The Business Vocabulary of the Field of Human Services – Current Transformations

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Abstract

This article examines how business language has been incorporated in health service organizations. The purpose of this article is not to debate the virtues and drawbacks of NPM but rather, to emphasize the role of language and communication as critical components for public administration in its day-to-day contact with the business sector. It draws upon a self-administered survey to reach the conclusion that business language is being used in health and human service organizations. By the same token this study shows that instituting these actions have been consistent with government language and have not endangered traditional democratic values.

Keywords: Public Administration, Language, New Public Management, Human Services

1. Introduction

Public administration has a long rich history of administrative management reform that has borrowed business principles to enhance the effectiveness of government. From Scientific Management to New Public Management, the field is no stranger to reorganization or the adoption of various techniques to improve service delivery. A growing number of governmental and nonprofit organizations have adopted various types of business techniques in efforts to make their agencies more efficient and effective. These business techniques have been commonly grouped under the rubric of New Public Management (NPM) and/or Reinventing Government (Hood 1990; Osborne and Gaebler 1992; Jones and Thompson 1997; Kaboolian 1998).

The escalation of these reforms and the growth of the non-profit sector in delivering government services (Cohen, Eimicke, and Heikkila, 2008) have necessitated a common understanding or language that references both the government and business sectors. The increased contact and cooperation between the government, private, and the nonprofit sectors have often revealed a capacity and willingness to work together in an environment less tense and confrontational than has sometimes characterized the business government dichotomy. On the other hand, since governments and business are frequently viewed as incompatible because of traditional fundamental value structures, tensions to one degree or another still permeate communications and obscure commonality. The old and venerable language of public administration is insufficient to fully express the complexities of new government models such as, networks, collaborations, public private partnerships, and various other associations that have emerged and continue to develop to deliver services to the public. In some instances we remain "prisoners of a vocabulary in which superiors manage employees; supervisors have subordinates; jobs are defined to be specific, detailed, narrow, and task related" (Zuboff 1988, 394-395). The new management reality requires another vocabulary – one that transcends disciplines and brings together the public and private discourse.

The purpose of this article is not to debate the virtues and drawbacks of NPM but rather, to emphasize the role of language and communication as critical components for public administration in its day-to-day contact with the business sector. Although these arguments are not new, it is important at times to revisit theories and practices to evaluate their impact on the day to day operations of public administration. It is widely acknowledged that NPM-type business techniques have influenced public administration and specifically the field of human services. Carol Graham (1998) says: "In many countries the debate is no longer whether this approach is acceptable but, what is the best way to integrate new incentives that improves the performance of public institutions" (278). In other words, today one can safely say that NPM has become the normative model signaling a profound shift in how we think about the role of public administrators, the nature of the profession, and how and why we do what we do (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2007). Put differently, public administration will ever be hard pressed to escape public scrutiny and make the case for bureaucracy (Goodsell, 1994) without fundamentally transforming how we do and think about service delivery.

The research presented here addresses how the field of human services has incorporated

business language into government communication. The paper reconfirms and echoes findings of other scholars such as Seidman and Gilmour (1986) who have concluded that the language of business has always influenced the practice of public administration. The article first reviews storytelling and a postmodernist view of language. Next, it is shown that the recent managerial reforms in government and the nonprofit sectors have influenced the language that is being used in these areas. At this point, a content analysis of texts in the field of human services is reviewed to show the increased use of business language in the day-to-day operations of service delivery. The final section contributes qualitative information from a recent survey of senior level managers in the field of human services that confirms the increase use of business language in government. The article concludes with an argument that public administration is becoming bilingual in that it is fluent in the language of government or democratic values while at the same time it is becoming conversant in the language of business.

2. Public Administration and Language

Although language has been studied from various dimensions (Chomsky, 1957; Lacan, 1968; Derrida, 1973; Tomasello, 2008) it is beyond the scope of this paper to address structural linguistics, psychoanalysis, deconstruction, and the analytical interpretation of words and language. It is, however, necessary to understand the significance and cultural implications of language. For instance, the study of language in organizations has received minimal analysis in management studies (Mitroff, 1979; Smircich, 1983; and Donnellon, 1986). In public administration the attempt to understand what we are doing by analyzing what we are saying has received some consideration. Some scholars, of course, have recognized the importance of written words as well as stories. Yiannis Gabriel (2000) reminded us that "storytelling is an art of weaving, of constructing the product of intimate knowledge" (1). Ralph Hummel (1991) argued that the way managers interpret their world – story telling – is as valid as science. In a later work, Hummel (1994) spoke of a language of bureaucracy distinct and separate form the common language of the ordinary citizen. He suggested that "bureaucrats seem to think differently from the thinking necessary to conduct everyday life" (156). His work clearly demonstrates that a language of public administration, not only exists, but is distinct and separate from that of citizens and for that matter of business. This specialized language, as Beryl Radin (2000) suggests, is much more complex: "we are a field with multiple languages, values and forms and with multiple individuals and groups as clients" (51).

On a more theoretical level, David John Farmer (1995) argued that public administration theory itself is a language. He described how our world perspective is bound by the lens of our conceptual language. In essence, he said: "The way in which public administration information is arranged is the language of public administration. Part of this arrangement is expressed in what we consider to be our ordinary language; for example, our understandings are shaped and constrained by the existence, denotations, and connotations of words such as public servant, bureaucracy, and private enterprise" (2). His work informs our understanding of a language of public administration by giving meanings not only to the words themselves but also to the concepts and theories behind the words. Jay D. White (1999) in his book *Taking Language Seriously: The Narrative Foundations of Public Administration Research*

argues that:

Language forms the basis for all of our knowledge of the world. We cannot have knowledge without a language to communicate it to ourselves and to others. More fundamentally, we as individuals and social beings are constituted by language and therefore by culture as much as we are by our biological existence. Language, not nature, defines us, shapes us, and makes us individuals and social beings in the world. Language provides us with knowledge of ourselves in relation to objects, other persons, and social constructions like organizations or political parties. Any statement we make, whether from common sense or from systematic inquiry, presupposes the use of a language" (7).

White proposes that various types of research for instance, explanatory, interpretive, and critical are different "language games" used to develop a body of knowledge. These languages are incommensurable unless the users are willing to learn the research language of the other. His basic argument is that "all research is fundamentally a matter of storytelling or narration. Any type of knowledge, even scientific knowledge, that we might have about public administration is basically a story grounded in language and discourse expressed in narrative form through conversations" (6).

Somewhere between White's narrative foundations, Farmer's understanding of a language of public administration, and Hummel's notion of a bureaucratic language, is found the practical language of public administration. Both practitioners and academics would understand this practical language as the actual language in common use in the field. This language encompasses several perspectives and is flexible enough to take on meaning. Communication through language, its interpretation and meaning are significant aspects of the operations of government agencies. Indeed, as argued by Jun (1994) "dialogue and use of language are the basic social means of practical action" (202). Therefore, inherent in language is culture and each language houses and promotes the culture of its organization. The opposite could also be argued and one could state that each culture has a language and each culture houses and promotes the language of its organization. Consequently, White & Adams (1995) suggest "language is the vehicle for culture. Culture – not nature – and, ultimately, language becomes the basis for the entire world's knowledge, social and natural. In this view culture becomes the basis for determining the truth, goodness, or beauty of the stories that give meaning to our lives" (8). The question though of which came first (language or culture), their relationship and influences upon one another, is beyond the scope of the present discussion.

The postmodernist view of language gives additional insights to how verbal communication within public administration is carried out. William Bergquist (1993) noted that "according to the postmodernist voices of the literary critics who do deconstruction, language gains primacy in the understanding of any text (be it literature, history, or philosophy). The deconstructionist (led by Derrida) believe that the language used in any text is itself the reality, rather than being the means by which some other reality (for example, the reality of history or the reality of a literary figure) is described" (23). He continues: "language itself becomes a shared experience. Conversation itself becomes the reality. Who we are – our sense of self – may have always been conveyed by the stories that we tell about ourselves" (24).

Although postmodernism does provide additional meanings to language in the field of public administration, there is reason for caution. White and Adams (1995) suggest that the "dark side of the postmodern condition is the conflict that ensues when narratives collide and the confusion that results when narratives fall apart" (4). Although a similar language is spoken, conflicting viewpoints stand in the way of shared knowledge and agreement. They go on to say: "Carried to the extreme, incommensurability means the creation of a narrative to separate one group from another in what might otherwise be a common culture" (4). Finally, because language and power are inextricably linked (Lyotard 1984), it is essential that the primary language used in public administration embrace the ability to evolve over time. Therefore the primary language will enable public administration to learn other languages that will provide the means to better serve the people. This flexibility is essential as the field moves in the direction of reform in virtually every aspect of its operations.

3. The Language of Reform

In recent years, the language of public administration has been influenced significantly by the language of management reform. At the turn of the century Scientific Management (Taylor, 1911) and the other proverbs of administration (Simon, 1947) left their mark and the reforms of today have already shown the potential for an even greater impact. Christopher Pollitt and Geert Bouckaert (2000) argue that public management reform "consists of deliberate changes to the structures and processes of public sector organizations with the objective of getting them (in some sense) to run better" (8). They go on to say that "the very language of change – reform, transformation, re-engineering, modernization – is suffused with assumptions about the speed, nature, and value of what is being described or represented" (18). They argue:

One difference between the current wave of public management reform and earlier

phases is that this one has taken on an explicitly international dimension. An international vocabulary (an English one) has developed . . .Terms such as privatization, gentrification, contractualization, continuous quality improvement, efficiency gains, activity costing, and performance management are part of this international lexicon. Their repeated use seems to confirm that everyone is involved in basically the same enterprise, a global shift in the direction of modern management" (189).

Although they go on to contend that these words or new vocabulary are not necessarily uniform in the various countries in which they are used, their statement confirms an active use of business vocabulary in a public management/public administration setting.

The language of reform was encouraged by the external as well as internal management forces of the 1980s and 1990s. These forces began to produce changes in how government agencies conducted their management operations. Barbara Kellerman (1999) believes that the transformations were "political, economic, technical, corporate, organizational, and cultural" (167). Norman Flynn (2000) argues that the challenges to the government sector came "less from voters than from business, which blamed 'red tape' for inefficiency and frustration" (33). Flynn goes on to suggest that the changes governments have made range from privatization, deregulation, and the use of the market model to improvements in accountability, efficiency and customer service.

The motivation for adopting business principles in the government sector has been the desire to improve the delivery of services. The field saw a necessity of transforming its styles of management to keep-up with the rising tide of management nationally and internationally. The differences between government and business management have been vanishing significantly. Kellerman (1999) says that:

"By the late twentieth century, the notion that public and private sector leaders were different species on different planets was being exposed as a fiction. Although the studies of leadership in government and business generally remain separate exercises, the theory and practice of leadership have converged in ways unimaginable even a decade or two ago. Not only is the ideology of leadership in business nearly indistinguishable now from the ideology of leadership in government, leaders on both sides of the divide are having to perform in ways that are remarkably similar. These similarities are hardly surprising. On the cusp of the new millennium, the two domains intersect at nearly every turn, and both are shaped by the larger national and international contexts that themselves govern how and when leadership is exercised" (135).

The adoption of business techniques – and consequently a degree of the culture of business has allowed the language of business to flourish in government. The process has been more subtle than noticeable; however, looking at documents through time indicates the rhetorical shift is indeed recognizable, and in some cases, the change is unrecognizable. Nevertheless, change in bureaucracies has a history of being more restrained than obvious. Lawrence Lynn (1997) saw the developments of this absorption and suggested that "there might only be a new 'meta-language' used by management consultants and national and supra national agencies" (29). However, the field of public administration is increasingly recognizing the influence of business language in its daily operations and is increasingly adopting new words. This influence though, is decidedly more complicated than a mere "meta-language." Words such as performance measurement, performance indicators, strategic planning, contracting out or out scouring, privatization, public private partnerships, The Baldridge criteria and award, and Six Sigma, just to mention a few, clearly indicate a change in government language.

This absorption of words and their associated cultural meaning is significant if we are to value how the field of public administration really functions. For instance, in the government sector today, it is not uncommon to speak of the rights of individuals on the one hand, and on the other debate about what performance measures are the best indicators to gage service outcomes. Aspects of both are common and are becoming the *lingua franca* as government agencies seek to be more efficient and effective in their service delivery. The use of both a government language and a business language to engage in efforts to promote efficiency and effectiveness captures the new reality of government service in its day-to-day operations.

4. The Changing Language of the Field of Human Services

The language of business as manifested by NPM has become pervasive in the field of human services. Clark, Gewirtz, and Mclaughlin (2000) proposed that one "significant dimension of the reconstruction of the welfare state has been the process of managerialization: the shift

towards managerial forms of organizational coordination" (6). Implicit in their argument is the fact that the language of business is used and has facilitated the "reconstruction" in welfare reform, just to mention one area. It is necessary that we remember as Robert J. Russo (1980) pointed out "effective change comes neither in large chunks nor as a result of showdowns and other dramatic occurrences. Rather, it is an almost daily process of small adjustments, each of which makes succeeding adjustments more or less likely to occur. Organizational change is a continuous process rather than a sporadic event" (135). In this particular case, the changes in management or the adoption of a business language in the field of human services has been incremental. To illustrate this point, Major Adrian D. van Brenda (2000) argued that "strategic planning has been imported into social work from the business sector. The Business Plan is a key component of strategic planning and is typically used by management to steer an organization through times of environmental turbulence. The Business Plan is relevant not only for the management structure of an agency, but also for the individual workers within that agency" (1). This case typifies the government adoption of a business technique to further enhance service delivery. In doing so the language inherent in the business technique becomes absorbed into the language of government. Strategic Planning is no longer just for business but also for government agencies and non-profit organizations. Another example is presented by Ng, Kent, and Egbert (2000) who employ a systems model – the 'Total Cycle' approach – to re-engineering the children's services program in a county social service department. They explain: "Total Cycle Time is a measure of the amount of time between the idea for a product and its final delivery to a customer. The objective is to reduce the amount of time by analyzing the entire production system by eliminating activities which do not add value" (35). Here too the vocabulary of business, as well as procedures and operations, have influenced government service delivery by incorporating a business technique and its associated language. Finally, in terms of advances in the field of human resource management, Hays and Kearney (2001) argue that "change appears to be occurring so quickly that it almost has become necessary to learn a new language as terms and acronyms are coined to reflect developments in the field" (586).

These examples illustrate the use of business principles within the field of social services. The new terms and concepts that come with this business language are being learned by the field continuously. For instance, according to the Oxford English Dictionary the first use of the word privatization was not until 1959 and the word was not in common circulation until the early 1980s. Additional words such as benchmarking, customer service, competition, contracting-out, team building, etc. are increasingly more common in government vocabularies. A cursory review of the texts in the field of human services shows that originally no mention of business terms or concepts were evident. For instance, in Herbert Hewitt Stroup's 1948 book: *Social Work An Introduction to the Field*, the primary divisions were casework, group work, and community organizations. The text described social work and its attributes but there is no hint or mention of modern business principles in the application or practice of the field. Stroup does mention that "basic to these processes [of social work] are the assisting elements of social action, social research, and administration. Social research and administration, however, may be conceived not as special and fundamental processes of social work, but as factors which aid in the fulfillment of the three

major divisions or social casework, social group work, and community organizations" (22). In other words, although administration obviously was part of the field early on, it was not considered essential or emphasized as a central theme of social work.

By the 1970s, it was apparent that the study and practice of administration was necessary to carry out the health and human service needs of the nation. Schulberg (1973) suggested that the field was "under increasing pressure for efficient and effective administration" (33). The section of Schulberg's book dedicated to administration covers the topics of: generating organizational change, human relations and communication, problem analysis, organizational decision and action, and democratic management and other administrative functions. Although additional emphasis was now placed on administration, its outcome affected office operations more than the efficient and effective delivery of social services in the field. Schulberg (1977) says that: "Human services are directed at enhancing the human condition, at providing life-facilitating and life-improving services to individuals needing aid. The human service emphasis is beyond economics; its motivations are not market or profit based. Rather, the object is to make such services available to those for whom they might be beneficial as a matter of right, without regard to economics" (149). Quotes such as these indicate that the field was moving towards "modern management" and that the movement was incremental and nowhere near comprehensive.

Today, books in the field of human services are including within their chapter's sections on management outcomes, for profit services, contracting out, and user type fees. All these categories are typical of the language of NPM and the market model. The pages of these texts are replete with words and vocabularies that demonstrate the adoption and inclusion of business language in the everyday use of the social service administrator. For instance, Judith Healy (1998) dedicates a whole chapter in her book to the "Market" in which she explains the market model, privatizing human services, quasi markets, service contracting, for profit services, and user fees. She says "The market model offers a salutary challenge to old welfare state assumptions that the public sector is the most appropriate provider of social services. There are no technical reasons why social services cannot be delivered by 'for profit' providers" (49). Nevertheless, she goes on to mention that "government clearly must retain its role as regulator given the vulnerable clientele of most social services" (50), a point prominently made by Larry D. Terry (1999).

Finally, John Clarke, Sharon Gewirtz, and Eugene McLaughlin (2000) edited a book in which managerial themes akin to those mentioned previously contain chapters filled with business language. Some of the readings make it clear the authors expect the audience in the field of human services to be familiar with or at a minimum, be willing to learn the business language. Chapters such as Beyond the New Public Management; Modernizing Public Services; Entrepreneurial Governance and Public Management: The Anti-Bureaucrats and Managerialsim; and Public Services: Some International trends. The language within these chapters is typical of that found in NPM and the administrator in the field of human services today is expected to speak managerialism. As the years go on and technology continues to creep into the government sector, the language of government will continue to adopt words from various disciplines that help its mission to deliver goods and services.

5. The Business Vocabulary of the Field of Human Services – Survey Responses

Although at first a business vocabulary undoubtedly appears foreign to many in government circles, understanding and using these new words have quickly become second nature to those in the social services. In some cases the new words have become common and rote or even institutionalized. Contextual meaning, however, is still important in the way public servants think and act in many government agencies. The 2002 study presented here looked at the effects of NPM on democratic values in social service agencies. This study demonstrated that procedural due process, a manifestation of democratic values, was positively correlated with NPM. A self-administered mailed questionnaire was sent to 765 senior level managers in the field of human services. The American Public Human Services Association's *2000/2001 Public Human Services Directory* was used as the sampling frame. A systematic random sample was developed and an overall response rate of 58% was received. The number of written responses was exceptional. Two open-ended questions were included in the survey to provide the opportunity for respondents to share comments from their own experience. Of the 788 surveys received, 535 or 68% included comments. A number of these comments are included here for consideration.

An analysis of the comments concluded that the field of human services was adopting business techniques, and thereby absorbing a business vocabulary. At the same time, it is significant to note that the field of human services was maintaining democratic values. It was concluded that an adherence to the laws within a Constitutional framework allowed this particular field to stay focused to its foundational principles of democratic values. Although no question specifically addressed the use of a business language, many open ended responses showed a highly developed use of business language that was well established. It was apparent that these new concepts and practices had been instituted in the field by the way respondents answered various questions.

The following quotes from the survey responses are arranged in three categories. These categories help add perspective to the current transformations in the health and human services agencies that are implementing business principles and absorbing the associated language. The first category is composed of comments that actually list or describe a business technique that is being used in the agency. These could be quality principles such as TQM or CQI or the Baldrige criteria. The next group categorizes remarks which reference NPM or reinventing government. It is evident that respondents are familiar with the current business language. The final selection of quotes highlights the importance of performance measures and references customers versus patients or clients as the new focal point of service. All these comments are presented as confirmation that senior level managers are familiar with the language of business and see the relevance of the new working language within their organizations.

6. Category 1: Quality Principles or Baldrige Criteria

Our department has implemented the principles of quality (TQM, CQI, Demming, Juran, etc.) over the past 3 years. It has made us focus more on who we are serving (customers), what their requirements are (customer requirements), and what results we are producing

(performance). It has allowed us to more clearly focus on the two main goals of our organization (safety, positive client outcomes) and has also resulted in increased employee satisfaction.

In my opinion, our implementation of quality principles has not had any negative effects on the justice/fairness, equity, and/or due process. In fact, these dimensions of our work have improved due to our focus on implementing quality principles. Through identifying respect and caring as a major customer requirement, we have begun for the first time to develop performance measure around issues related to treating our customers with respect and caring.

Many business practices can be modified to be very useful in government. The problem, in my opinion, is that new initiatives (reinventing, reengineering, TQM, etc.) are never funded. Internal staff without the expertise is expected to make changes.

We actively participate in quality assessments and applications based on the Baldrige criteria. Having our department values defined, we are able to keep them in focus during all our changes and improvements.

For the past several years, we have been practicing Continuous Quality Improvement principles. This has followed significant training opportunities for all staff. In addition to that, we are currently moving into the Baldridge program with our self-assessment to occur later this year. This is part of the Iowa Government Excellence Program.

My agency has embarked on a Baldrige – based quality improvement process (2 to 3 years ago). It has markedly improved our focus on performance measurement and we have actually completed one complete cycle of quarterly performance reviews across the entire department. Our focus has been on outcome results measures. Our quality improvement journey is causing more staff to look more closely at all aspect of our complex human service operations. We have rewritten our vision and mission statements within the past three years and have mission statements for all units and programs.

Through strategic planning, employing the concepts of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI), Managing for Results (MFR), and the Baldrige criteria for Organizational excellence, State government agencies apply a business process approach to reengineering the delivery of services within the context of assuring customer satisfaction

(i.e., value added). We seek to preserve and expand the programs, benefits, and services in a customer driven environment that insures justice, fairness, equity, and due process. The organization routinely seeks feedback via town meetings and public forums.

It was obvious in this first category that employees were working in teams and that business principles such as Total Quality Management were being employed. It was also evident that customer needs were factored in when making policy decisions. Agencies also looked at continuously improving the way they do "business." They looked into is performance-based standards for institutions, sought a win-win solution by obtaining information and facts about the issues and obtained principles of business processes regarding engineering for understanding a framework for outcomes. It is interesting to note that amidst all this striving to achieve standards and enhance services, developing partnerships, expediting benefit

delivery, etc. that the core values of justice, equity, were still important in all their programs.

7. Category 2: NPM or Reinventing Government

Our focus on reinventing government is designed to ensure customer service, increased customer education/information about services available, increased access to services via alternative means for traditional face to face contact.

We operate as a public (government) for Profit Corporation. To that end, we are charged with integrating private and public management practices to maximize profit and public responsibility. We are way ahead of the curve on "reinventing government."

Reinventing government refers to an entrepreneurial spirit in the public sector and implies that the public sector should be mission-driven, customer responsive, and results oriented. These qualities have been emphasized since 1994 in the performance based budgeting required by the state legislative Budget Board and Governor's Office of Budget and Planning. The state government mandates biennial strategic plans for programs and information technology areas and requires benchmarking.

Our state agency has been moving towards the "management for results" which has every employee's performance measured against the agency mission. We are in a human services area, so this mission is directed towards better public service to our clients. Included in this transition would be an improvement in all-public contracts such as fairness, equity, and due process.

From the language used above it is unmistakable that reinvention activities have emphasized service delivery to the customer or client and achieving measurable outcomes centered around improvement on client's lives. A number of agencies subscribe to many elements of reinventing such as customer focus, continuous improvement, and performance standards. In some agencies, process items like reinventing government are viewed as the best way to provide the most efficient services possible.

8. Category 3: Performance Measures and Customers

The changes have more effect on the other aspects of the business environment. A customer focused approach is one of the agency's guiding principles. My department (9000 employees) is under a great deal of pressure to reduce costs and increase productivity. A major project is underway to privatize the core programs providing cash assistance and food stamps. A prime example is the finger-imaging project, which require fingerprints of all applications.

All state agencies are required to develop performance measures for customer service and track progress in improving customer service through surveys. Both federal and state laws require reporting on performance measures. Federal incentives are based on federal performance measures. State appropriations are contingent on state performance measures.

We have stressed outcome measures and have a certification process for agency wide measures. While I do not want to claim or imply more than we have achieved, I suspect we are one of the more progressive departments in our state. I am not aware of another agency in our state with actual department-wide quarterly performance reviews. We actually have an example of moving an outcome measure 50% in a positive direction within the 1st year of a

measurement. I would not have expected such a result so quickly.

Our performance measurement system is not fiscally oriented. We are not, as yet, looking effectively at unit costs to any great extent.

Our Commission on aging has moved toward true performance based management in recent years. State and federal dollars are distributed to providers pursuant to performance based agreements, with legally enforceable contract. Provisions of services are regularly assessed including customer satisfaction, compliance with projected units of service, and a close look at program outcome measures. As a consequence, accountability has been enhanced significantly.

A newly enacted requirement by the legislature means that we will be involved in performance based budgeting. Every department must develop a strategic plan and we have to align that plan with our budget request. We are developing outcome measures for many of our programs, which we never considered in the past. These are positive changes. A negative change is the reduction in money for many programs, which is requiring decisions on reducing or capping services. That is in process.

The department's strategic plan articulates the organization's mind-set as follows: Vision, we envision a state where people independently support themselves and their families, and where individuals are safe from abuse and neglect. Mission, we will aggressively pursue opportunities to assist people in economic need, increase prevention efforts, and protect vulnerable children and adults.

Privatizing has meant cases do not get neglected and has eliminated or reduced opportunities for cronyism or corruption. Building performance measures into contracts is key to improving service, fairness, and due process, etc.

There were a number of comments in this last section perhaps because it appears intuitive to improve and enhance the customer service approach relative to services being offered. For instance, a number of agencies modified their mission statement to reflect a more "outcome" based focus. Other improvements such as increased emphasis on performance measures, strategic planning, developing 5-year master plans, were all geared towards improving agency performance and becoming more responsive to the public. It was clear that some agencies were learning to benchmark, train and empower staff, and manage using data. Others were more versed in this new language and were able to establish comprehensive services for families, identifying needs for customers, while at the same time maintaining integrity, fairness, respect and ensuring due process for all individuals.

Although it would be nice to have a concise way to define government language, the fact may be that the language of government is in constant flux. The examples above demonstrate that the language of government is constantly accepting new vocabulary from the field of business. On the other hand, these examples also show that the field of public administration is using both languages simultaneously and not jeopardizing the traditional democratic values so closely associated with the public service. The language of government is not being replaced; it is being augmented by new vocabulary words that are being added to its lexicon. Nevertheless, it essential that democratic values as defined by Rohr, 1986; Selznick, 1992;

Rawls 1971 which include justice, fairness, representation or participation, social equity, and constitutionalism, among others are not jeopardized by the addition of these new words. One could say that the language of government is becoming bilingual.

9. Can Public Administration Be Bilingual?

As the language of government changes we must ensure that public servants as well as the business sector become familiar with the language that is spoken. The lengthy examples above show that the field of human services is well versed in the language of business. They attest to the ability of administrators to use both the language of government and the language of business to carry out their mission to serve the public. In essence, they are bilingual: practicing and "alternatively using two languages" (Weinreich 1953, 5). Habermas (1988) noted that although we have been trained in one language, we are not confined to it nor prevented from grasping the best from other languages. He said: "we are never locked within a single grammar. Rather the first grammar that we learn to master already puts us in a position to step out of it and to interpret what is foreign to make comprehensible what is incomprehensible, to assimilate in our own words what at first escapes them" (143).

Bilingualism is often defined or categorized by degrees. Scales of bilngualism range from "native like control of two languages" (Bloomfield 1933, 56) at the more sophisticated extreme, to "producing complete and meaningful utterances in the other language" (Haugen 1953, 7) at the more inexperienced level. Hugo Baetens Beardsmore (1986) says:

Bilingualism, must be able to account for the presence of at least two languages within one and the same speaker, remembering that ability in these two languages may or may not be equal, and that the way the two or more languages are used plays a highly significant role (3).

A dictionary definition of bilingualism is: the ability to speak two languages with equal skill or habitual use of two languages. Following this definition, the language of public administration has been bilingual since it first used scientific management principles and continues to be bilingual as it adopts NPM business techniques. In speaking both languages of government and business the public is better off because services will be delivered more efficiently and effectively. I do not argue that one language will solely be used or dominate the conversation to guide decision-makers in particular situations. I suggest that the public administrator will be educated enough to know when and where to use the appropriate language to serve the public interest. Although the language of business has often been downplayed in the public sector, the emergence and staying power of NPM cannot be denied. It has had the effect of bringing to light, not only new business principles for government use, but identifying business principles that have been traditionally used in government for decades.

Another interesting concept in bilingualism is referred to as code-switching. It is the alternative use of languages in the same sentence, phrase or conversation. "Sometimes switching occurs between the turns of different speakers in the conversation, sometimes between utterances within a single turn, and sometimes even within a single utterance" (Milroy and Muysken 1995, 7). In terms of its application to the government sector, code-switching describes actual practice in government quite well. Some government

agencies use only a minimal amount of business techniques, and by consequence its associated language and then switch back to a previous government practice. Others use a number of business techniques and switch back and forth alternating business principles with traditional government practice for the delivery of services.

Finally, the third variation has integrated both government and business techniques within a single service delivery unit providing competent services. As Colin Baker (1952) said: "In between those that are fluent in two languages and those who are learning a second language there are many variations. Most people are more competent in one language than in another. Bilinguals often find it easier to use one of their languages in one set of circumstances, another language in a different set of circumstances. Languages often have different uses in different places, with different people" (2). According to the definitions provided, is the language of public administration bilingual? Certainly. However, probably not on the side of the scale of "native like control," but certainly far more advanced than just uttering simple meanings. Will it continue to develop its proficiency in both its traditional primary language of democratic values and its new adopted language of managerialism? Probably. Farmer (1995) notes that "The language in which we think can be assumed to shape the world that we see, and our best hope for escaping (if we can) may be through a multiple use of dialects that are sufficiently different. Public administration thinking might then have a chance of becoming what we have always wanted it to be" (248). In terms of public administration's use of business language the situation is quite the same.

10. Conclusion

It is not being proposed that the language of business displace the primary language of public administration or democratic values. On the contrary, the primary language of public administration will be fortified by the adoption of certain principles and phrases of business language. This will enhance the viability of public administration in its mission to deliver services in an efficient and effective manner. Agencies will have the opportunity to use language for the betterment of the agency and ultimately for the improvement of services to citizens.

The integration of business language and hence culture into the field of human services has helped to assure efficiency and effectiveness.   By the same token this study has shown that instituting these actions have been consistent with government language and have not endangered traditional democratic values. New Public Service, Denhardt and Denhardt (2007) has not vanished and the government sector still holds these values in high esteem.

In November of 2012 the city Irving, Texas was a recipient of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award—the nation's highest Presidential honor for performance excellence. Irving is the largest city to ever receive the Baldrige Award, and is only the second municipal recipient in the program's 25-year history. The award promotes excellence in organizational performance and Irving was recognized in areas such as strategic planning, process efficiency, performance measurement, Lean Six Sigma process improvement, increased workforce productivity, and cross functional teams. It is apparent from the award description and the areas of acknowledgment, that the city of Irving has adopted a business vocabulary that has

been implemented to better serve its residents. Here is a perfect example where both the language of business and the language of government have come together to establish a high performing organization. It is recommended that further study in this area be conducted to broaden our understanding of how both languages can benefit the public by the efficient and effective delivery of services. The city of Irving has and many other public agencies can achieve a level of service that is worthy of the public sector.

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