SOCIOLINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVES ON REGISTER

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4

Shared Thinking and the Register of Coaching

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1. Introduction

In the late 1980s, reformers in education, medicine, and engineering adopted the metaphor of coaching in efforts to reshape traditional instructional situations. Behind these reforms lay the premise that learners and the institutions in which they studied and worked would benefit by a move away from the transmission model of socialization which assumed a designated expert passing on information and skills to a passive but presumedly willing novice. New ideas about thinking and learning shifted the focus from classrooms of individual learners to small groups being coached to construct knowledge jointly through collaborative and complex problem-solving in a variety of active learning situations.[1]

Experienced journalists now became coaches for less-experienced writers on the news, feature, or sports desk.[2] Within businesses ranging from high-technology firms to manufacturing, managers began to speak of coaching workers into new forms of behavior and innovative ways of communicating in groups to solve work-related problems.[3] Prodded by new plans for school reform, some public education reformers recommended a coaching model for instruction with the central focus on habituating learners to use their powers to observe, to judge, and to reshape and create knowledge collaboratively. Theodore R. Sizer, initiator of the "effective schools" movement of the late 1980s, argued that both students and teachers should learn by coaching: "The only way to learn to think well and usefully is by practice. The way a teacher assists this learning is by coaching" (1984:216). Support for such arguments came from studies of the rapid and generative learning seen in students working with computers and reported widely in journals devoted to the study of computers in education. The techniques students with different levels of expertise used with each other around computers inspired observers to equate their methods

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with those of coaching. Education reformers quickly began to recommend peer-coaching and project-based learning that brought students together to learn in groups working on activities such as writing compositions, preparing science projects, or creating units of study for younger learners. Peer-tutoring and similar efforts, such as "reciprocal teaching," inspired the redesign of instructional situations away from individual learners working in isolation and dependent on the teacher as primary knowledge source (Palincsar and Brown 1984).

By the end of the 1980s, however, close studies of such shifts in learning situations revealed the complexities involved in enabling teachers and others previously involved in traditional top-down instruction to change their perceptions of their roles and their language. In essence, such studies suggested that the organization and guiding principles of any situation strongly influenced language uses, which in turn carried implications for cognitive and social development. Some scholars suggested that the hierarchical organization of schools created a chain of authority in which teachers met their "survival needs" through requiring only knowledge displays in short answers devoid of connection to "real" activities (McNeil 1986). Situations created with the intention of distributing learning across a small group (such as that composed of teacher and several students in writing conferences) more often than not reflected micromanagement strategies that led participants to reenact major features of traditional classrooms such that a single individual often emerged as the only active participant while others sat by passively. For example, when a specific set of objectives or "game plan" rested in the head of an individual who assumed a position of power early in the interaction, certain language uses (such as attentional imperatives—"now think," "see how it would . . .") shut down alternative perspectives and forms of knowledge display (Ulichny and Watson-Gegeo 1989).

Register features reflect choices of speakers who "index the moment" (Haviland 1979:389) through characteristics of language that are shared and conventionalized. Resulting language conventions are highly interdependent with a sense of role, title, and responsibility and are thus not easily dropped. Numerous studies of the register of teaching have shown, for example, that teacher talk is heavily marked by the instructors' sense of responsibility to transmit information; thus teachers often dominate classroom talk, ask a preponderance of questions to which they know the answers, and expect learners to display their knowledge primarily through specific genres—both written and oral (Cazden 1988).

2. Coaching as a Context for Talk

Though coaching is instructional in some sense, it seems to call for both organizational structures and language uses that differ from those of teaching. Sociolinguistic examination of the language of coaching to compare with studies of teacher talk can provide a sense of variation in what may be a range of registers of instruction. Moreover, a study of the language of athletic coaches can help fill a gap in research on sports language by sociolinguists who have examined sports announcer and narrator talk (Ferguson 1983), children's acquisition of the register of sportscasting

(Hoyle 1991), and the register of written sports commentary (Ghadessy 1988). Such studies have illustrated how these registers vary in accordance with occasions of *use* situated in specifiable contexts regularly populated by an identifiable set of language users. All of these studies emphasize the functional context for the use of language and suggest the extent to which individual speakers link their sense of role and context to their language choices.

This chapter looks specifically at the register of coaching to ask what are those linguistic features at all levels of the grammar, including discourse, that distinguish its use. We ask particularly about the nature of the language of coaching and how its use might be linked with assumptions that lie behind coaching. What are the relations that exist between coaches and players and between skills and information and the words and actions of coaching? We draw here from data collected from five different athletic teams of youths, two Little League Baseball teams of boys, one girls' softball team, one boys' basketball team, and one girls' basketball team in inner-city neighborhoods of three urban areas.[4] Unless otherwise indicated, conclusions drawn within this chapter apply to the language used by the coaches of all teams, regardless of type of activity or gender of players.[5]

Around the 1920s, when coaches came to be a regular part of sports teams, research on the process of coaching centered on the personality and background of the coach[6] (Coleman 1932, Lawther 1951). By the end of the twentieth century, physicians, psychologists, and sociologists lamented the absence of training for coaches, as well as their isolation from any systematic reporting of scientific research on children's development, the physiology of sports, or preventive sports medicine (Fixx 1985). Yet coaches, from neighborhood sports groups to collegiate and professional teams, have usually had practical experience in the sport they coach and have supplemented their knowledge through informal study of the game. In addition, they frequently have had managerial experience of some type, and they often bring a strong interest in the sport to their position (Neal 1969). Despite the fact that coaching is centrally involved in group dynamics, those who succeed as coaches seem to do so without explication or training in communication, a central part of the process of melding a group of disparate strangers into a team motivated to high performance through hard work, consistent practice, and sustained monitoring by peers. Thus it is appropriate to look closely at the language they use and the ways in which their language relates to their stated goals of working with individuals so that they become team players.

3. Locating the Register

Though numerous studies of register variation focus primarily on providing a taxonomic grid of several major dimensions or parameters of a register (Leech 1966, Halliday 1968), others merely label particular features of a register without offering a general framework for comparative purposes (e.g., Henzl 1974, Ferguson 1977). For this study, our approach is to "locate" the coaching register by identifying the organizational or functional features that lie behind the recognizable forms of the language (cf. Ferguson 1983 on sports announcer talk). This process of location is

especially important for the register of coaching, because by the late 1980s the movement of coaching techniques into situations previously dominated by teaching brought with it the demand for attention to the features that characterize the occasions in which coaching generally occurs. By first locating the register situationally, we can check characterizing features for evidence that they are linguistically determinative and then relate these features to those of other registers in a systematic manner.

Four underlying organizational aspects of coaching provide the frame for its particular language characteristics. The first of these is that participation and demonstration—and hence activity—provide the primary contexts in which language is used. The second follows from the first, in that, to a great extent, action scripts the talk. The third provides the wider context of the first two: the primary goal of those engaged in the activities is to function as a group in order to accomplish a single jointly determined goal. The fourth relates to the rule-constituted and regulated nature of the activity for which coaching takes place: members regulate themselves by rules that derive from the nature of the activity that brings them together—whether it be baseball, production of a daily newspaper, or performance of a dance recital.

Coaching is then primarily the oral accompaniment to activities of practice and demonstration that prepare members of a group who intend to work together through a series of culminating events (often some type of contest, game, or performance). Coaches expect members to have different levels of experience, skills, and preparation in the array of tasks necessary to the culminating events; thus they view members as an ensemble of different individuals whose particular talents and abilities will have to play off each other in ways that will emerge through the course of the joint activity. The expectation of work toward a production, performance, or recognizable goal of an audience carries with it the need to develop into a cohesive unit within a definable time frame. Regroupings of teams may occur, but such regroupings are marked and involve the need to socialize new members into the group and the activity. The time element and the drive toward a culminating event or goal allow for language that intensifies the power of demonstration and elevates motivation—language uses that would not normally be sustainable over an undefinable period or for an unspecified task. This organizational feature differentiates the coaching register from kinds of talk that take place within groups where the focus is on transmitting a body of knowledge to individuals who will carry out tasks or demonstrate skills in isolation, with no responsibility for building group knowledge at a pace coordinated with a specific time span. The coaching register must simultaneously reflect the building of group relations and the incremental accumulation of participatory knowledge by each member of the group.

A second locating feature of coaching is that action scripts talk. Much of coaching talk during practice is a monologic scripting of activities as they occur or eventcast projections of possible scenarios that could emerge from an action just witnessed by all.[7] Coaches set up practices into specialized subactivities (such as bunting, hitting grounders or flies, catching grounders or flies) that they often first demonstrate and then orchestrate. For example, talk about bunting surrounds the coach's demonstration of several bunts, but when team members assume their position at bat, the talk of the coach backgrounds each bunt and extends actual

events into other probable occurrences (e.g., a bunt along a baseline). This feature differentiates coaching register from related varieties, such as radio or television sports announcing or teaching, which do not have accompanying demonstrations and simultaneous eventcasting, and it places coaching closer to other demonstration talk, such as that taking place during a medical procedure performed as part of a clinical medical training program (Tannen and Wallat 1982).

A third locating feature of coaching is the level of commitment to group bonding for the purposes of the culminating activities. The diverse types of experience and skills in the group contribute particular features of the register that deemphasize hierarchical judgments of who is best or worst within the group, and that stress how group performance taken as a whole measures up to agreed-upon models outside the group. The central play of team and coach enters the imaginative realm of projecting the group beyond where and what it now is into what it can be and what it knows to be "best," "optimal," or "special." Added to those ideals that come from outside models or norms are those peculiar to the group, such as the use of special names for individuals or actions and secret codes in gesture, dress, or written representations. It is the coach who models these personalizing, praising, and reinforcing features in the talk of coaching. This location differentiates the register of coaching from that of teaching or other types of group activities, since the coach assumes (and often insists) that members of the group will not differentiate themselves through competition in particular highly specifiable skills (e.g., hitting home runs) or bits of knowledge (calculating statistics). Instead, group members will focus their differentiations within the framework of team work or play; they will heavily personalize all roles, including their own within the ensemble; and they will assess outcomes according to the external ideal for the group.

A fourth contribution to the location of the coaching register is the role of rules—those brought into the group to regulate its interactions as well as those that constitute the game or central activity that organizes the group.[8] Rules of the first type come with the players' prior knowledge of ways to regulate human behavior under very general conditions (such as being a "good sport," "hanging in there," or "sticking up for your friends"). The extent of shared knowledge of these regulative rules becomes clear early in the team's formation, quickly spreads among the group, and operates as a code for which all members hold responsibility and must therefore monitor. Thus the talk of coaches about these rules is extensive in the early stages of group formation and on occasions of crisis to the group as a whole, but not during the regular activities of the group.

Constitutive rules are those that make up the game (e.g., of baseball, basketball, soccer), and these, in contrast to regulative rules, echo consistently throughout practice beyond the opening sessions of the group and serve as the basis of frequent reminders from coaches to players to cite, demonstrate, or explicate. Coaches ask repeatedly for recitation of the specific rules for determining what a *ball* or a *bunt* is, the functions of a *forward*, and the rules for *time-out*. Moreover, coaches expect that recitation of the constitutive rules of the game before the group by both coach and players will help ensure automatic retrieval of these rules during actual performances. This direct commitment to rules in the register of coaching differs from that of other rule-regulated, role-differentiated registers, such as that of physicians to

patients, teachers to students, or police officers to citizens, since the coach assumes that group members want to know and use the second type of rule because of their elective commitment to the normative ideals of the group and their joint goal of doing the best job possible for the team and thus for themselves.

These four characteristics lay out the role of the coach in building and sustaining the essentials of group collaboration as well as individual knowledge and skill development. Coaches are not direct players in the culminating activity, but through modeling, demonstrating, narrating and asking for recitation or recapping of rules, they bring about the participation and socialization to team membership of those who must practice, perform, and ultimately stand for assessment by team members and outsiders of the culminating event. Thus to a great extent coaches are both outside the team and full representatives of the team. The relative status of coaches depends on the extent to which they help create within the team norms of (co)operation that draw attention away from individual performers and toward the activities themselves and the best possible coordinated execution of these. The communicative intentions of coaches lie within the ethos of the team's reason for being, namely its central activity. Moreover, since much of the language is scripted by ongoing demonstration and action, its effectiveness lies in the ability of team members to internalize the demonstration and action together with the accompanying language and to understand the extent to which specific practices relate to community-acknowledged rules and team-building expectations.

4. Discourse-Level Features of Coaching Talk

The discourse features of language identifiable in coaches' talk follow the course of both the season and the nature of practice and games. Certain speech styles mark coaches' talk at particular points in the season. At initial gatherings of the group or team (and throughout group sessions at times of crisis to the membership), coaches take the floor for chunks of uninterrupted language in which they lay out the group's philosophy (often reiterating regulative rules, such as those for good sportsmanship and team membership), additional rules of the current specific organization, and some personal elaboration or confirmation of these.

During practices, coaches provide eventcasts as openers, running commentary on the practices, and summative peptalks and reviews of skills practiced. Games provide relatively little time for talk except brief telegraphic reinforcements or reminders; at game end, coaches often recap highlights of the game and tie these back into the season's major philosophical themes.

4.1. Philosophical Setups

In the first sessions of the season, illustrated by (1), long segments of talk by the coach outline the call to team membership and responsibility, lay down and solicit the particular rules of the group, and remind players of their need to develop their skills and play with full knowledge of the actual rules of the game. Consistent throughout these talks are reminders of what may be termed the doubleness of the

team's situation: they are *playing*, they are *in a game*, and yet within this play mode, they must operate according to some fundamental rules of *real life* relating to human interactions, future goals, and standards of judgment. Along with the rules that constitute the game of basketball or baseball come the rules of belonging to the team and the opportunity to extend what happens in team life to life in the world of work.

(1) There's rules to be followed. You gotta follow 'em in life; you're gonna have to follow 'em in baseball. You don't do what you wanna do. And the next one that talks. I'm gonna pull out of the line. [pause] It's one thing you learn, you have to listen. In any phase of life, you have to listen and, and follow rules and follow orders. I do. There's people tell me what to do and I listen. That's part of life. Now next week. I see I see a lot of progress in a lot of you. A lot of you are doing very good. By the time we get out on that field, you'll be, very good ball players, because I'm seeing a lot of progress.

The relationship established with the coach is more than that of source of rules and skills, but instead model, mentor, motivator for being a good team player and thus contributing to team camaraderie, and pride in the team as a whole.

One coach's three rules presented at the first meeting of the second season by the assistant coach hark back to the team membership the players shared the previous year and build on their strengths and weaknesses. He opens his address to the team by saying: "Last year I was kinda easy on you guys. This year I'm gonna really be mean." He adds the rules for this year:

(2) First, anybody caught fighting with ANYBODY, you're suspended for one game. Fight again, you're off the team. Second, I'll let you know the schedule. You are expected to be at all practices and games unless you call beforehand. Otherwise, you'll find yourself sitting on the bench. Third, when you get your uniform, you are always to come to games with a complete uniform. Part of the game of baseball is pride in your uniform and appearance. I want you guys coming to the games looking sharp.

To these hard and fast rules he adds the reminder that they are the defending champions, and they have to play their hardest, "look sharp," and be determined, if they are to retain their title.

The manager of one of the teams also lays out his set of rules for the beginning of the season. He greets his team on the first day with a pep talk, saying "I'm here to tell you we're gonna have fun; learn some fundamentals of baseball, sportsmanship; and learn to have fun and learn not to suck our fingers." While the emphasis is on having fun, he adds, "We're gonna be the best darn team in the league, right? Hopefully." He then invokes the relationship between the coaches and the players by adding, "We'll [the coaching staff] be with you every step of the way." After this introduction, he lays out some basic rules for play:

1. Be at least fifteen minutes early to make practice as good as possible. Maybe take a lap.
2. No horsing around; always be prepared to listen, as we have lots of teams and limited time on the field.
3. On the team, no laughing; always encourage your teammates. Remember every guy is doing his best. We want you to lose like a winner. You can be sad, you can be upset, but you always go and shake all hands at the end of every game.

The general philosophical precepts of team membership dictate how coaches and subsequently players learn to deal with preferred roles on the team. All the coaches and players stress the "basics" of throwing, running, hitting, and catching (all players have to learn the basics and then they can be creative). Players in all positions must have these skills and learn the techniques of strategizing when and how to play out the nuances of combinations of posture, timing, spacing, and cooperation that lead to success in a given play or game. Beyond these skills, however, as the course of the season moves along, individual players demonstrate expertise in particular roles. Coaches begin the season with numerous mentions of "We need some good catchers this year" or "We really have to have some strong outfielders"—creating a cluster of elements of need and features of play around each position.

One coach tells the team, "Everybody will have a shot at all the different positions; we'll spread it around. First we'll determine your skills so you can best help the team." Such generalized announcements of the qualifications for the team contributions of each position socialize all team members into a body of knowledge about how the choice of the appropriate players for particular positions will enhance the quality of the team as a whole.

Aside from these large blocks of talk about building teamwork at the opening sessions of the season, other such large chunks occur only at points of crisis and focus primarily on extended explanations of rules of the game. On most occasions of such extended talk, coaches remind players that they have heard this information before and are likely to hear it again.

(3) Now I told you I'm-o almost every practice I'm gonna keep sayin' this. If you're not gonna take a block or the target xxx during the game, I know you won't take it at the end of the game. That could be the difference between winnin' or losin'. Even if it is a charge and the referee calls a foul, that man still has to go to the free throw line and throw free throws. I'll take my chances. Some of you let the person go around you and just score a layup and tap him on the arm and then they get three points. Now you go to to get your bodies in front of them and you go to to take a charge. Now, if you don't take a charge you cannot play for me in important situations. It just will not happen. I don't care what you say. This game is made o-, if you don't if you can't take contact next you cannot allow your man just to roam free and go wherever they want to all over the basketball court. Some of you all just foul the man all around. You can't do that. You must cut the court in half.

In the remainder of this segment, the coach adds numerous conditions that might deter the players from wanting to charge—other players who are taller, particular run patterns of opposing team members, and so on. His talk ends with the admonition, "If you just let him run right across, he just gonna post you up every time."

The context of this talk was the need for the boys to "take the end of the game seriously in practice." Team members were not projecting ahead to the score results from each of their individual plays or hesitations in play, and the coach wanted the boys to think "game ending situations" as they played out every minute of practice.

At points such as these, when the team goals seem to slip away from players, coaches offer brief reminders of the need to stop thinking and moving as individuals and to unite as a team.

(4a) You guys are a bunch of individuals out there; you're not a team yet. You've got to support one another. All you guys care about when do I get to bat, and not how is my team doing.

(4b) All right, everybody give him five man; tell him he's gonna be all right. All right? [about a boy who was hit in nose with ball] Come on, that's your teammate; make sure he's OK.

To help promote sustained concentration by the whole team to the task at hand during practice, coaches often invoke fantasy play with the team by calling for "game conditions." For example, during an intersquad practice with the starting line-up in the field, minus the pitcher and the rest of the team batting, a coach says:

(5) I wanna see game conditions. It'll be just like a game. G., I want you to be umpire. OK? So that means, a walk you'll take first, we're gonna play it just like a game.

"Game conditions" extend to the request that the catcher put on all the catching gear. Here the coach shows his respect for some of the older players (the "vets" who are twelve years old) by giving the catcher the option of putting on his gear. "That's up to you. I know it's hot. You're gonna have to start getting used to it, OK? And it is game conditions." The catcher joins in on the discussion of what game conditions means by saying, "If this is a game, I need my suit." The instructions on game conditions complete, the team gets five minutes: "OK, do you guys wanna take five minutes, get the water, and then we're gonna go, OK? Like I said it's gonna be a hot summer, so you better start getting used to it, all right?" Such talk is often peppered with restatements of the fantasy condition (game end or game conditions) along with bits and pieces of the organizing rules of the group and reminders of the team as an entity.

4.2. Eventcasts and Routines

While the beginning of the season involves intensive team development, throughout the season, before both practices and games, coaches routinely set up what is to come for players by running verbally through the practice's events (drill for batting, catching, running, free throw practice, and so on).

(6) We're gonna practice going to first base, outfielders throwing to second base, throwing to third base. C., you listening? OK? and then I'm gonna pull a couple of you guys aside to see what you can do throwing the ball, see who's gonna be pitchers for this year, OK?

Such talk is punctuated with gestures, occasional movement about the field or court, and insertions of reminders of what has been done in previous practices or games. These chunks of language at the openings of events provide the only occasions during which coaches outline what is to come and remind players to keep the whole coming scenario in their heads. Phases of these eventcasts usually include the opening, enactment of the plan, any possible breaks, enactment of what will follow the break, and the closing.

The opening of each session or segment of activity invariably includes overt calls to membership and teamwork ("Let's go, gang," "Everybody in"). Before practices, such eventcasts lay out events and urge high effort; before games, coaches stir an image of finality or peak performance demand, offering abbreviated quick repetitions of what the game is, what the players know, and what they want.

Just before a girls' softball game, the coach gathers the players between the dugout and third base coach's box:

(7) This is it. Everybody has to go out there and attack the ball. Look at me. Attack the ball, girl. Go up there; you gotta go up there and take aggressive. You have to go up there thinking you want to get that ball. You don't go up there thinking—if you think you're going to get struck out, you're going to get struck out. You know who's pitching. You've nailed her a hundred times. Get out there and get on top of her quick. I mean quick. Hey, I want everybody talking up here. This is it, xxx. This is the game. Any game you want to win. This is a game you have to win. This is a game you have to win. Do what you want. It's up to you. Not to E (assistant coach). It's how bad you all want it. This is where it starts. Right here. This is where it starts.

The assistant coach echoes these thoughts in a follow-up talk, projecting several possible scenarios of specific actions:

(8) Jo, here. Hey, you've got to go on out there and be aggressive. Every play. On the bases. Norma, you gonna be here. Hey, you gonna play—look, look at the xxx. If I do this. If I go like this [imitating a wind-up for the pitch] the next pitch, the first pitch. Let's move. You know what that means. xxxx steal. If I go like this, during the second pitch. Anybody who goes base coaching, if I do like this or like that, first pitch or second pitch. Hear me. And when that pick up. Take it upon yourselves and, if she got a good pitch, don't make a break. Be sure she go the xxx. Get the xxxx. Go on in. Don't wait for nobody to get the ball. xxx and Go with her hard. [imitating a wind-up] xxx the baseline. OK. Go. Hey, stay with it girls. Stay with it xxx. It's your game. It's up to you all now.

These occasions of talk during games contrast sharply with the highly abbreviated talk (98 percent of which is between two and five morphemes in length) generally found during the actual playing of the game.

In contrast to what is possible during games, coaches use practices to model the running commentary that they hope players will run in their own heads during games. During practices, coaches urge players into action and script their actions with almost unceasing commentary, heavily laced with players' names, positive reinforcements, and rhetorical questions. This commentary takes the form of both imperatives that are often routinized and conditionals that remind players that under certain circumstances, other outcomes would be possible. These commentaries provide players with specific on-line feedback and instructions on skills with which they may be having trouble.

(9) Don't move back. Here do you wanna go that far, stand about right. [pause] Get the bat up, choke up, choke up [hit]. There you go. Good job.

(10) That's right, OK good. [pause] You did the right thing. You couldn't get nobody so you held onto the ball. There's no reason to throw the ball if a man's already on the base.

This scripted action is interspersed with statements of positive assessment, reinforcement of correct behavior, and corrections of behavior the coach expects the

player to know. The form of this talk is telegraphic and repetitive; the pace is that of the activity; the linking of statement to player is dependent on the frequent use of vocatives (either a given name, a nickname, or a position/role such as first baseman or catcher).

(11) OK infield, let's get one again. B. Str——, strong throw, no throwing up in the air, I wanna see a good throw, all right? Good throw, get one. [hit] Yeah. That's it, that's it, that's the way you throw the ball. Good catch, good catch, good catch. OK, C., get one. [hit] Get it, get it.

Once a drill is completed, the coach usually calls the players together for a brief retake, in which players and coach talk about what was seen and what improvement is needed. This point also reinvokes the concept of the team as joint monitors, continuous assessors, and team members who are consistently aligned to the achievement of the group goal.

(12) OK guys, out here, second base. Everybody come in to second base for a minute. [pause] Second base. Come on J. Come on Mr. B. hustle baby, hustle hustle. OK, you guys look sharp, all right? The infielders are doing what you want, the outfielders, the only thing, only think I want you outfielders to do is remember, OK?, now and I know it isn't always comfortable, but I think M. and G. probably do the best job of it. Keeping the ball in front of you. OK? You don't always have to catch the ball, OK? But if the ball, if you can keep the ball in front of you, I mean if it hits your knee or if it hits you in the chest or in the side, I mean that's not the way you're supposed to catch, right? But the, you, the object is to keep the ball in front of you. OK?

During such retakes, the coach offers some "quick rules" and demonstrates what is meant (e.g., "Keep your knees bent," "Keep your eye on the ball at all times," "Keep your glove down"). The frequent call to "remember" comes with a fast-paced demonstration and frequently repeated encapsulation of the key points of the exercise. Mental state verbs, such as *remember* and *think*, as well as modals (*could*, *might*, and so on) and catenatives (such as *gonna*) occur on the average of thirty times in every one hundred turns of the coaches' talk and make evident the combination of cognition and action the coach intends for team members. These occasions remind the players that the sport rests on a small number of general rules that must be remembered and that have high transfer potential across positions and game conditions.

After games, coaches may wait until the next practice for a retake, and such retakes focus on specific incidents of the game as well as general principles of play and team membership.

(13a) Now listen. Now you all did pretty good yesterday. We come back when we had to, and you showed that you wanted to win. I like that. For a little while we were down on ourselves, but, like I told you all, we got on top of em quick, we let up and they came back on us. They went ahead. Bu I s-, I see it in your all's eyes last night you all wanted to win it. You wanted it. And took it. That's all that matters. So long as everyone out xxx, you can't take nobody lightly. I don't care if you've got twenty run lead. The game was early. That was only the second inning. We played five. We had to struggle for those last three innings. You cannot afford to let up. I'm tellin' you all. We can't afford to let up. They will come back. Hey, they're a hitting team. And they'll hit the ball. You all seen that last night. They scored ten runs just like that. I mean, just like that. [pause of eight seconds] Offense we did good. Everyone was hittin' the ball when we need to. You all hit it when we needed to.

Example (13a) contains only the first one third of the retake talk on this occasion by this coach. He closes the full sequence with a reminder:

(13b) Hey, let's start practicing today hard, and let's work on those mistakes. I'm telling you all, hey, the farther it goes along, it's going to get tougher, becuz everybody's getting better. I told you all that at the beginning. We'll go over everything today. We need a lot of work. A lot of batting practice.

Coaching language moves the players to practice the skills, remember and apply the rules, and, most important, see themselves as knowledge sources and skill displayers within an integrated unit of strategizers.

To these ends, coaches see a general developmental process as youngsters stick with a particular sport within the course of one season and certainly over several seasons. Early in the process, the players are to have fun, learn a few basics, and find out what it is like to be a member of a team unit. The next stage brings knowledge of rules specific to the game as well as a continuation of emphasis on the general philosophic principles of interaction that permeate the early process. At this point, distinction between one's own team and others becomes an integral part of the way in which competition figures in the players' sense of purpose or goals. The final developmental phase is maintenance of the basic precepts of the game as well as continuous invitations and reminders to the players to become strategizers and thereby frequent winners and good losers.

5. Syntactic Features

Five types of syntactic phenomena illustrate key features of the coaching register. Each of these features works to help the coach in his or her goals of invoking team membership, building up a set of skills in players, and ensuring that players learn to think of themselves as strategists.

5.1. Telegraphic Utterances

During segments of practice, as well as during games, coaches' utterances have a telegraphic character: short bursts of speech usually of no more than five morphemes, with those of three morphemes by far the most frequent. These utterances declare actions as positive, cue specific routinized parts of skills, or give imperatives in one of six forms:

1. V + pro or N prep phrase (optional ADV)
   get one, try it again, keep your eye on the ball
2. ADJ + N
   good job, nice throw

3. EXP pro V
   there you go
4. pro art N
   that's the way, that a way
   or
   pro N ADJ
   that's OK, that's all right
5. pro V pro
   I like that
6. Vphrase ADV
   let's get it together

These forms are either imperatives or evaluative declaratives. Optionally preceding or following any of these forms is a vocative addressing either an individual or the group.

Approximately 60 percent of the utterances within telegraphic scripted action talk are repeated at least twice within the span of eight seconds. Coaches think of this barrage of talk as a mental prod to get players to internalize the quality or feature of their current action. Such talk also serves as *back channeling* for the players' actions in ways similar to the "uh huh" and "yeah" of conversations. Such talk is either highly affective ("good play") or directive in very general terms ("all the way," "come on"). Approximately 10 percent include vocatives of a highly general type: "Sweetie," "Baby," "girls," "guys." Players say that this "chatter" lets them know someone is watching and tells them how they're doing at any given moment. Another 10 percent refers to individual players by name and highlights specific actions or features of that player's behavior.

5.2. *Conditionals*

Perhaps the most outstanding feature of all coaching talk (except for its telegraphic nature) lies in its creation of hypothetical conditions. Approximately 80 percent of eventcasts before practice and games and the running commentaries (excluding telegraphic utterances) during practices establish irrealis conditions. As noted, many of these assert "real game conditions" during practice, but others set up specific possibilities for the consequences of particular kinds of plays.[9]

The use of conditionals provides the players with alternatives and examples of causal environments which have an effect on the playing of the game. Within the *play* mode, the overarching frame is that of "what if?" and the accompanying expectation "You always have to be ready; anything can happen." Thus much of the talk of both coaches and players reshapes current actions into one or more possible extensions or outcomes. These conditionals exist not only in the form of "if-then" utterances, but also in utterances that appear in the form of directives but function as conditionals. Moreover, the juxtaposition of two declaratives often works as a conditional without the direct statement of either *if* or *then*. Following such statements is the implied question of "what now?" In addition to these abbreviated invitations to imagine "what if?" are longer sociodramatic bids that play out ex-

tended eventualities built upon the current configuration or one that can be fantasized.

5.2.1. IF-THEN CONDITIONALS

In extended chunks of discourse that are eventcasts for practices or retakes of practices, approximately one third of all utterances are if-then constructions. *If* appears on average nine times per one hundred turns of coaches' talk in girls' athletic events and ten in boys' activities.

Conditionals of the simplest type—stating only one condition and one result—refer primarily to state of affairs outside the game or practice itself.

(14) I think if there's rain coming again, we may uh xxx
if you, if you wanna get something [to eat] before, go ahead
if the pitcher's good enough to throw strikes, then you, then
if I have to get you a pizza after every win, I'll tell you, I'll be broke by mid midway

The primary location for simple conditionals that refer to the practice itself is at the end of extended chunks of coaching talk.

(15) if you just let him run right across, he just gonna post you up every time
if you drive to the basket, they're probably gonna foul you
if everybody calls that interference, they're not reading the rulebook

In approximately 50 percent of the if-then utterances, either the conditions or consequences are multiple, with branched possibilities of conditions occurring three times more frequently than a layout of numerous consequences. The conditions often work as a series of unstated if-then linkages.

(16a) And if I'm sticking him and [if] the ball's over there, before you can get over there, if he wants to get right there, [then] I make it so he has to fight to get around and I ain't just dead.

(16b) If the ball, say the ball gets to the-, passes the outfielder and [if] the ball hits the fence, OK, [then] there's no way that she can-, she can reach the ball from home or to second from where she's at, so second basemen, or say [if] the rightfield, second basemen has to go out and cut her off, and she'll hit the relay.

(16c) if you stay, if you stay, hey, hey, and relax and breathe deep, [then] you can swing as hard as you want, but you gon' like this [demonstrates], the ball's comin' in and you, hey, when you do that, xxx the ball xxx.

(16d) if the ball's a little bit slippery, maybe even dry off the ball. What you have to do, if you're gonna, step outside that circle, if you need to dry anything off or if the ball is really bad, show the umpire

(16e) OK, if you walk D., [if] you're on base, and uh you know, then you can start some action out there

Conditions are usually highly interdependent, while results include an array of outcomes that may or may not be linked and that cannot necessarily be predicted. Thus these multiply branched conditionals call for the players to hold several conditions in their minds and to anticipate alternative outcomes.

5.2.2. CONDITIONALS STATED AS QUESTION-DIRECTIVES

A fast-paced question with a follow-up directive usually functions as a conditional when coaches want to personalize heavily an outcome in a particular situation at a single point in time.

(17a) [Vocative], [if] this is your ball? [then] put it in your pocket.
(17b) [if] you wanna get to first base before him? [then] run, run like you're scared.
(17c) So [=if] they have some good hitters, huh? [then] you might have to go out six innings.

Coaches throw out these questions-directive conditionals very rapidly and appear to use them to target the attention of individuals. Most are accompanied by a vocative or a strong gesture directed to an individual (pointing to a youth's pocket, placing an arm around the shoulder, or giving a pat on the back). Their tone is sometimes sarcastic, especially in those utterances such as (17c) in which *so* functions as *if* and implies a challenge.

5.2.3. SOCIODRAMATIC BIDS

As indicated, during practice, coaches frequently draw players into the fantasy that they are in "real" game conditions.

(18) OK, the other thing is is this sort of applies to what's gonna have to happen in games. When we're playing a game, and you guys are out on the, in the defense, when you're in the outfield. We'll have to be ready all the time. You don't know where that batter's gonna hit the ball. OK? So when you guys are standing out here playing, I want you to be watching that batter. Now there may be times, like later this afternoon where the outfielders can play some catch in between pitches. But the infielders should always be ready. OK? If we have a hitter that we have to work with a little bit and it's taking some time, the outfielders can have a ball out there and play catch.

Later within this segment, the coach asks not only that the players imagine a game, but that they also imagine the limits of the field.

In addition, the coach wants them to join in a fantasy play within a fantasy play. They should suspend within their imagined game the "rule" that pitchers should try to throw so batters *cannot* hit the ball: "This is *batting practice*" (and thus those rules of real games that would conflict with this announcement are called off).

Other sociodramatic bids highlight critical turns of action in the hypothesized scenarios and often follow quick directives for team members to look and listen.

(19) All right, now. Now, listen, again. Listen again. HEY. J. Now, the skins' team is losin' 84 to 78. Both teams in the bonus. There's a minute on the clock. Which means, cause I don't think some of you all know what that means. Which means that the skins' team must put pressure on the shirts' team to steal the ball. Not to do intentional fouls but to go for the ball. Now if you're in a man to man situation, if your man is in the front court and he gets by you, you try to run and pick him up. There's really no excuse for you to foul unless you're trying' to foul right away. Now in the this situation, you want to go for the ball hard where you probably will foul him in the front court. Not silly stuff.

In this case, the appropriate use of fouls can make the difference between winning or losing the game in the final moments. Consistently, these "clutch" sociodramas place the hypothetical scene near the end of the game when a cluster of conditions coming together can easily go either way—to the benefit or the detriment of the team's score. Such sociodramas are punctuated in the coach's elaboration with frequent expressions of *now, all right, OK,* as well as spatial deictics, such as *here*. These extended chunks of talk consistently take place in a mixture of present and present progressive tense. Past tense is generally reserved for comments of a parenthetical type about the outcome of an action scripted in the present tense (e.g., "You denied them the ball").

Once the team moves out of the role of audience for such sociodramas and into practice, coaches test players on their understanding of the scenario by asking *why* questions.

(20a) Why would you foul him and put him in the bonus when he's winnin' by six?
(20b) How come you couldn't jump into him and shoot the ball rather fo-, fade away and shoot?

These questions continue the frame of the hypothetical "clutch" situation into practice, so that the conditions given in the drama persist and justify time-outs from practice to talk about the results of certain moves or plays.

5.3. *Balanced Negatives and Directives*

In spite of a public perception that coaches, especially those of baseball, are often highly negative with youngsters and constantly shout commands to players, data from the teams studied here show several patterns of use of negatives and directives among coaches that conflict sharply with the stereotypical view of coaches.

The first of these features is that of "balanced negatives"—negations followed immediately by positive assertions (usually more than one).

(21) don't call in the play. I'll call it
you can't be doin' this stuff, xxx put the pass, come on back for it, xxx, do it again.
don't reach for it, get over there and block him

Coaches rarely direct negatives to individual players; instead, they ask rhetorical questions, often tinged with a mixture of sarcasm and humor. During practice the majority of these questions ask for confirmation or explanation of an event that has just taken place and that all have either seen or heard.

(22) [Vocative] what did I just say?
[Vocative] what are you afraid of?
did you all hear that?
you goin' to let it ride like that?
what kinda pass is that?

Most of these questions are calls to attention, since listening, observing, and remembering strategies must complement all other activities of the practice and game. Hence, coaches use both direct reminders ("Listen," "Keep your eyes open," "Listen up," "You all keep a eye on the back court") throughout practices as well as in opening eventcasts of what is to come in either practices or games. Calls to *look* occur on the average twice as often as calls to *listen*.

Augmenting these direct reminders are frequent requests for clarification that check with players on the status of information and sustain the view that all members of the team are accountable for information that should be in common purview.

(23) OK, who are we missing here?
Now, where is D.?

Do you have money for it?

Oh, you played the first game?
Get fanned?

OK, L., you still have that baseball?

Who are we missing here? Where's D.? OK S., Where's S., S., where, where was that ball you guys were playing with?

Beyond these balanced negatives and checks on the status of knowledge is yet another way of lending a positive tone to practices. When infractions of safety, sportsmanship, or team image occur within practice, coaches usually set the negative or unacceptable action against an understandable reason for such an action. When a player threw down his batting helmet with particular force after he struck out, the coach yelled: "We're not gonna have any of that, all right?" followed by a comment to lessen the blow of failure: "Everybody strikes out once in a while, OK?"

5.4. Tag Questions

Lessening the blow of an infraction is one of a number of occasions in which the coach makes use of tag questions (especially *OK?*, *all right?*). These are also used within the stream of running commentary during practices to mark points at which the players should check for themselves on what is happening.

Tag questions represent another attempt in which coaches try to get players to "see" how their thinking processes should work and to be in a constant state of self-monitoring. Coaches also explain their use of tag questions by indicating that they want the moment-to-moment directives to the team to fall into a general sense of acceptance of this information by all team members. (Note that examples [5], [6], [9], [12], and [18] show use of *OK?*, and [4], [5], [11], and [18] include *all right?*.)

5.5. Pronoun Usage

A fifth component of coaching talk centers on the use of first person plural and second person pronouns that draws the players into the talk by invoking team membership and a lack of distinction between players.[10]

This usage shows the unique position of the coach as a member/nonmember of the team. While not participating in the bulk of the activities, the coach invokes his identity with the group through talk that regulates positive team cooperation as well as talk that includes the coach only as far as planning and preparation are concerned. Hence we see both inclusive and exclusive use of first person plural pronouns with exclusive far more frequent.[11]

Our examination of pronouns focused on *we* and *us* and *you*, with the goal of determining the extent to which coaches used pronouns to consolidate individual identities of the youths into a group identity. Because English does not morphologically mark distinctions between the singular and plural of the second person pronoun, observational and follow-up interview data provided essential information about coaches' intended referents of *you*.

In addition to a focus on *you* (plural), we contrasted two primary uses of *we* and *us*.

5.5.1. WE/US-PRESENT-CENTERED, EXCLUSIVE, SINGULAR OR PLURAL

In this use of *we* and *us*, the coach excludes the speaker and addresses only listeners.

(24a) All right, now we gonna practice. We're not gonna do as m-, we not gonna do a lot of drills. We are gonna run so that you all stay in some kind of shape. And, uh, then we're gonna start practicin' and we're gonna be out of here by six o'clock, so that gives us about fifty minutes. OK, so start, y'all start runnin'

(24b) we all tend to be a little more aggressive about school when school is startin'

(24c) let's go, let's get started, let's get it together, guys

(24d) we're offsides here

In these cases, *we/us* functions as *you* (singular or plural) and appears most frequently in talk that has either a strong directive or nurturing and "checking-in" quality. Though the action to which the utterance refers may take place in the past, present, or future, the force of the utterance is a current directive or attempt to manage the behavior of another individual.

Even when the talk focuses on the specific action of a particular player, the use of the first person plural clearly places the talk within the frame of the group and implies that all members can benefit from the comment and should pay attention to everything that is said during practice. This applies in particular to chastising that follows infractions. The most frequent use of exclusive *we/us* occurs in such instances. The second most frequent use of exclusive *we/us* embraces all those occasions when the coach wishes to get the practice started (or restarted) and wants to draw the group together for talk which often includes an eventcast.

5.5.2. WE/US-INCLUSIVE PAST AND PRESENT, SINGULAR OR PLURAL

The second major use of *we/us* includes the addressee and recalls a shared experience or projects a future experience of which both speaker and listeners have some knowledge. This talk generally falls outside the play of the game and involves coordinating times and places for play.

(25a) we'll have to get another one [said with reference to a test application needed in a tutoring program associated with the team]

(25b) we were like three or four hundred miles over the four hundred miles that we were supposed to have [referring to the mileage on the van used to transport the team for the institution]

Within coaching talk, *you* (both plural and singular) appears far more frequently than either *we* or *us*, suggesting that coaches do not include themselves as team members in the sense that they can be directly involved in the winning of games. On the average, across all the girls' athletic events, *we* appeared 13.17 times per 100 turns of the coaches' talk, while *you* appeared 85.43 times; across all the boys' athletic events, *we* appeared 25.23 times per 100 turns of coaches' talk, while *you* appeared 107.63 times. The message of the coaches seems to be, It is up to *you, the players* to carry out the activities; I have to be separate, in the final analysis, from the actual game itself.[12]

6. Conclusion

Though the concept of *register* is slippery, it remains useful to identify the bundles of linguistic features that coalesce around certain types of social situations or uses. It is perhaps the most useful to compare the features of two registers often regarded either as very closely aligned or indeed as a single variant in the repertoire of a particular type of register (such as instructional registers or sports registers). The analysis here of the language of male and female coaches with young players (male and female) of baseball, softball, and basketball indicates numerous features that have not been found in instructional registers and several that appear often in sports talk (for example, telegraphic speech and hypotheticals).

The language of coaches is activity scripted, centered on practice and demonstration, and geared heavily to forming a group identity for a product or goal. Praise, rephrasing of rules, calls for future scenarios, and repetition of verbal props for participatory actions shape the bulk of coaching talk.

Coaches do not work on the basis of a transmission model of socialization; rather they are engaged in modeling and interpreting activities, which are supplemented with advice on ways to move as a team toward a group goal. Their primary goal is not to pass on bodies of knowledge, but to help learners develop competency in basic skills hand-in-hand with a sense of strategy and collaborative achievement as group members. Coaches also want to display and invoke in players positive attitudes, motivational incentives, and relish for participatory action. Coaches say that both skills and attitudes depend on practice over time, as does the habit of

creating a mental picture of what can happen in future situations. Thus they set up practices that offer frames in which players can envision a series of potential environments that they may encounter in any possible game. The "game" then becomes a part of real life that extends over time and from which coaches draw further allusions to "the game of real life."

Coaches embrace a transitional model of socialization—even during a single season—believing that players will develop through practice, team participation, and the hard knocks of winning and losing "real" games. Coaches therefore see themselves as starting youths to learn particular skills, attitudes, and roles; they do this through reminding them of the *play* in which they are all engaged. Yet within this play, the roles are real in that they count toward the outcome of the team's reputation, identity, and final scorecard. Coaches cannot possibly elaborate all of the skills and bits of knowledge that individuals must have to bring about a successful practice or game; they see the outcome as emerging from the players themselves as collaborators solving mutual problems, monitoring and correcting each other, and producing a sense that they share their thinking and get better by doing so.

In the contexts of learning that promote the register of coaching, players internalize external activities, grow in interdependence with each other and with shifting situations, and develop as their verbal support and demonstration from coaches shift over time. The language in coaching—telegraphic feedback, emphasis on action by the players, and calls to think, look, listen, and hypothesize—reflects its strong cognitive functions. Moreover, the language of the coach underscores the idea that within practices that lead to the goal of successful games, the players need to prepare themselves to think and act in a constantly changing series of local perspectives, created through the combination of specific tasks and ensemble of talents on the court or field. The coaching register emphasizes for individuals their need to engage constantly in minute acts of perception, self-monitoring in highly participatory and shifting actions, and mental imaging of how the current scene can bring new situations for action. Such a combination of directive, socially integrative, and cognitive functions in language has rarely received attention in the language of instruction. As current educational and work-related reform movements take up the coaching metaphor for students and workers, close examinations of the organizational structure and language of coaching, as well as their implications for both individual and group participation, constitute a necessary preparatory step for such reforms.

Notes

1. In the 1980s, anthropologists and psychologists joined to "think through cultures" (Shweder 1991, Stigler, Shweder, and Herdt 1990) and center attention on competence, communication, and cognition in the everyday world (Rogoff and Lave 1984, Sternberg and Wagner 1986). Especially important in this work was attention to the means of mediation within small groups and the analysis of work as situated practice in multiactivity settings (see, for example, Suchman 1987 and Engeström 1990). Soviet psychologists earlier in the century had studied the role of language in collectives and small problem-solving groups and had also

identified the decisive role in such interactions of "work connections" that built "responsible dependence" (for reports of this research, see Chernyshev (1984) and Lomov and Kol'tsova (1984).

2. Primarily through the work of the Poynter Institute for Media Studies, the practice of coaching writers has spread through editing offices of major newspapers in the United States since 1985. *Coaches Corner*, a newsletter, circulates among editors, and periodic sessions on coaching writing take place at the institute. The "primer" of coaching writing characterizes the coach as a combination of teacher, critic, priest, therapist, and catalyst (Clark and Fry forthcoming).

3. In the 1980s, Tom Peters (Peters and Waterman 1982, Peters 1988) and sociologist Peter Drucker (1985) popularized key ideas underlying participatory management and the possibilities for coaching within business. Since then numerous journal articles, consulting firms, and educational units of business have offered workshops on coaching in which they promote its capacity to empower workers, to enable managers to get feedback from workers, and to motivate a team approach to recognizing and solving problems (Sujansky 1988, Margulies and Black 1987).

4. The five teams included the following: (1) a Little League team of predominantly African American inner-city working-class youngsters aged nine to twelve coached jointly by a middle-aged African American male from the community and a local European-American college student; (2) a Little League team of nine to ten year-old youngsters of working-class and middle-class parents, about half European-American and half African American, sponsored by a Boys and Girls Club and coached by an African American male; (3) an African American boys' basketball team, ages twelve to eighteen, sponsored by a grassroots inner-city community organization, with two coaches, both African American males—one a schoolteacher; (4) a primarily Latina Little League softball team, with two coaches—one Latino and one Latina; (5) a European-American girls' basketball team of working-class origin, sponsored by a Boys and Girls Club and coached by a European-American male.

Date for these athletic teams were drawn from a corpus of approximately a million words collected in a variety of artistic and athletic youth organizations in inner-city locations. Transcription conventions are modified from Tannen (1989), with CAPS indicating emphatic stress, and xxx indicating unintelligible portions of the tape. Transcriptions of the practices and games, once entered into a computer, were quantified according to the appearance of particular items (e.g., negatives, modals, *if-then* constructions) per one hundred turns of both coaches and players. In addition, conversation analysis, field notes, and follow-up interviews with coaches supplemented this quantitative overview.

5. It is not unusual for the general public to view coaches of voluntary out-of-school athletic activities as highly individualistic, autocratic, and even ruthless in their interactions with youngsters. We acknowledge that such coaches would in all likelihood be omitted from our data collection, since the larger study for which these data were collected had the goal of identifying youth-based inner-city organizations that neighborhood youths themselves viewed as effective. Thus we studied only those groups that regarded youths as resources and not as problems, and had relatively steady attendance and support from community youths. These organizations were not always those labeled as "the most successful" by local political leaders, social workers, youth counselors, or educators. For further discussion of these organizations, and their conception of youth, see Heath and McLaughlin (1991). Our findings that the coaching talk of male and female coaches differed little (regardless of whether or not they were coaching male or female teams) are, no doubt, influenced by the types of organizations studied. The philosophy of the youth-based organizations that inner-city youths selected would have eliminated highly autocratic coaches who put winning above all else. For discussions of differences in coaching philosophies—and resulting views on uses of aphorisms and

calls to strict discipline—between male coaches of male and female basketball teams, see Pratt and Eitzen (1989).

6. The origin of the English word *coach* is the name of a small town in Hungary where the first coaches were built; the word appears to have referred generally to "carrying others from place to place" until it came to be used to refer to academic tutors in the mid-nineteenth century, and by 1885, to those who both managed and trained players in athletic contests. From the late nineteenth century until well into the twentieth, clubs or teams had captains and managers but not coaches.

7. Such talk as script for action marks instructional talk that accompanies demonstration, but nuances, such as a sense of authority, shape particular types of such talk. For example, Niemloy (1988), in a study of the teaching of engineering in a research university, identified four uses of the first person singular pronoun: as classroom authority, as speaker's aside, as an inanimate object of manipulation, and as the voice of experience. In addition, special uses of modals and deictics mediated the professor's use of overhead transparencies and chalkboard drawings, as he emphasized degrees of importance of the visual material to his current action and the future actions of students.

8. The philosopher John Searle (1969:33–34) first distinguished between regulative and constitutive rules. The former exist independently of current behavior, such as rules of etiquette that regulate personal interactions. *Constitutive rules* are those whereby new forms of behavior—such as games—are created or defined.

9. For examination of the uses of conditionals by children and their various forms, see Traugott, Meulen, Reilly, and Ferguson (1986). Heath (1991) considers conditionals, including bids for sociodramatic play, in the practice and games of mainstream, middle-class, and upper-class Little League players.

10. For a comprehensive discussion of *we* and *us*, and the need to consider these in terms of the functions of language, see chapter 7 of Mühlhäusler and Harré (1990).

11. When we consider pronouns in the social events in which they appear, it is often impossible to determine their semantic and functional correlates. Since the corpus from which our analysis draws includes not only audiotapes, but also extensive field notes that detail the social practices and interviews that elicit rationales from the coaches for their ways of talking with the players, we can usually, though by no means always, determine their referents.

12. This notion of coach as outsider to athletic teams is paralleled among writing coaches: "Coaches occupy the privileged position of strangers in a community of shared assumptions, both of the immediate group and of the entire profession. As strangers, they tend to see with the clarity of the outsider, with sense less dulled by habit and preconception and personal politics" (Fry 1988:2).

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