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ABSTRACT
        The term "managerial semantics" brings together
aspects of communication, behavior, semantics, and management. An
investigation of semantic principles as they are applied in industry
today shows that although Korzybski's emphasis on differences between
objects and individuals may have been useful when first formulated,
it is less useful today than stress on similarities. Also, problems
of "future shock" seen in industry mean that generalists, who can see
the whole of a problem, are vitally needed. Such a unified view is
hard to achieve in an educational system which too often fragments
rather than synthesizes the many aspects of an issue. For instance,
some conventional and widely-accepted behaviorists fail to recognize
the importance of language. But language is unique in facilitating
any communal relationship, from small groups to complex industries.
Therefore, managerial semantics, which brings together various
disciplines that have a bearing on management, is one way to provide
the synthesized training needed in industry today. (JK)

MANAGERIAL SEMANTICS: WHERE AGAIN ALL THE NERVOUS CENTRES ARE INVOLVED

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The new term Managerial Semantics portrays the changes we think need to be made to co-relate these areas: Communication, behavior, semantics, management.

We have conducted a two-fold, year-long investigation of semantic principles as they are applied in industry, and of behavioral concepts in the classroom as they relate to communication.

We have found that semantic principles need to be reevaluated as they apply to the industrial environment of the seventies.

We have found that some conventional and widely-accepted behaviorists fail to recognize, fail even to contemplate, the importance of language.

We assert the uniqueness of language in facilitating any communal relationship: among separate members, in groups, or in complex organizations.

We recommend Managerial Semantics as a method of new-thinking that incorporates and reevaluates contributed ideas from semantics, from behavior, and from conventional approaches to communication.

The term Managerial Semantics is meant to express a flexibility and an appreciation of the need to interrelate disciplines. It is meant to suggest a willingness to borrow, to meld, to achieve a needed new entity where, in the words of Korzybski: "Again all the nervous centres are involved."

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MANAGERIAL SEMANTICS:

WHERE AGAIN ALL NERVOUS CENTRES ARE INVOLVED

JOSEPH A. RICE, Ph.D.

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Forty years ago, when he wrote the words, "where again all nervous centres are involved," Alfred Korzybski was deeply involved in an explanation of the semantic reflex-skill "required in handling our linguistic apparatus. . . ." and the "danger of sudden twists and turns"[4,p.470].

As we have developed Managerial Semantics,all our nervous centres have been involved. All our reflex-skills have been required. The twists and turns have been more sudden and circuitous than Korzybski, who died just over twenty years ago, could have imagined.

Managerial Semantics.

It is a title, an eponym, chosen from dozens of terms that we scribbled on cards, posted on walls, and tried to live with -- first one, then another. We sought to express the fused interrelationships between management and semantics and behavior that our two-fold investigations were revealing existed. One of us was viewing actual communication problems currently being experienced by managers. The other was experiencing an in-class exposure to behavioral concepts by teaching an introductory course in that science area.

Why were we investigating?

We were motivated.

For the previous four years we had been teaching a course called

"Business Communication" in a college whose dean provided this thrust

for change in a speech he addressed to a regional communications convention.

He had told that convention:

> There are two areas of endeavor in which
> every communications faculty should seek
> to excel. One is the development of
> innovative teaching methods . . .
> The second critical area . . . is that of
> curricular development.

As the dean spoke, he outlined an approach to the change that must take

place if we were not to be buried by the newly-emerging and more

"glamorous" areas:

> You must orient the program to the
> problems individuals and groups have
> influencing each other. Here the
> emphasis is on semantics, concepts
> of individual behavior, problems of
> intergroup dynamics, and interaction
> theory. Such courses cover content,
> form, and theories of human behavior
> and motivation. This type of program
> is appropriate in schools of business
> in which the overall curriculum is
> designed to produce change agents who
> can contribute to problem identification
> and solution in the social systems of
> which business is a part. [1, p.38]

Ours was becoming such a school -- producing change agents. And we'd

have to change. We couldn't stand still any longer.

We then did something we had done many times before. Perhaps you'll

identify with it. We looked at our classrooms and didn't like what we

saw. But this time, with the directive ringing in our ears, we vowed

to become explorers for a year or so. Rice would go into industry,

where communication gaps yawned and the interactions between groups in

organizations and the problems they faced were real. Elliott would

move into new classrooms where behavioral and managerial concepts were

being espoused. Where, presumably the teachers were using new behavioral

techniques for handling students in a classroom. Those techniques,

we assumed, were being incorporated with measurable success in innovative

business organizations.

This article consists of:

1. What we found,

2. What we thought of what we found,

3. What we tried out in our classrooms as a result
   of our investigation,

4. What we propose to you in terms of our experiential
   discoveries.

RICE: AND THE UNPREDICTED TRAUMA OF THE 35-YEAR-OLD ENGINEERING SPECIALIST

One of my first discoveries, as I moved out into big industry --

oil, aerospace, banking, transportation -- was that a Korzybskian cliche

of forty years ago seemed to have turned bottom-upards. And nobody had

noticed.

When K said that cow_1 was not cow_2 he explained, "we have as yet,

in our Aristotelian system, chiefly concentrated our attention and

training on similarities, disregarding differences," and thereby K made

a valid observation about the world of the early thirties. There was

a critical need, then, to "make differences fundamental" [4, p.165] in

order that categorization and specialization could be of most value --

especially in the sciences and in engineering concepts.

But K never fully anticipated the specialism that I was encountering

in the early seventies. He never predicted the engineer whose educational

and environmental training had led him more and more deeply down a narrower

and narrower defile which then was bulldozed out of existence by changes

in national defense, in aerospace budgets, in priorities, in the economy.

He did not anticipate the trauma to a 35-year-old specialist of

being told that he must come out of the lab and manage people. Or that with cuts in the company budget the only job that would remain for him would be on the sales force. Or that he would have to reevaluate his space-trained skills to see how they would relate to the company's newly-defined area of specialization -- "municipal services" -- a primarily social rather than strictly business or engineering activity.

He did not anticipate that the specialist would just have to find another job, that the environment in which he had been hired (after choosing the juiciest of two dozen job offerings, circa 1958) had unpredictably and mysteriously changed.

He had not lived long enough to see the exotic threads of specialism that would run through the fabric of American industry, becoming tangled and stretching to the breaking point until fluidity of movement had become impossible.

So what had I found out about "semantic relevance" in my industrial experience?

"Cow_1 is not cow_2", a concentration on differences, was relevant -- in the thirties.

Its follow-through, "$specialization_1$ is not $specialization_2$", had developed such excellence in differences that great know-how was possible in World War II. This excellence of differences had provided the synthesis for all specialties to pool their achievements in working together to thwart a common enemy. Groups, men in organizations, interrelated to reach a common goal.

After the war, for a time, cooperative effort to reach equilibrium, peace, renewal, kept men in groups working together in spite of their specialization. To say that $cow_{12345678.8}$ was not $cow_{12345678.9}$ was

a-stretchin' ol' Bossy mighty thin.

Another Korzbyskian principle, dealing with time, which gently posed that $world_{1923}$ is not $world_{1943}$, also demanded reevaluation in terms of $world_{1972}$. It was useful, at one time, to say that $Boeing_{1947}$ is not $Boeing_{1952}$. But to say that $Boeing_{1967}$ is not $Boeing_{1972}$ has become practically useless. What one must urgently express is that $Boeing_{1971.9}$ is not $Boeing_{1972.3}$. And that puts people under a bit more pressure.

I had found two things, then:

1. It was a time to concentrate again on similarities. A time for bringing things together. A time, indeed, for generalists.

2. Alvin Toffler's assertions that "future shock" was upon us were evidenced by nervous tics, job realignments, layoffs, and trauma among the specialists I'd been dealing with.

What did this mean in terms of meaningful data to incorporate in the classroom?

Traditional semantic concepts would have to be reevaluated. Even the "etc." concept so useful to semanticists as a reminder that an expressed concept has more dimensions than those stated. . . The "etc." was suddenly leading bankers into oceanography where they had never been (nor had anybody else). In 1972 the "etc." began to suggest the successful oiltool firm that had begun to expand suddenly and take on new dimensions like a monster on a late-night Japanese science-fiction feature.

The principles of semantics were being tested in an environment of urgency, and if there were possibilities of metal fatigue it would begin to show. The wings might come off.

But no wings came off, as I wandered with my briefcase from the Manned Spacecraft Center to Standard Oil to Texas Commerce Bank to

Esso Production Research to Baker Oil Tools to the United Steelworkers
and round the circle again. No semantic wings came off. But they
vibrated over-much.

I began to find that the semanticists, clear and generous with
recipes and ladders of abstraction, workable definitions and admirable
insistence on eschewing the pedantic and the arcane . . .

I began to find that they seemed a bit lacking in behavioral
sophistication, as I absorbed from Professor Elliott, from Lionel
Tiger and Robin Fox, and others, concepts about behavioral management,
about cultural anthropology, about "biogrammars" and "biobehavioral
grammars" of human relationship [2, p.235].

To spin around at the lowest level of abstraction is mere gossip,
scolded the semanticists. Get on up the ladder. Make yourself clear.

But, Professor Elliott and the behaviorists kept insisting,
gossip is often a nurturing process. It does far more good than bad.
It is one of our key socializing processes. Not only that, said Tiger
and Fox, we need to bring it back into the learning process because
"what is primarily a social relationship has become a technical
transaction between organisms insufficiently comparable to make
exchange agreeable or even possible" [2, p.152].

"Teach my men to become salesmen," said the manager at the Manned
Spacecraft Center. "They're all a bunch of engineers; that's all they
have ever been. If they can't learn to close a sale, we'll have no
job for them. Help my men to learn to close a sale."

An A.I.D.A. for sales-closing? Is that what he wanted, I asked.

Conventional roles, conventional training, the tight economy,
increasing complexity of doing business, rapidity of change, Alvin

Toffler called this concatenation "nothing less than the second great
divide in human history" [6, p.14].

And as I wandered from puzzled banker to traumatized engineer to
frustrated manager, the words that rang in my ears were not those of
our dean. They were the doomsday sounds of Alvin Toffler.

Perhaps the recent research of cultural anthropologists and of
futurists could effectively bring semantics into relevance?

Perhaps, by documenting semantics with examples from industry,
I could help students to understand how costly it is to get stuck on
one rung of Hayakawa's abstraction ladder. The electrical engineer on
Aerospace Project 2.345, for example, may not be able to move up the
functioning ladder to get to the generalist point of view that graduate$_{1973}$
is going to need. He will need the general point of view to cope with
the rapidity and complexity of the changes he will encounter, especially
in such a tight job as market as May$_{1973.3}$, maybe?

My puzzlement increased. Meanwhile, what had Professor Elliott
discovered in her travels among the behaviorists? Perhaps they had
all the answers. Perhaps, by trying to update the semanticists, I
was missing the well-traveled road . . .

Management and engineering and sales and behavior -- especially
the rich mother-lode of behaviorist concepts recently uncovered by
MacGregor, Herzberg, Lickert, Mazlow, Argyris, Bennis, Leavitt,
Drucker and others. These must all relate.

But how?

I kept reminding myself that if semantics seemed to need help from
behavior and if behavior seemed needlessly arcane, (to me!) then
where was "business communication?" It was still hung at the A.I.D.A.,

third-stage-collection-letter, follow-the-syllabus level and, increasingly, looked to me like a 19th century whalebone corset.

ELLIOTT: PEOPLE ARE THE SAME IN CLASSROOMS AND IN INDUSTRY.

While Dr. Rice was discovering in industry, I experimented with motivation in a behavioral management science classroom.

I discovered that students are people and that some behavioral management theory can be borne out in practice. (at least the one I tried). And I made this discovery in a classroom of all places — right there amid lectern, chairs spaced in stationary rows, at a ho-hum class session time (1:00 p.m.) with my notes in my hand and my best "now-hear-this" voice tuned authoritatively. . .

The section on the course outline read "Motivation — TEST — April 13"

I thought: "O.K. girl — you've been given an opportunity to change within the organization you work for — now how about giving your students an opportunity to grow or change within their own organization — this class? Are you learning experientially any of the management-of-people practices being recommended by the behaviorists your students are supposed to be reading about and learning for the test?

And when I heard my own voice in the classroom that day it was saying "Let's get together on a little experiment that will relate to your own individual best interests and at the same time accomplish an objective I've assumed as a teacher. Shall we?"

"Like what?" was Thornton Tarvin's response on the 1st row, (I'm afraid my "Now — I've-told-you: now-you-know" manner hadn't fooled anyone). Steve Burch spoke up and said "Let her tell us what she has in mind." (I guess I'd been experimenting with class atmosphere and student-teacher role without realizing it.) Norma Burton smiled, and

I got a better question out.

"How would you like to add 5 points to your next test grade?"

As the "Great!", "Who sez?", "Are you kidding?", "Only 5?", died down, I posed the action. O.K., first we'd get into our groups (which we'd done before when COMMUNICATION on the course schedule gave us the excuse to try "the-free-flow-of-information-in-an-organization" theory). We'd next read a case about Bing and Hart, an employee and a supervisor who were having troubles. Then, finally, as we read the case, we'd relate as many "that's-a-clear-example-of-MacGregor's-Theory-X-in-action" as we could.

The group with the greatest number of theorists' names and examples of this theory which was related to the case would win!

And each person in the winning group would have 5 points added to his test grade on MOTIVATION. With just a minute for "What else will the test cover?" "Were we supposed to memorize names?" and one "How shall we do it?". I said "MOVE!" They did.

And as I walked around the room, (it was much easier with them in five's and six's together) I listened to the humm of that dynamic that gets organizations functioning. I was able to learn, right while I was teaching.

I learned that each group was working -- but every group (to a one, and there were 7) was using a different method.

Group #2 had decided (and without their "leader") that they'd each write down all the instances - theorists and their theories they could find and then pool their papers when the 30 minute time limit was up.

Group #6 had a tally going. They'd written 3 column headings across one page, which found Joanne Gee taking notes and Ackerman, Wycough,

and Whittaker taking turns and/or blurting out names.

Group #5 had an argument going over employee-management practice
issues in the case and had about 3 names on their list, written by the
be-speckled, soft-spoken man among 'em who was trying.

Which group do you think won?

Group #6 [Who'd really gotten going when I walked by and said
"Group 7 says they have 19"]. Confusing to the issue?

As I took those names down in the grade book, somebody had started
a vote for a replay the next class period....Some were voting and some
still talking to each other as the bell rang   oh heck, I thought, "I
didn't get to tell 'em how the experiment bore out Argyris theory" and
walked over to the abandoned lectern and picked up my neat notes on
Herzberg, Maslow, McClelland, Schweer, and others.

I looked down at the jumbled,uneven,penned and penciled set of
papers in my hand and saw that Group #6's list had 23 theorists on it,
and there in a column for easy reading -- (without being told) they'd
written the proof of their learning - their products for the day:
23 ways to show Bing and Hart how to resolve their differences.

Joy at discovery comes so quickly and unexpectedly at times and of
all things - to a school teacher

        in a classroom

        amid students - bless 'em·

        They really are fun people.

And people who react to other people

in groups

free to devise their own methods ,to reach their own and the organization's

        objectives - in an atmosphere which can breathe with growth -

"are the luckiest people in the world."

I discovered experientially the principle that people are motivated by their own best self-interest. It worked. I was able to see, in operation, Argyris's assertion -- that when the needs of the individual and the needs of the organization are co-joined - both man and the organization win [3, p.80]. And winning is fun.

BUT SOME BEHAVIORISTS HAVE MISEVALUATED THE COMMUNICATION FUNCTION.

The experience was fun, usable in the future, and gratifying. But, more relevant to our present discussion, was the dismay I experienced when I realized that a major behaviorist seemed to be doing the communication-semanticists an injustice. As I perceived it, his inference was that an executive skilled in communication-semantics would be no more effective in influencing human behavior than another executive devoid of such skills. Not only that, he was doing man a disservice by grading one of man's unique abilities as a minor function. He was so disregarding as relevant the affective nature of this important faculty, that he, and others [7, p. 106], would deprive an organization following that tenet of a viable method for accomplishment in that organization.

Herzberg, in his motivation theory, rated the communication function a non-motivating factor in group interaction. His term for it: Hygiene Factor [3, p.50]. The behaviorists thought of us as teachers of hygiene factors? We were no more than bars of soap to keep things clean?

Any behaviorist who cannot see that the ability to behave in relationship to each other depends upon the language function and its semantic applications in that behavior. . . .

Any behaviorist not aware that the potential for managing this behavior lies in man's dynamic use of this language-faculty to facilitate cooperative relationships. . . .

Such a behaviorist stands ready to miss the semantikos, if you will, the significance of the proper use of the language-faculty which is the dynamic for relatedness in groups in organizations.

Behaviorists do see the need for change in organizational structure. They are aware of need for change in our perception of people and their behavior. They have missed the significance of the tool for putting these changes into relationship and this structure into being: man's ability to engage in, and willingness for employing, open, free, but complex and challenging communication.

MANAGERIAL SEMANTICS: A WAY TO ACHIEVE SEMANTIKOS

We must get back to the understanding that the common path that we must walk takes us toward cooperative acts among men and within an organization.

We must recognize the relationships between the sales department, the technical department, the public relations staff and the administrative policy so that we can all see that they are one process with various identifications of separateness within the structure, with a co-functioning, an interrelationship that is absolutely necessary for their effective structure-functioning as an entity.

Until we recognize that these people who are learning -- students, businessmen, engineers, scientists -- are different people than they were, facing different challenges, we will not have gotten much closer to the problems that beset them and us.

What have we learned of behavior? And how can we meld it with

what we know of semantics? And with what we brought with us from business communications, or speech, or journalism?

Our understanding of behavior has grown from pat little formulas for managing people in industry. It has grown from five-step techniques for speechmaking to groups. It has grown from who, what, where, with a major why in two-column editorial writing to intelligent readers. It has grown from A.I.D.A. plans for letter writing and product selling — to confronting the mushrooming body of data about man's look into man's behavior which has occurred in the last fifty years.

The term Managerial Semantics is preferred to business communication or freshman speech or technical writing or editorial writing because the name change calls attention to a real change in concept.

The responsibility of dealing with people individually and in groups has changed. It has become important to us in all disciplines of education, as man is learning that he must deal with himself and others in groups, whatever might be the purpose of the group's formation and whatever might be the ends of their activity.

The dimension and the value change that we must add to communications can be expressed, behaviorally, as well as semantically, in these terms:

> Communications is not just in the words. It is
> in the meaning and the meaning is important
> because of the person receiving the meaning.
> And he will not be fooled by the words we use,
> or the formulas, or the behavior that is designed
> to trick him into following something that is
> not to his own best advantage. For us to find
> that cooperation among men is to each individual
> man's self-interest is the point that we are trying
> to make. We must achieve a synthesis.

Managerial Semantics is a name for the behavioral concept that:

1. Not only do signs and what they mean have
   meaning,

2. The behavior influenced by these signs and
   meanings must be managed.

3. It can be better managed through the purpose-
   ful and intelligent melding of the evidence
   of man's behavior characteristics and
   patterning that are streaming in from such
   divergent sources as astrophysics and
   anthropology.

From Webster's New World Dictionary, appropriately the Collegiate

Edition, comes this one of two definitions of semantics:

> The scientific study of the relations
> between signs, or symbols, and what they
> mean, or denote, and of behavior in its
> psychological or sociological aspects
> as it is influenced by signs. [8, p.1324)

THE COMMON CHALLENGE

Mankind's common challenge today is to manage the technology

and the human resources of a world in change. It is a world that's

hurtling with all its rich reserves and potential technology to a

holocaust of extinction unless mankind and its leaders can establish

patterns of positive relationship between the two and exert controls

which stem from values that will preserve the earth and man on it.

Might an appreciative, exploratory, integrated study of man's unique

ability to use language as a cooperative act (unbound by time and our

personal experiences) contribute to that pattern of man's dominion over

his technology?

We conclude that it might.

We conclude that man must accept this dominion and the related

responsibilities which stem from its reality. We conclude that that

dominion must be shared among his fellows on earth and cooperatively

maintained. That, we conclude, is the subject to which all disciplines must address themselves today - "where again all nervous centres are involved." That, we conclude, is where Managerial Semantics leads us.

We, the "experts" in communications, have remained in our polished ruts for too long or we've so burgeoned ahead publishing, forming national readerships, public images, thinking at such a high level of abstraction that we have lost touch with our fellows. Either position -- narrow view or ethereal -- will not provide a base for coping with the almost crisis proportions of everyday conditions.

By introducing the term Managerial Semantics, we are trying to point up the need for melding former separate disciplines into a unified awareness of shared characteristics. In order to allow the student to walk freely in and out of separate activities in the communication process as easily as he walks from the dining area to the fireplace area in his home.

The old Victorian house had a separate room for each function or activity in that house. Whatever you wanted to think or feel or do, there was a room for it and a separate etiquette to maintain in it. With Frank Lloyd Wright's assertion that the house fit its owners, displays personality, flexibility, ease of movement, and that the house outside spring from and become a complementary addition to the environment around it, a new architecture arrived.

Managerial Semantics is our term for our new architecture.

In proposing the term, we are not saying that all is wrong with what we are doing in the separate disciplines of business communication, speech, journalism, mass media. The formulas for writing an effective persuasive letter, the five-step process for making a good speech, the

use of who, what, where, why in editorial writing, the selecting of clear and concrete description which limits the scope of that description in technical writing -- there's nothing wrong with these things. We are simply extending, with the new name, an invitation for innovation.

We are offering a new way to think about communication courses and management courses. And in that new-thinking, or rather because of it, we will explore the impact of that thinking on the philosophy, the subject matter, the activities, the methodology, the teacher role and the class atmosphere that now exists in classrooms and in training sessions.

We propose then, a change of name to Managerial Semantics -- a name which would incorporate the changes we are recommending within the subject areas of this study and the philosophy change which these imply. We suggest that this incorporation be made in our present courses . . . courses that cover the entire spectrum of what we are . . " where again all the nervous centres are involved."

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