Bernstein elaborated and restricted codes; their social origins and some consequences

Bernstein argues that we are different in many different ways but what makes us truly stand out from the rest is the fact of how we use our communication e.g. the way we form a speech or the simply being by our behaviour and social structure; how we cohabite with other individuals of other backgrounds.

He goes on to say that the problem lies on sociological process which tend to control how we as child became comfortable in our surroundings, and by doing so we are allowing acceptance of our social environments. “What seems to be needed is the development of a theory of social learning which would indicate what in the environment is available for learning, the conditions of learning, the constraints on subsequent learning, and the major reinforcing process”. (BERNSTEIN 55-69)

Our behaviours are significant as its implicates the physical and social environment when its being transmitted to a child, the way we use our languages are so very transitive; Bernstein also suggests that there is two sources of languages base, meaning you have the language itself and you also have the speech which indistinctly means how your pronunciations is used and how the wording is correctly coming.

He also says that by the way your interpret your speech your are socially accepting what social environment you attain to, such as speech changes the form of social relationship, The way speech is also used can self-identify different orders of significance. “This is a sociological argument, because the speech systems is taken as a consequence of the form of the social structure”. (BERNSTEIN 55-69)

To summarise what Bernstein meant is that different social structures may use different sort of speeches e.g. chavs tend to use a more slang way of speaking whereas a politician knows how to hold a conversation to represent their higher ache statues. Each individuals chooses how to speak from a young age, how he interprets his behaviour amongst others is also learned early on in his childhood.
“As the child learns his speech, or in the terms used here, learns specific codes which regulate his verbal acts, he learns the requirements of his social structure. The social structure becomes the substratum of his experience essentially through the effects of the linguistic process”. (BERNSTEIN 55-69)

Social structure then becomes the developed stabilized environment accepted by us the individual as it social identifies us as an individual, Bernstein suggest that children who have access to different speech systems may adopt quite different intellectual and social procedures which may be only tenuously related to their psychological abilities. These speech systems and linguistic codes are not defined in terms of vocabulary, it can also make it difficult to predict the syntactic options; however with restricted code, the range of alternatives, syntactic alternatives is considerably reduced and so it is much more likely that prediction is possible.

When we speak of a restricted code (structural prediction) we normally tend to see these being implemented when ones at a closed communities such as prisons, armed services and also peer groups of children or adolescents, most of the time the code will develop wherever the form of social relation is based upon some extensive set of closely shared identifications self-consciously held by the members; an example of this could be group of hoodlums standing in the corner of a street, the observer tends to be eavesdropping and compare himself to the other half, at first you as an outsider might have difficult understanding their communication/speech and therefore makes your articulatory reduced. Bernstein says “the content of speech is likely, but not necessarily to be concrete, narrative and descriptive rather than analytical or abstract”. (BERNSTEIN 55-69) In other words an observer might notice that within this social class you can notice a difference in the individual’s speech such as it being fast, fluent, meanings might be discontinuous, and furthermore the quantity of speech might not be affected but low use of vocabulary will definitely be visual.

Restricted codes are available to members of society but it may be that some are more acceptable in virtue to their social class background. What’s normally
transmitted verbally refers to the other person in terms of his status or local group membership, and what is normally said reflects the form of social relation and its basis of shared assumptions. Social class ultimately defines who we are as a person but within behaviour found amongst groups who fall in particular class are often defined by certain attributes we acquired during the years.

Bibliography: