices.

I will be doing a critical discourse analysis of the text, and theoretically framing it, I will follow closely Halliday's theory of language (1985) and work previously published on CDA, such as Kress (1988), Wodak (1989) and van Dijk (1993), but mainly Fairclough (1989, 1992, 1993) and Fairclough, ed. (1992). Concordant with Fairclough (1992, 1993) I understand critical discourse analysis as the sort of analysis that is targeted to unveil linkages of causality and determination between discursive practices and events and wider social and cultural processes and structures, and to investigate how such practices are shaped ideologically by relations of power and struggles over power and the maintenance of hegemony. CDA

1. RACISM, IMPERIALISM, CULTURISM: THE CASE OF BRITAIN

Let me put it this way: "There was an Englishman, a Scotsman and an Irishman..." Independently of what comes next, the reader knows by now that I am planning to go on

with a joke at the expense of Irishmen (at least the reader who is familiar with such jokes). But that is not the case. In drawing upon this type of joke, by using its familiar introductory sentence, I want to bring to attention not only the ideological role of jokes in the spread of stereotypes, but mainly, by inverting the general purpose of this kind of joke, its usually hidden purpose that by letting people know what we are not, we are letting people know what we are. What I mean is this: prejudiced discourse tells us as much about the 'we' seen through their particular world interpretation, as about the 'other' seen through that same particular interpretation. So these jokes tell us as much about the way the English see themselves (the ones that usually create and spread such jokes), as about the way the English see the Irish.

Of course, what we have in these jokes is a clear positioning of the English towards what Cohen (1994) calls the Celtic fringe in the British frontiers of identity within the British Isles. As he puts it: "For the English, the boundary is marked by irresolution, uncertainty, incongruity, derogation or humour. 'Humour' (if such it be called) is still directed against the 'dumb Irishman', derogation is still aimed at the Welsh though, in the case of the Scots, ethnic humour has been in rapid decline since North Sea oil has started flowing." (Cohen, 1994: 12). As far as the frontiers of identity outside the British Isles are concerned, I could quote (sticking again to one of the most obvious examples) the expression *the 'eleven' plus the 'one'*, used in the popular press and in political discussions when the EU countries were only twelve, to stress the distance (some sectors in) Britain kept from the other member countries of the EU. Cohen (1994: 5-36) speaks of six of these frontiers of British identity, but most of them reflect the positioning of the British towards the others in ethnic terms. Only through close reading can one actually understand that some of the relationships established have less to do

with ethnocentrism and racism than with what is my interest in this paper, mainly what I have labelled culturism.

From the examples given so far we can see that racist attitudes are deeply dependent on social, historical, political, cultural and economic factors, and denote situations of power struggle where dominance and disempowerment takes place through prejudice. Of course, in racism this prejudice is based on traditionally attributed race characteristics, as in sexism it is based on gender characteristics. But as Van Dijk foregrounded in his *Elite Discourse and Racism*, in our days racism is no longer mainly racial. It is also based on culture and professional status, which "presupposes that members of dominant groups also operate with cultural hierarchies between groups, and that racism also involves cultural dominance." (1993: 15). Hence my use of culturism to single out this process of dominance and inequality based on cultural premises, as it is the case in the document under analysis, where the phenomenon observed has little or nothing to do with race, and where *cultural and professional status prejudice* naturally comes out, fed by extra social and discursive practices that organise the world in a hierarchy of cultures and cultural values, and in oppositions such as West vs. East, developed countries vs. undeveloped countries, western Europe vs. eastern Europe, rich countries vs. poor countries, North vs. South, etc.

Between Britain's *geographical* isolation from Europe, "extended to refer to other, non-material forms of separation and distance, such as economic or political isolation" (Hardt-Mautter, 1995: 181), the European integration, and the presence of the English language all over the world, the idea of the empire still remains an available option for ideological mobilization in Britain: "What empire did was to establish a cultural and national superiority of worldwide proportions: an empire where, truly, the sun never set. The British were the new chosen people. Their assigned task was to conduct a civilising

mission at the frontiers of all humanity." (Cohen, 1994: 22). The document under analysis, as I intend to show, is reminiscent of the idea of empire and still constructs the British as conducting a civilising mission at the frontiers, if not of all humanity, at least of all Academia. What comes out from this is a certain difficulty to naturally develop a non-disempowering consciousness, perception, or recognition of the 'other', showing that the transition from a past empire to a *nation* (an only *apparent empire*) was not completely overcome and that the nation is still looking for its definition as such in the reminiscences of a colonial past based on separation and segregation.

I am not talking, of course, about extreme right-wing practices and ideologies, the ones that more explicitly denote ethnic racist attitudes towards others. Those are the ones that people in general condemn and refuse to accept; and in that condemnation they incorporate by presupposition their own definition of racism that immediately excludes them from a possible characterisation as racists and turns each person into a potential defender of the rights of ethnic and cultural minorities. I am talking, in fact, about more veiled forms of derogation, made possible in part by the reasons referred to so far, and, more importantly, due to the prominence of the English language in the world, that is, the imperialism of English.

And so we come to the embryo of a possible distinction between racism and culturism. Racism tends to be devalued and fragmented through a politically correct social interaction between the 'we' and the 'other'. This interaction varies according to the difference of the 'other', making the discourse of racism a spectrum of different attitudes, based in a *one-to-several groups* relationship in which what is at stake is not only the difference between the 'we' and the 'other', but also the differences between the 'others'. This means that one may be *less racist* towards one ethnic group (because this group is already a part of society), and *more racist* towards another (making its integration in

society less easy). This spectrum of different attitudes, though, does not prevent the devaluation of the 'other', accompanied by the self-exaltation of the 'we', from being the predominant attitude in racism. Being the most predictable kind of prejudice and, therefore, the one people are more aware of, the one that, in its denial, allows for the reproduction of other types of prejudice, by excluding the 'we' from its definition, racism is also the one that has been more studied.

Culturism, on the contrary, is the default portion present in racism and it is rooted, mainly, in cultural-centrism. It does not vary according to the difference between the several 'others', since the 'others' are only different in face of the individual representation the 'we' attributes to them and not between themselves (it is the 'we' vs. 'the rest of humanity', one could say). So culturism has more to do with the egocentric conception of the 'we' in cultural and nationalistic terms than with the ethnic difference the 'we' sees in the 'other'. It may become indistinct in the face of a stronger type of prejudice, i. e., racism, but it is there. It is a *one-to-one group* relationship (there is no variable in the value of 'they', the 'others'), not a *one-to-several groups* relationship, as with racism. And whereas racism tends to look at others in terms of their characteristics as members of a group (colour of skin, race, religion, etc.), and to signify one's superiority through the difference one detects in the 'other', culturism is based on a feeling of cultural superiority that excludes from one's group whoever does not fit in, no matter what their characteristics may be (whether they are black or white, European or non-European, etc.). In other words, let us just say that in racism, a white person, for instance, is prejudiced against a black person because s/he *is* in fact black and therefore s/he is not white, whereas in culturism, a white person may be prejudiced against a black person not because the person is black but because the person *is not* a member of her/his socio-cultural-national group.

Culturism clearly presupposes the centrality of one's culture, together with a prejudiced view of other cultures. It becomes a system of cultural inequality and dominance (and hence my reluctance to use the word *prejudice* to conceptualise the practice I am talking about) when it is expressed linguistically and socially, so as to maintain and reproduce that centrality, forcing the 'others' to adapt and to comply, and limiting and constraining them in the nature and range of their possible actions.

In the case of Britain, the foundational basis of the existence of culturism lies, on the one hand, in its economic and political power, which still seduces people from abroad who are looking for better life conditions or for professional specialisation, and, on the other hand, in the strong ego-sustaining function the global role of the English language has had for the British. Phillipson (1992: 1) says that "whereas once Britannia ruled the waves, now it is English which rules them. The British empire has given way to the empire of English." Nevertheless, to assume that this is the only foundational basis for the existence of culturism in Britain is to forget the importance of other factors and their articulation with each other. The memory of British nineteenth-century world dominance, the memory of the stoic resistance and sacrifice during World War II, or the long history of national pride and confidence in social institutions (the legal system or the Church, for instance) signifying their difference from equivalent foreign institutions, may all be seen as having played an important role in the framing and self-exaltation of British idiosyncrasies, as standing well above the rest of humankind.

Looking at the types of argument and types of power in (English) linguistic imperialistic discourse, Phillipson (1992: 271, ff.) quotes several examples of what he calls intrinsic, extrinsic and functional arguments of English imperialism. What strikes the reader when going through those quotations is the fact they are examples of both things that are our concern here: on the one hand they are examples of culturism in its

fundamental, linguistic component, with the devaluation of all languages (and by implication, all cultures) but English, and on the other hand they are examples of elite discourse, mainly academic (and particularly by linguists) and political.

What is not surprising, though, according to Phillipson (1992: 285-286), is that "those who represent English linguistic hegemony do *not* come with arguments which stress what English *is not*, does *not have* and does *not do*. For children whose mother tongue is not English, English is *not* the language of their cultural heritage, *not* the language of intense personal feelings and the community, *not* the language most appropriate for learning to solve problems in cognitively demanding decontextualized situations, etc." In fact, to put forward arguments such as those would be to emphasise positive aspects in languages other than English, and to open the way to further arguments against the linguistic and cultural imperialism of the English language.

With no further comment, and before turning to the critical discourse analysis of the text that concerns me here, let me just give you an example of a clear case of culturism, a comment made by the editor of *The Oxford English Dictionary* in his 1985 book *The English Language*. What is foregrounded in the comment is not the premise underlying it, which may in fact be a true one, but the association, quite violent and arrogant I would say, between ignorance of English and poverty, famine and disease: "English has also become a lingua franca to the point that any literate, educated person on the face of the globe is in a very real sense deprived if he does not know English. Poverty, famine, and disease are instantly recognised as the cruellest and least excusable forms of deprivation. Linguistic deprivation is a less easily noticed condition, but one nevertheless of great significance." (Burchfield, 1985: 160-161).

2. CULTURISM IN AN ACADEMIC CONTEXT: ANALYSIS OF THE *GUIDELINES FOR THE ACCEPTANCE OF VISITING SCHOLARS*

The document *Guidelines for the Acceptance of Visiting Scholars* was produced in a Department of a British University somewhere in England. In order to "ensure that the Department and the University are not identifiable, nor associated with the document", as requested by the Department, I have removed from it, in the reproduction of the complete document in Annex A, all the identifiable references. One point must be made about the Department beforehand, though: when it comes to its student population, the Department may be considered a multicultural one, since the majority of its 100 PhD students are overseas students. Visitors, no matter the status the Department attributes them, are also, of course, overseas visitors.

Although its title alone may lead us to believe that the document is, as I have said, a set of premises by which the Department guides itself in the acceptance/refusal of applications of scholars who want to be visitors to the Department, the main purpose of the document is not exactly that. On the contrary, its general purpose is to summarise all the relevant information useful not for the Department itself but for the potential applicant to the post of Visiting Scholar (VS). So the Document is not, as might be argued, for internal use (and where is the difference?), but for external use (to be given to VSs and applicants for that post). Hence the document was not known to all the staff in the Department and it was only given to newly arrived VSs and to applicants for that post.

The fact that the title of the document comes immediately after the name of the Department, without any reference to the University to which the Department belongs, makes it clear that the guidelines are specific to the Department and therefore are distinct from the guidelines of the University. This difference of policies between the Department

and the University is further stressed in the three-part division of the document: 1. *The Policy of the University*; 2. *Visiting Scholars: The Policy of the Department of [name of Department]*; 3. *Guidelines*. The reasons for this difference between the Department and the University are not explained in the text, however, and we must always bear in mind that whenever the policy of the University is being described, the description is a report of the University's actual policy, made by the Department.

According to what is said in part 1, the policy of the University, which *welcomes overseas academics who wish to spend a period (...) as a visitor attached to one of its departments*, is that visiting academics *fall into one of (...) three categories: Visiting Research Fellow, Visiting Scholars and Visiting Postgraduate Students*. The document then defines in this same part each of these categories, following the general rules of the University. A clear separation between the first two categories and the third is made in their designation. Whereas visiting academic staff that fall into the first two categories are understood, subjectified as scholars, researchers, colleagues, the ones that fall into the third category are subjectified as students, giving grounds for their continuous interpellation as such in the daily routine of the Department. Furthermore, only in relation to this third category (1.C) is the verbal expression *apply to be admitted* used, an expression that denotes the action usually associated with students who want to enrol on a course, a seminar, etc. The expression is used in collocation with the other expressions in the remainder of the sentence, *naturally treated as students, having rights to, have their work supervised and, make use of*, making it not only clear that the person will be interpellated as a student, but also that, by absence of the same type of expressions in their description (in 1.A and 1.B), the other two types of visiting academic staff will not. This positioning of the subject as a student clearly backgrounds the meaning of the noun *staff* in the nominal group *visiting academic staff*, even though its function as the nucleus

of the group. (Notice the correspondent nominal groups used at the beginning of the document, *overseas academics*, *visitors* and *visiting academics*, general enough to allow for the separation between students and staff introduced later in the labelling of the three types of visitors). According to the definition of the category Visiting Postgraduate Student (VPS), visiting academic staff, scholars, academics, lecturers, researchers are no longer academic staff, scholars, academics, lecturers, researchers (nominations and subject positions that only have meaning in their home country, not at this University), and become students of whom a patterned behaviour is expected in accordance with the existing ground-rules.

What we have here is the same type of disempowerment described in Janks & Ivanic (1992) in the specific case of a PhD research student at a foreign university, who at home is himself a university lecturer with his own research students and whom the welcoming university registered as a student and assigned a supervisor. As Janks & Ivanic (1992: 309) put it, these are "interesting subject positions for both of them. The same person might have come as a 'research fellow' or as a 'visiting lecturer', appellations more likely to encourage a reciprocal relationship of learning. As it turned out 'the student' found himself in a deeply contradictory position."

It is interesting to note that Janks & Ivanic, in the above quotation, use the subject positions research fellow and visiting lecturer as examples of emancipatory subject positions. In fact, one would expect that to be the case, but it is not so in the Department under consideration. As I will have opportunity to demonstrate, the subject position visiting scholar (similar to the visiting lecturer position referred to by Janks & Ivanic) is not in this Department dissimilar from the visiting postgraduate student subject position. In fact, part of the policy of the Department (part 2, 2§) is *to consider equality of*

treatment between different groups of visitors (such as visiting postgraduate students and visiting scholars). Why distinguishing between them in the first place, then?

Let us go on with "the policy of the University". In section 1A the document states that Visiting Research Fellows (VRFs) are *academic staff of significant international reputation whose presence at [name of University] is judged to be a benefit to the University*. This is a one-way thing, a unidirectional way of looking into the matter that naturalises what does not come as natural, e. g., that intends to transform what is an ideological construction into non-ideological common sense. In fact, it is easy to recognise that in this context, the meaning of *international*, due to the imperialism of the English language in the world, derives directly from the fact that the potential VRF's academic production is in English (whether originally or in translation), since the use of the English language is a basic and necessary step when attempting internationalisation in academic contexts (what else am I doing in this paper, being a non-native English speaker?). Whether a person with a superlative *curriculum* of publications produced only in his/her native non-English language will be considered of international reputation by the Department is something that is left unsaid. If we reverse this image and think exactly of the same situation, this time with a British scholar in a foreign university, we will have the example of a scholar of international reputation.

The fact is that British scholars will always be scholars of *significant international reputation* if they are visiting, let us say, a department in a Portuguese, Hungarian or Brazilian University (not to mention cases in English-speaking countries where Britain is no longer the administrative power, but where it has left probably the most important residue of the empire: the language). But that has less to do with being international in the sense that their work is known/considered/followed/studied in different countries, than with the fact that they use English as their mother tongue. And if British scholars

are the first to emphasise that English is the language of *international academia*, "to the point that any literate, educated person", as Burchfield has put it in the quotation I have used earlier, "is in a very real sense deprived if he [sic] does not know English," these scholars should also be the first to use the opposition national/international cautiously, since writing in their national language is writing in the international language of academia, and that makes everything easier. (Of course, this opposition may be internally productive to differentiate between British academics whose theories are known and followed outside British academia and those whose theories are not, but that is another matter).

I could develop further this line of argumentation, mentioning the book market and all the aspects connected with it, and how it is easier for a British scholar to have a book published in Britain than for a foreign scholar. I could even mention the case of academic publishing in the Netherlands, for instance, as symptomatic of this and as a good example both of a reaction against British publishing imperialism, since it opens the door for publishing to non-British scholars, and of compliance to the existing rules of "internationalisation", since English is the language used. That is not my intention here, though. I just want to stress the following: considering that English is the language of *international academia*, and that to be of international reputation one needs to write in English, the universe of all the potential overseas *Academic staff of significant international reputation*, when considered from the point of view of a British university, is much smaller than the same universe when considered from the point of view of a non-British university. Notice how the author of the document itself acknowledges that fact by asserting, in the final paragraph of part 1, that A status, concerning VRFs, *is rather rare*. Even so, non-British universities seem to treat their foreign visiting colleagues

(British or not) better than British Universities treat their foreign colleagues. Let us expand on that.

In section 1B it is said that VSs are those *who are not considered to fall into the category of Visiting Research Fellow*. Several questions arise in the process of interpretation of this clause: i) is this distinction established on the bases of international reputation? ii) if so, how is international reputation measured? iii) is it measured based on the applicant's publications in English? iv) is it measured based on the status of the applicant at his/her University? v) is it based on what the Department thinks about the applicant? vi) or is it that VRFs are thus categorised because they "do not apply" to come, they are "invited" to come, on the basis of the Department's interest?

If we consider the sentence *Academic staff of significant international reputation whose presence at [name of town and of University] is judged to be a benefit to the University*, we may read in it a positive validation of the last question in the above listing. Since VRFs are *thought to be a benefit to the University*, they are invited to come on the basis that their presence there is in the University's interest: because *they may be expected to form a valuable collaboration with*; because they may be expected *to make a direct contribution to*; because *they may be staff from institutions with which the department has formed special academic links or wishes to develop them*. Although one detects a certain reluctance to transparency in this wording, the position of the University or of the Department towards the potential VRF is clear in it: they need these visitors, and therefore the attitude towards them is more accepting or, should one say, submissive. Notice for that matter the use of the modal *may* and of the passive voice in the first two aspects stressed, with the University/Department's needs and expectations being put in a secondary place, denoting both modulation of a command (opposing "the

Department wants VRFs to form a valuable... and to make a direct..."), and, simultaneously, modalization of certainty (Halliday, 1985).

This tension between the importance the Department attributes to itself and the importance it attributes to VRFs is further noticed in the footnote to part 1.A. In the first sentence of that footnote, in which the Department comes as theme (foregrounding again the difference of policy between the Department and the University), the use of the verb *accept* (*a Visiting research Fellow is accepted on the basis that*), echoes the use of the same verb in the second paragraph of the document (*Such visiting academics are accepted by the University on the recommendation of a department*), but, according to what is said in the first case, the verb form used afterwards should be "is recommended (to the University)" and not *is accepted*. Clearly implicating that the Department has the final say concerning the presence of VRFs, the use of the verb to *accept* serves the purpose of stressing the empowered position in which the Department places itself, in a sentence where the rheme/new is the fact that the VRF, whose importance is so recognised, will be hosted by a member of the academic staff of the Department (*will be the responsibility of a member of academic staff of the department who is nominated as "host"*). But then the wording of the footnote is once again unfortunate, since it characterises VRFs as burdens: *The host will ensure that the Visiting Research Fellow will be well looked after, and will not cause any appreciable burden or responsibility to fall on other members of the Department*. Now, the document does not read *any burden*, but *any appreciable burden*, with the adjective denoting the definite nature of what is characterised by the noun: VRF will always cause a burden, being the host's responsibility to diminish it to non-appreciable standards.

What is important in all this, apart from the reluctance to explicitly acknowledge VRFs as empowered subjects in their institutional relationship with the Department, is

the devaluation the document puts onto the other two types of academic visitors. In fact, the characterisation of the category VRF implicates that applicants for the other two categories are: i) not *judged to be a benefit to the University*; ii) not *expected to form a valuable collaboration with*; iii) not *expected to make a direct contribution to*.

I have already mentioned that one does not know the University's policy for each of the three types of academic visitors. In fact, what we have in the document is, in part 1, the denomination and description of each of the three categories, referred to as a university categorisation not as a departmental one, and in the remainder of the document, parts 2 and 3, the policy of the Department towards what is called VSs. As I have stressed, what this specific three-part division clearly states is a difference between the policies of the University in general and the Department in particular. Furthermore, I have said that, as it is, part 1 is not the policy of the University itself, but the policy of the University as read by the Department (a selection upon a selection) and paying special attention to what it has to do with the Department. As the parenthetical wording in 1A serves the purpose of stressing the general policy by referring one exception to it (*except in some cases in [area of studies] departments*), the footnote in the same part 1 serves the purpose of separating the policy of the Department from the policy of the University (*In the Department of [name of department], a Visiting Research Fellow is accepted on the basis that...*).

As it is, we do not know on what bases this difference between the two policies is established, maintained and reproduced, although one can get some clues from the text. And so we come to part 2 of the document, about the category VS, clearly stated as being the object of a different policy (*...the department has set up the following guidelines relating to visiting scholars*), since it is the one that presents (more) problems (meaning implied in the last paragraph of part 1) and the one that is *more variable*.

Part 2 comprises two paragraphs structured to express the point of view of the Department. The first expresses the positive aspects of the relationship VS/Department, the second the negative aspects, introduced by adversative conjunction: *In recent years, however, the department...* The cohesion between the two paragraphs is not guaranteed only by the use of *however*; it is also achieved by the use, in the first sentence of the first paragraph, of certain linguistic units that introduce the negative aspect of the relationship that is developed in the second paragraph. That is the case of *in principle* and of *would like to be in a position*, both stressing the good will of the Department and attempting to redeem it from the negative connotations that may arise from the interpretation of the following paragraph. The second sentence of the first paragraph comes as a confirmation of the good will of the Department, by evoking tradition and its positive aspect, together with the idea of the *community of scholarship and purpose among scientists and scholars throughout the world*. Then comes the second paragraph with what seems the reasoning for the different policy of the Department when it comes to VSs: because *an increasing number of visiting academics have been applying for attachment to the department and it is often difficult or impossible to provide the facilities that visiting scholars should ideally receive, etc.*

Now, what is interesting in the construction of these two paragraphs is its dubious wording, which has serious consequences for the potential applicant for the post of VS. In fact, if we look at the second clause of sentence 1 in the first paragraph, *...would like to be in a position to extend hospitality to any linguistic scholar who wishes...*, we will notice that what we have there is, by a relationship of implicature, an indirect form of the declarative sentence "we are not in a position to extend hospitality to any linguistic scholar who wishes...", which means that, due to reasons to be explained later, the Department has to be selective and cannot extend hospitality to whoever wants to come.

In other words, what one reads is that the number of visiting scholars in the Department cannot be, due to particular reasons, as high as the Department would like, and so some scholars may have their applications refused. Fair enough, the potential applicant to the post of VS would say. But no, that is not fair enough, since that is not how the policy of the Department actually operates. The policy of the Department, on the contrary, is to maintain, even augment (that is one of the justifications used), the number of visiting scholars and reduce the facilities they should receive. The clause *it is often difficult or impossible to provide the facilities that visiting scholars should ideally receive* really introduces the main problem VSs face in the Department in question; that constitutes the remainder of the document, its part 3, which is all about the use of facilities and the amount of money VSs must pay for the use of those facilities.

But if we stick to part 2 we will notice also that the second paragraph is structured as to give meaning to the whole of part 3, which is introduced in the final sentence of part 2: *To try to deal with these problems, the department has set up the following guidelines relating to visiting scholars*. What is the anaphoric referent of *these problems*? The fact that the Department *has come under increasing pressures, mainly increasing student numbers, increasing staff overload, unfavourable economic factors and increasing number of visiting academics*. These are the problems, then come the solutions (Part 3. Guidelines), but do we have a reduction of the number of VSs in the Department as part of the solutions? Of course not. Let us face it, VSs are a source of income (!?) to the Department and as it is stressed in the document, *unfavourable economic factors* is one of the problems of the Department.

Thus, we come to one of the most important aspects of the document, in the sense that it helps and motivates the discourse of inequality revealed in it: the tension between different *orders of discourse* (vd. Foucault, 1971; Fairclough, 1993) in its discursive

organisation, mainly one that we may label academic and traditional, that it is being undermined by what Fairclough (1993) calls the marketization of the discursive practices of universities. According to Fairclough (1993: 143) this "marketization of the discursive practices of universities is one dimension of the marketization of higher education in a more general sense. Institutions of higher education come increasingly to operate (under government pressure) as if they were ordinary businesses competing to sell their products to consumers." By bringing into the text *the community of scholarship and purpose among scientists and scholars throughout the world* the document draws itself upon the 'old' order of discourse of academic shared knowledge. Notice the use of the present perfect (*Visits and exchanges of staff between universities have traditionally been a means of establishing and maintaining a community of scholarship...*), as a means of placing the Department, at least in terms of accessibility and will, in a long line of a 'rational and right' tradition that comes from the past into the present. It is this past that is disrupted by the *recent years* against which the Department cannot stand, due to the factors immediately listed.

The listing of all the problems is no longer the product of a process that draws upon the same order of discourse, but upon a new one. Its function is to diminish the negative impact of what comes next by connecting it with more general macro-economic and social changes, that unfortunately (this is the point of view of the Department), have repercussions at a micro level. This is exactly the same strategy we find, for instance, in letters from insurance companies when trying to justify the need to increase the level of the premium: it is not their fault, they are forced to by the socio-economic conjuncture.

The marketization of discourse results in an intermingling where the frontiers between orders of discourse is not always peaceful. Notice, for instance, the use of the nominal group *minimum package*, a clear example of interdiscursivity (Fairclough,

1993), that brings into this text, in a very direct way, what was until recently specific to other genres and discourses, publicity, marketing, etc., but that is now spreading its boundaries across orders of discourse. I am talking of promotion as a function of discourse. Again, the use of the adjective in the nominal group is revealing and is the direct result of the assault on the text by promotion, thus letting the readers believe that the package is in fact *minimum* and that a lot more is available. It is all about money and about making one's way through *unfavourable economic factors*. And for that, one must sell one's product well, by leaving for the end, isolated in the third page, for instance, what should be guaranteed in the first place: a working space in the Department (*No promises can be made regarding the availability of study space in the department...*).

I will not detain myself with the quality of this *minimum package* and its relation with the *Additional Visitors Facilities*, about which a lot could be said; what is important about it, for now, is that the listing of the items is also the result of the marketization of discourse and of the subordination of meaning to instrumental effect: in the name of the *community of scholarship and purpose among scientists and scholars throughout the world*, the use of most of facilities listed should be free of charge, but in the name of the construction of that community on a market basis, VSs become customers. In other words, they must pay. It is the 'law of the market'. The presence of most of the items in the listing (*use of library, computers, restaurants and bars*) serves only the purpose of 'justifying' the payment of fees (for which the Department has no other justification but the *unfavourable economic factors*) and of diminishing the possible resistance to it on the part of VSs.

The minimum package (or *Basic Visitors Facilities*) is very important. It is, in fact, when we come to it that we actually understand the disempowering process that goes on in the text. Two of the items listed (*Attendance at one or two informal research groups*

with the permission (which will not normally be withheld) of staff convening them. and Attendance at regular course lectures, with the permission (which will not normally be withheld) of the lecturers.), curiously enough the ones to which the Department seems to attribute more importance, position the VSs not as 'colleagues' as one could expect, but as 'students', 'second rank lecturers' that need to be lectured by 'us'. In truth, the Department naturally assumes that VSs want to be lectured (as if there are no other reasons for them to come to the Department), which is the excuse for charging them a fee. And before going any further let us stress the behavioural paradox the Department wants the VS to assume: the VS pays to attend courses but at the same time has to ask permission to attend them! Apart from being demeaning for the VS, who sees her/himself positioned and subjectified as a different type of lecturer from the ones in the Department, without having the opportunity to react to that positioning, this formulation is non-emancipatory and segregationist. The Department just assumes that all VSs are alike, with no differences of motivation and intention between them. They are only different when compared with the staff in the Department.

3. CULTURISM AS A RESULT OF SELF-PROMOTION AND DEROGATION OF THE 'OTHER'

Although incomplete, due to space constraints, the analysis presented so far clearly shows that the theoretical possibility of having a visitor who brings something new to the Department in terms of research, teaching, etc. is never considered in the document. Even in the case of VRFs, for whom the possibility of making *a direct contribution* is considered, that contribution is thought of as being a *contribution to the research programme of the department*. But, again, this is not specific to VRFs. In fact, what is recurrent in the whole document, and the first part is therefore no exception to it, is the ideological positioning "they have everything to learn, we have everything to teach

them", fairly regular in certain academic contexts in Britain and definitely regular in this Department. This positioning is reproduced daily on the basis of the reproduction of a complete set of values, beliefs, assumptions, premises, habits, representations and practices that surpass the academic practice but frames it. Culturism is a sort of an endemic condition that may be less symptomatic in certain institutional contexts, but it is there. At the same time, it may be aggravated due to certain discourse practices that easily contaminate others.

In the case in this document, culturism is made possible not only by the non-emancipatory positioning of the Department towards foreign academics, but also by the colonizing spread of promotional discourse we detect in the document. While engaging in its self-promotion, the Department easily slips into derogation of VSs. The listing of the *increasing pressures* under which the Department has come (*increasing student numbers, increasing staff workload, and unfavourable economic factors. Also an increasing number of visiting academics have been applying for attachment to the department.*) serves the purpose, already noticed, of redeeming the Department from the devaluation of the basic conditions VSs *should ideally receive* but has at the same time a promotional function: to stress the importance and growth of the Department. The manipulation of meaning for instrumental effect which is typical of promotion is further noticed in the inclusion of the possibility to attend *at one or two informal research groups*. Since teaching is the basic thing the Department has which shows a market value, the 'transformation' of research groups (units of collaborative research) into teaching/learning units is the transformation of something that does not have a market value into something that has. The Department knows that research groups are units in which the VS is very keen to participate; by transforming them into teaching/learning units that it may 'sell', the Department is justifying the need for VSs to pay fees. The

serious consequence of this is that, at the same time, the Department is assuming that VSSs want to participate in these research groups because they want to learn something from the colleagues in the Department, without ever considering the possibility that the colleagues from the Department may learn something from the colleagues that are visiting them.

As Fairclough (1993: 142) points out, “self-promotion is becoming part-and-parcel of self-identity in contemporary societies”, and the “colonization of discourse by promotion may also have major pathological effects upon subjects and major ethical implications”, since it involves “a serious problem of trust” and at the same time “it is increasingly difficult not to be involved oneself in promoting”. One of those effects (dangers seems more the correct word), we must add considering our analysis, is the derogation of the 'other' that may accompany self-promotion, either explicitly or implicitly. People are not washing powder that can be advertised by enhancing its properties and using derogatory remarks towards other washing powders. And if that may be the great danger of promotion, the result of it when applied to cross-cultural contexts may even be greater, since it can easily drive the discourse into racism and culturism.

4. THE NEED FOR EMANCIPATION

There is a general tendency towards making people conform to a perceived *status quo*, without them being aware that conforming to it is a way of being positioned either socially, politically, or culturally, etc. The need to react to this tendency is a need for emancipation: to resist disempowerment and stop conforming and contribute to manufacturing consent by letting other people subjectify not only us but also others. That is why the concept of critical language awareness (CLA) (Fairclough ed., 1992), may be

particularly useful when dealing with prejudiced discourse. Developing a critical language awareness (CLA) of how language works as a means of reproduction and maintenance of the *status quo* is one step towards emancipation. As Janks & Ivanic (1992) put it: “We need to become aware of how we subject other people: how the language we choose sets up (consciously or not) subject positions for others. CLA can make people conscious of how language can be patronising, demeaning, disrespectful, offensive, exclusive, or the opposite.”

Of course, being conscious of all these aspects in a cross-cultural context may be a difficult task for the subject, given the fact that topics and ways of talking about them are cultural constructs and that people from other cultures have a way of dealing with reality, a way of talking about issues, that is different from ours. But that is one more reason to develop a sense of social responsibility towards others when using language, no matter how promotional contemporary culture may be, how 'powerful' or 'powerless' one is, or how different from one another we may be. And for that, being tolerant is not enough, because being tolerant is being patronising. To develop this sense of social responsibility one has to reach the second step of emancipation, what Janks & Ivanic (1992) call *emancipatory discourse*, i. e., "using language, along with other aspects of social practice, in a way which works toward greater freedom and respect for all people, including ourselves." (p. 305). Unless this practice can transcend cultures, nations and races, prejudiced discourse is always finding new reasons for its existence.

One last comment on the motivation for this paper must be made. We all know that whenever there is dominance there will always be resistance to it. The same happens in academic contexts. As Van Dijk puts it in the already mentioned *Discourse & Society* editorial (1994: 275): "Social and cultural group dominance is not relinquished without reactionary resistance. (...) racism, ethnocentrism and nationalism are part of our

everyday academic lives, and so are the strategies of the struggle against them." Doing a critical discourse analysis of the discursive practices that give voice to these systems of disempowerment and dominance (no matter whether those practices are part of a more complex strategy or are solely the product of a particular and isolated spacio-temporal event), may well be one of those strategies of struggle. To a certain extent, by *denouncing* the prejudiced attitude embedded in the document *Guidelines for the Acceptance of Visiting Scholars*, towards a group in which I find myself, I was giving voice to opposition and resistance, the two stages referred to by Janks & Ivanic (1992) as essential to emancipatory discourse in its dimensional aspect of resistance to disempowerment.

NOTES

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ANNEX A

Department of [name of Department]

Guidelines for the Acceptance of Visiting Scholars

1. The Policy of the University

The University of [place] welcomes overseas academics who wish to spend a period here as a visitor attached to one of its departments.

Such visiting academics are accepted by the University on the recommendation of a department, and fall into one of the following three categories:

A Visiting Research Fellows

Academic staff of significant international reputation whose presence at [place] is judged to be a benefit to the University: for example, they may be expected to form a valuable collaboration with [place] colleagues and to make a direct contribution to the research programme of the department *or* they may be staff from institutions with which the department has formed special academic links or wishes to develop them. In such cases (except in some cases in science departments) the University does not charge the visitor a fee.¹

B Visiting Scholars

Academic staff who hold postgraduate qualifications, who wish to make use of the study facilities and resources of the university and of the department (for example, for a period of leave), and who are not considered to fall into the category of Visiting Research Fellow. The University encourages the department to charge a fee to such visitors, the amount of the fee typically depending on the extent to which the visitor makes use of the department's and the university's facilities (e.g. attending courses, making use of the computing resources, etc).

C. Visiting Postgraduate Students

Visiting academic staff who apply to be admitted as visiting postgraduate students are naturally treated as students, e.g. in having rights to attend courses, to have their work supervised and assessed by a member of academic staff, to make use of student accommodation and welfare facilities, etc. However, they are not registered for a degree at [place] University. They are charged a fee which varies from time to time, but will be (1995-96) £2,350 for students from member countries of the European Union, and £4,465 for those from non-European Union countries.

¹ In the Department of [name of Department], a Visiting Research Fellow is accepted on the basis that he or she will be the responsibility of a member of academic staff of the department who is nominated as "host". The host will ensure that the Visiting Research Fellow will be well looked after, and will not cause any appreciable burden or responsibility to fall on other members of the Department.

Of these three statuses, A (which is rather rare) and C tend to be clear-cut and present few problems. Status B (Visiting Scholars) is, however, more variable and is the subject of the remainder of this document.

2. Visiting Scholars: The Policy of the Department of [name of Department].

The department in principle welcomes visitors from other universities, and would like to be in a position to extend hospitality to any linguistic scholar who wishes to spend a period of study (e.g. a period of sabbatical leave) at [place]. Visits and exchanges of staff between universities have traditionally been a means of establishing and maintaining a community of scholarship and purpose among scientists and scholars throughout the world.

In recent years, however, the department of [name of Department], like many departments, has come under increasing pressures: for example, increasing student numbers, increasing staff workload, and unfavourable economic factors. Also an increasing number of visiting academic have been applying for attachment to the department. It is often difficult or impossible to provide the facilities that visiting scholars should ideally receive, and we also have to consider equality of treatment between different groups of visitors (such as visiting postgraduate students and visiting scholars). To try to deal with these problems, the department has set up the following guidelines relating to visiting scholars.

3. Guidelines

- a. Visiting scholars may apply to spend a period of attachment to the department, varying in length between 2 weeks and 1 year, normally according to the wishes or circumstances of the applicant. The visiting scholar will normally be asked to fill in a form, and, assuming acceptance by the University, will be sent an official letter of appointment by the Personnel Services department.
- b. The department offers the following as a *minimum package* to visiting scholars:

Basic Visitor Facilities

Brief initial advice on finding accommodation (provided by secretarial staff)²

Use of other university facilities available to staff (e.g. use of library, computers, restaurants and bars).

Attendance at one or two informal research groups with the permission (which will not normally be withheld) of the staff convening them.

Attendance at regular course lectures with the permission (which will not normally be withheld) of the lecturers. (On attendance at seminars [small group teaching], see 3c below).

² However, secretarial staff cannot offer a full “accommodation service”, and visiting scholars are advised to allow time for making their own accommodation arrangements by direct contact, as there is often a scarcity of suitable temporary accommodation, both on and off campus.

No promises can be made regarding the availability of study space in the department, but we hope to make available to each visiting scholar a desk space in a shared study room.

- c. A visiting scholar who accepts the *basic visitor facilities* will be expected to pay a standard fee, currently £50 per week. Visiting scholars from some countries may be able to recover this fee from their home university, or from scholarship funds they have been granted.
- d. Other visiting scholars may request additional facilities, and will be able and willing to pay for them:

Additional Visitor Facilities

Regular attendance at courses: either (a) lectures only, or (b) lectures and seminars.

Access to staff for tutorial advice.

Use of fax and telephone.

Use of special research services, such as research reports, computer corpora, special software, video recordings, etc.

Use of these facilities will be costed individually, will be monitored, and will be charged to the visiting scholar in addition to the basic visitor's fee. Full use of such additional facilities might increase the visitor's fee by (say) 60%.

The costing of a visiting scholar's fee will be calculated pro rata as a percentage of the full visiting student's fee (1995-6 home fees £2,350, overseas fees £4,465). which is regarded as the maximum that may be charged.

- e. Use of photocopying, for all visitors, will be possible on payment for a photocopying card.
- f. Sometimes a visiting scholar may make a welcome contribution to teaching in the department. Such teaching will be paid for at the standard rate. However, normally a decision to accept an offer of teaching cannot be made until the visiting scholar arrives at [place], and cannot be used as a basis for a lowering of the visiting scholar's basic fee. Such decisions are taken by the Head of Department in the light of the department's needs.