

LANGUAGE SOCIALIZATION

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INTRODUCTION

The notion of language socialization developed in this article concerns two major areas of socialization: *socialization through the use of language* and *socialization to use language*. This notion is linked to a flourishing field of research devoted to understanding the interdependence of language and sociocultural structures and processes. The interest is not limited to the role of language in integrating children into society, but is open to investigating language socialization throughout the human lifespan across a range of social experiences and contexts. Further, those involved in understanding the process of language socialization are not limited to spoken modes of a language. Within this area of inquiry we have studies of the mutual effects of literate language use (including computer literacy) and society.

The notion of language socialization draws on sociological, anthropological, and psychological approaches to the study of social and linguistic competence within a social group. Within British social science there is a strong tradition of examining the functions of language in family interactions across social groups and the implications of different norms of usage for children's educational success and eventual social mobility (15, 48, 100, 231). Bernstein and his associates (16, 48), for example, emphasize that styles of communication and the forms that distinguish them are intimately linked to local concepts of social identity and social roles. In this sense, Bernstein claims that children are acquiring social knowledge as they acquire knowl-

¹The order of the authors' names was determined by a flip of a coin.

edge of language structure and use. The bodies of social knowledge and patterns of language use acquired in the homes of some groups of children are not always those valued in formal schooling activities. These differences can result in differential participation and achievement in formal school settings. Cook-Gumperz (48, 49) has presented a general formulation of differences between home and school language socialization in which the formal language socialization of the school requires children to use language more explicitly and not to assume shared meanings to the extent possible in familial settings.

Several researchers have utilized the notion of communicative competence as developed by Hymes (115, 116) in formulating research programs on children's communicative development (197, 200; for discussion see 20, 68, 175, 182). These projects propose a series of research questions for studying the acquisition of communicative competence across speech communities. Fischer (75) draws on aspects of Hymes's notion in his study of "linguistic socialization" in Japanese and American family communication. Linguistic socialization in Fischer's framework concerns "the learning of the use of language in such a way as to maintain and appropriately and progressively change one's position as member of society" (75, pp. 107-8). Fischer relates patterns of caregiver-child communication to family structures and societal values. Gleason & Weintraub (87), in their discussion of input language and the acquisition of communicative competence, consider input in terms of its role in instructing children in specific cultural and social information, including appropriate uses of language (such as politeness routines and formulaic expressions). They refer to this use of language as the "language of socialization" (87, p. 205). The socializing function of input language is primarily linked to the message content of utterances addressed to children. Further, this function of parental language is depicted as emerging subsequent to the "language-teaching" function of input; the language of socialization begins around the age of four and continues through adolescence.

The perspective proposed by Ochs & Schieffelin (161), however, is that language socialization begins at the moment of social contact in the life of a human being. From the extensive literature in sociolinguistics and the ethnography of communication we know that vocal and verbal activities are generally socially organized and embedded in cultural systems of meaning (11, 97). Those vocal and verbal activities involving infants and young children are no exception (161, 190). From this perspective the verbal interactions between infants and mothers observed by developmental psychologists can be interpreted as cultural phenomena, embedded in systems of ideas, knowledge, and the social order of the particular group into which the infant is being socialized. Cross-cultural research on infancy has demonstrated the impact of culture on early human experiences (73, 129). The contribution of

linguistic anthropology to developmental psychology is to make explicit the fact that Anglo white middle-class verbal interactions with infants and young children are also culturally organized and to outline the nature of that cultural organization.

THE PROCESS OF SOCIALIZATION

While it is beyond the scope of this article to review theories of socialization (cf 127, 232), some discussion of such theories that have given theoretical shape to studies of language socialization is in order. One of the more prominent themes in the language socialization literature is the notion that socialization is an interactive process (39, 55, 158, 161, 190). In this regard the child or the novice (in the case of older individuals) is not a passive recipient of sociocultural knowledge but rather an active contributor to the meaning and outcome of interactions with other members of a social group (232). This perspective on socialization draws on symbolic interactionist (139) and phenomenological approaches as developed in recent frameworks of society (13, 173, 191). The first theory contributes the idea that reality, including concepts of self and social roles, is constructed through social interaction. Further, individuals (including young children) are viewed not as automatically internalizing others' views, but as selective and active participants in the process of constructing social worlds. This idea is also compatible with the Piagetian concept of the child as an active constructor of his or her own development (167).

Phenomenological approaches contribute to language socialization research the idea that members' perceptions and conceptions of entities are grounded in their subjective experiences and that members bring somewhat different realities to interpersonal encounters (141). This view does not imply that views of reality do not overlap or are not shared to some extent. Indeed, later phenomenological and ethnomethodological frameworks stress that members share "stock knowledge" and "typifications" and rely on "the et cetera assumption" in filling in implicit background information to make sense of interactions and messages (13, 39, 77, 191). One task of social interaction is to create and maintain a sense of shared understanding, drawing on those assumptions that members share and negotiating others. Within this paradigm, every interaction is potentially a socializing experience in that members of a social group are socializing each other into their particular world views as they negotiate situated meaning (198). In terms of language socialization, we concur with McDermott et al (137) that members constantly conform and inform one another through language. This is one way of viewing socialization as a lifespan process. Interactions of members with young children comprise one type of socializing context, in which the local conceptions of the

asymmetrical distribution of knowledge and power influence the interactions in particular ways. Language used in these interactions can be examined for ways in which it indexes these social and cognitive variables, e.g. among white middle-class caregivers, the use of questions and other directives, expansions, attention-getting devices (29, 35, 53, 66, 67, 160, 203).

The interactional character of socialization is also a dominant theme of research on psychosocial development carried out within a Vygotskian framework (30, 36, 38, 45, 130, 131, 174, 218, 219, 233). In this framework, higher order intrapersonal psychological processes are developed through (social) interaction. Particular sociohistorical circumstances, which provide for certain kinds of social activities, promote or impede the development of complex cognitive skills. Recent research along Vygotskian lines emphasizes the role of more knowledgeable members in facilitating learning (36, 94, 127, 128, 174, 230, 234). Novices are able to carry out particular tasks through "guided interactions"; they develop skills in a "zone of proximal development" as they move from guided or collaborative to independent action. Within this framework, cultural knowledge both organizes and is acquired through these communicative activities (45). The sociohistorical orientation is evident in research on children's emerging discourse skills (36–38, 55, 112, 113, 239–241) and in studies of the development of literacy skills (46, 126–128, 195, 196).

In these approaches to socialization, language and culture are assumed to play critical roles in the organization of socializing contexts. From the perspective of Ochs and Schieffelin, the view of language and culture most compatible with symbolic interactionist, phenomenological, and sociohistorical approaches is one that sees them as:

bodies of knowledge, structures of understanding, conceptions of the world, and collective representations (which) are extrinsic to any individual and contain more information than any individual could know or learn. Culture encompasses variations in knowledge between individuals but such variation, although crucial to what an individual may know and to the social dynamic between individuals, does not have its locus within the individual (161, p. 284).

LANGUAGE SOCIALIZATION AND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

It might be useful here to distinguish the study of language socialization from the study of language acquisition. The study of language acquisition has as its ultimate goal an understanding of what constitutes linguistic competence at different developmental points. Researchers have investigated processes that underlie and strategies that organize language comprehension and production over developmental time (9, 18, 25, 33, 42, 120, 135, 168, 201, 222). In

contrast, the study of language socialization has as its goal the understanding of how persons become competent members of social groups and the role of language in this process. Language in socializing contexts can be examined from two perspectives. We can investigate how language is a medium or tool in the socialization process. In addition, we can investigate acquisition of the appropriate uses of language as part of acquiring social competence. With respect to the role of language as a socializing tool, it is important to note that the organization of language use is a powerful socializing force. To quote Corsaro: "Language and discourse become the most critical tool for the child's construction of the social world, because it is through language that social action is generated" (55, p. 74). In understanding the socializing process, not only what someone is verbally communicating but how the communication is structured must be considered. Researchers have related the structure of exchanges in caregiver-child communication to general cultural patterns and social habits and have, for example, related ways in which caregivers negotiate understanding with their children to folk theories of intentionality and preferred interpretive procedures within a social group (39, 90, 154).

Other studies have examined the role of language in framing social events and social activities. An important claim here is that one of the ways in which children come to understand these social contexts is through (minimally) exposure to and (maximally) participation in verbally marked events and activities. Children come to identify these contexts and their internal organization through an understanding of the verbal keys or cues (89, 95) that convey these meanings (27, 51, 105, 122, 145, 163, 183). Other features of language use that can be examined for the sociocultural information they index include dyadic and multiparty turn-taking (31, 69, 79, 152, 182), strategies for performing speech acts (1-3, 40, 41, 70, 79, 169), phonological, morphological, and syntactic variation (1, 28, 71, 153), and interpretive procedures (39, 55, 198).

With respect to the study of developing linguistic competence as a part of social competence, researchers have investigated a range of language behaviors necessary for children's successful participation in everyday social life. These studies cover different types of socialization contexts; children in relatively monocultural and monolingual communities (1, 3, 20, 21, 40, 41, 53-55, 58, 59, 66, 69, 76, 79, 102, 114, 138, 158, 169, 186, 227-229, 237); children in multicultural and monolingual communities (24, 105, 107, 166, 223); and children in multicultural and multilingual communities (64, 74, 193, 194). All of these studies emphasize continuity and discontinuity of expectations regarding appropriate language behavior across social contexts (e.g. home, school, religious, play).

From the perspective of Ochs & Schieffelin (161), the processes of lan-

guage acquisition and the process of socialization are integrated. The process of acquiring language is deeply affected by the process of becoming a competent member of society. The process of becoming a competent member of society is realized to a large extent through language, by acquiring knowledge of its functions, social distribution, and interpretations in and across socially defined situations.

LANGUAGE SOCIALIZATION AND DEVELOPMENTAL PRAGMATICS

Language socialization research differs from research in developmental pragmatics in that developmental pragmatics tends to focus on children's competence in constructing discourse (9, 10, 76, 159, 160), including their competence in producing and understanding speech acts (2, 10, 49, 66), genres (11, 47, 105, 110, 142, 143, 206), turn-taking norms (69, 80, 118), discourse and sentence topics (118, 160, 192). The relevant features of context utilized in developmental pragmatic research primarily include prior and subsequent discourse (52, 151, 233), and interlocutors' understanding of social identities, knowledge, and goals (1–3). These features are linked to specific linguistic structures in order to assess children's functional competence in language. Language socialization builds on this rich understanding of children's discourse at the microanalytic level. However, language socialization has as a goal the linking of microanalytic analyses of children's discourse to more general ethnographic accounts of cultural beliefs and practices of the families, social groups, or communities into which children are socialized. In this sense, language socialization research is concerned with a different scope of context than considered in developmental pragmatic studies (158, 182, 186). The language behaviors of children, their peers, and caregivers are compared with language behaviors of members across a range of social contexts. For example, clarification procedures among Samoan children, caregivers, and peers are compared with such procedures in legal, school, and work settings (61, 63, 154, 161). Rhetorical questions by and to Kaluli children are linked to cultural preferences for indirect or "turned over" language (185). Teasing and assertive language to and by white American working class children is tied to the value of such language competence in a range of settings in the community (145). The structure of Kware'ae children's disagreements and conflict resolution is tied to norms governing these activities among Kware'ae adults (229).

The relation between language behavior and cultural ideologies is not explicit or obvious but must be constructed from a range of ethnographic data, including interviews, observations, transcripts. The recordings of children's or novices' verbal activities with others form one part of a larger data base

used in proposing generalization concerning local social practices and cultural patterns. The concern with taking on such a task is what distinguishes language socialization research from developmental pragmatics. Language socialization studies share this goal with anthropology and sociology.

LANGUAGE SOCIALIZATION: THE SAPIR-WHORF HYPOTHESIS REVISITED

From the discussion thus far, the reader can see that there are links between language socialization and classic anthropological works on language, thought, and culture. In particular, that acquisition of social competence is directly tied to acquiring competence in language use and that socialization is accomplished largely through the medium of language are two ideas central to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis:

It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is that the "real world" is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group . . . We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation (180, p. 162).

This classic quotation from Sapir promoted an era of research on the effects of linguistic structure on the organization of culture and thought. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis was roundly criticized for its linguistic determinism and for taking at face value the meaning of particular grammatical forms and domains (14, 177). Nonetheless, anthropologists have not been able to let go of the basic tenet that culture and language are deeply tied to one another. This notion is at the heart of Hymes's concept of communicative competence (115, 116). Ochs (154) and Scollon (194) have suggested that it is time to shake the dust off the original Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, rid it of its extreme deterministic interpretations, and emphasize the importance of Sapir's term "language habits" and Whorf's term "fashions of speaking." Ochs (154) proposed integrating the basic thrust of the hypothesis with Vygotskian and neo-Vygotskian notions relating mind, language use, and society. The latter paradigm emphasizes that 1. humans use language to accomplish specific goals in socially and culturally organized activities; 2. certain activities and certain ways of using language do not occur across all social groups or include all members of a social group; 3. these differences give rise to differences in cognitive skills of individuals in these social groups (130). Research on uses and acquisition of literacy illustrates these notions (105, 107–109, 126–128, 131, 196).

This research indicates that while not all societies include literacy as a linguistic and cultural resource, those that do organize literacy activities and

events along culturally specific lines (46, 63, 131, 187, 189, 195, 233). These differences in the organization of literacy practices differentially affect the development of cognitive skills such as hypothetical reasoning, modes of categorization, and memorization. This orientation toward activities, including language activities, as organizing thought is akin to the Sapir-Whorf view of language habits and fashions of speaking as organizing world views of language users.

One of the problems in interpreting the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is that language users have been viewed as objects shaped by the language in use. This characterization of language users as passive needs to be modified in light of the interactive views of socialization and language socialization presented earlier in this review. We advocate the view that young children and other novices (including adults in secondary socialization contexts) take active and selective roles in socializing contexts (190). The impact of language habits on language users will not necessarily be uniform. Various systematic circumstances may affect the nature and extent of the impact of language on world view and thought in general. For example, discussions center on the differential impact of classroom discourse on children from differing class and ethnic backgrounds (37, 47, 106, 108, 142, 143, 216). Children who speak the same language (even as native speakers) do not necessarily take information from talk or texts in identical ways. Children bring their experiences and expectations to the verbal interactions that take place in formal school settings, and these differing backgrounds contribute to the nature of their participation, the interpretive procedures they employ, and their understanding of these verbal interactions. All of these factors contribute to the composition of world views that are not necessarily identical.

Other researchers have suggested that the language spoken to young children conveys a world view to children (29, 39, 193). Cicourel, for example, notes that caregiver speech makes explicit "what everyone knows" (background information) in a social group (39, p. 49). Brown & Bellugi suggest that "a mother in expanding speech may be teaching more than grammar" (29, p. 143). These insights presented over 15 years ago are now the subject of extensive inquiry in the field of language socialization. Language socialization research looks for world view—language connections as expressed through forms and functions of language use. It looks for cultural information not only in the content of discourse but in the organization of discourse as well.

LINGUISTIC RESOURCES FOR SOCIALIZATION

One of the basic tenets of sociolinguistic research is that language serves several functions in social life and that consequently spoken and written

messages have not only logical (truth-functional) but also social meanings. Social meaning covers information relating to the social identity of interlocutors, act, activity, event, genre, goals, setting, affective demeanor or tone. Features of language that are variable across contexts of use are candidates for carrying social meaning. Members of a social group have tacit understanding of grammatical, discourse, and lexical structures as tools for signaling particular social meanings, e.g. that a particular activity or affective disposition is in play. In other words, members of a social group have linguistic resources available to them to construct and interpret social actions. These features and their functions have been discussed extensively by Gumperz and others (52, 95, 96, 98). Gumperz calls such variable linguistic features "contextualization conventions" or "contextualization cues," markers which provide an interpretive frame or context for interlocutors. Children acquiring language acquire knowledge of the language or languages in their sociolinguistic environment.

From the point of view of language socialization, we are interested in how these linguistic resources organize interactions between small children and their peers, older siblings, and adults in their day-to-day environments. We are concerned with ways in which these interactions are similar to or different from other types of social interactions within and across speech communities. For example, we are interested in ways in which turn-taking procedures characteristic of caregiver-child interactions in a particular community are similar to or different from those associated with other social relationships in that community. Caregivers may socialize infants and young children into a particular view of the child-caregiver relationship by engaging them in numerous repetitions of a particular turn-taking pattern (136, 152). Caregivers may also involve the child in triadic and other multiparty turn-taking, and in so doing socialize the child into understandings of diverse and complex relationships. Turn-taking can even be used to make cross-cultural comparisons of socialization practices. For example, we may contrast the cultural sources and ramifications of the typical dyadic (usually mother-child) turn-taking that constitutes the bulk of the experiences of first-born white middle class infants with the typical multiparty turn-taking that characterizes infants and young children's experiences in many other communities (27, 59, 64, 102, 161, 227).

Just as turn-taking can be a socializing resource and hence a variable in socialization research, so can such variable features as alternate forms of speech acts and conversational sequences, members of lexical sets, case marking, inflectional morphology, verb voice, sentential mood, particles, phonological variants, intonation, and voice quality (1, 3, 19, 21, 22, 40, 41, 66, 67, 152, 155, 156, 158, 161, 162, 169, 171, 172, 185, 202, 203, 236, 237). Where several dialects or languages constitute part of the linguistic

repertoire, these codes in themselves may convey social meaning and through their use with children become vehicles for their construction of social knowledge.

One of the most important points we wish to convey here is that ordinary conversational discourse is a powerful socializing medium. Crucial information concerning the organization of society and local knowledge is conveyed not simply through the content of language but through its grammatical and discourse form as well. One of the most frequently made observations across societies is that caregivers will recurrently engage young children in certain verbal routines (163, 164). Routines may involve a member (e.g. a caregiver) modeling something to be said and directing the child to repeat it. Such routines are often marked by the imperative “say” and/or a characteristic intonation. This has been reported for Kwara’ae (227), Kaluli (182), Samoan (152, 153), Basotho (59), Mexican-American (27, 65), Wolof (237), and both Anglo white middle class (85, 86) and Anglo white working class households (144), among others. Routines, however, do not necessarily involve implicit or explicit directives to repeat some word or phrase. Routines may simply involve repeated performances of an action or sequence of actions. How and how much a child participates in such routines will vary with the age of the child (227, 228, 234) and cultural configurations of caregiver-child interactions (161, 188).

Repeated performance of a routine is of course an obvious means of getting young children to participate in and recognize a sociocultural context. It is also a means of familiarizing children with social expectations that cut across whole sets of activities. For example, several researchers (37, 43, 106–108, 150, 193) discuss how certain routines engaged in by mainstream white middle class preschool children are continued in activities in formal classroom settings. Other researchers (182, 183, 185, 223, 225–228) have pointed out how repeated participation in particular routines socialize children into affective demeanors appropriate to a range of culturally defined relationships and activities.

UNDERSTANDING BABY TALK

Baby talk (BT) has been a major topic of discussion in language acquisition research (56, 57, 71, 72, 87, 149, 202–204). Two major dimensions of talk to children have been isolated: an affective component and a simplifying component (28). However, in developmental psycholinguistic research the simplified component has received the most attention. One of the major contributions of language socialization research has been the reevaluation of this component as a simplified register. We use the term “register” here to refer to a variety of language tied to use (1, 71, 72, 101).

While registers associated with other contexts of use such as legal and medical settings are examined for their keying of different social statuses, participant roles, and event/activity structures, BT has been examined primarily for its role in facilitating communication between children and others and more pervasively for its role in facilitating language acquisition itself. Here the discussion focuses on the impact of BT as a kind of simplified register. In these discussions, it is assumed that talk to children generally displays simplification; however, the observations on which this assumption is made are based on a limited number of speech communities [e.g. Arabic, Berber, English, Japanese (cf 71)]. For several years the emphasis was on the presence of simplifying processes in speech to children and few questioned its scope of occurrence (but cf 223).

More recently, research among southern working class blacks (107), Athapaskan Indians (193, 194), Samoans (152), and Kaluli (182) indicates that many of the simplifying features of BT reported in the acquisition literature are absent when members of these societies talk to children. Most notably absent is morphosyntactic simplification of caregivers' speech and expansions of children's relatively unintelligible utterances. Scollon (194), for example, notes that Athapaskan children are expected to repeat utterances of others without understanding them; understanding will come later in life. Further, Athapaskans tend not to negotiate an understanding of what a child might be intending in his/her partially intelligible utterance but rather will provide a situational and culturally appropriate "gloss." In this way, reformulations of children's utterances socialize children into conventional expectations concerning particular contexts. Absence of expansions (reformulation intended to capture the intentions underlying an unintelligible utterance) is also reported for black working class, Samoan, and Kaluli caregiver speech. In these communities, however, the unintelligible utterances of children tend to be ignored, in contrast to the Athapaskan caregivers who seem to use such utterances as resources for supplying cultural information. In both Kaluli and Samoan societies there is a dispreference for verbally guessing at the unclear intentions and motivations of others, particularly of children (154, 161). This preference contrasts with the preference of Anglo white middle class (AWMC) caregivers who display a keen interest in pursuing what a child could have meant in some unintelligible or incomplete utterance (90). Athapaskan caregivers, then, seem to be like Samoan and Kaluli caregivers in their disinterest in pursuing what the child is "really" intending to convey and yet similar to AWMC caregivers in their interest in reformulating unintelligible utterances of small children. Both the Athapaskan cultural gloss and the AWMC expansion (29) encode world views for the child. The expansion, however, is conceptualized as representing the child's personal intentions, whereas the cultural gloss does not make this presupposition. These dif-

ferences reflect and socialize children into different cultural orientations toward communication, meaning, and the social status of children.

As this brief discussion indicates, cross-cultural comparison of BT is a complex enterprise. Comparisons involve detailed analysis of the formal organization of discourse and the interpretation of sociocultural meanings which that organization may convey to infants and young children over developmental time. While recognizing this, Ochs & Schieffelin (160, 161, 190) have nonetheless suggested a variable that can be used to characterize caregiver-child discourse across social groups and across social contexts within any one group. This variable, communicative accommodation, is realized as a continuum running from a highly child-centered to a highly situation-centered communication with children. In highly child-centered communication, the caregiver takes the perspective of the child in talking to and understanding the child. Highly child-centered communication is also characterized by child-centered topics, a tendency to accommodate to the child's egocentric behavior, and by a desire to engage the child frequently as a conversational partner [for descriptions of AWMC caregivers' speech see (56, 57, 90, 202-204, 217, 241)]. In highly situation-centered communication, the child is expected to accommodate to activities and persons in the situation at hand. Highly situation-centered communication is characterized by a range of situationally appropriate registers addressed to the child as opposed to the heavy reliance on BT register characteristic of child-centered communication (cf descriptions of Kaluli and Samoan caregiver speech).

It is important to note here that the two orientations are not in theory incompatible. Certain societies appear to lean one way or the other at some particular point in an infant's/young child's development; however, other societies such as the Kwara'ae (228) regularly integrate the two orientations throughout early childhood. Further, certain communicative practices may blend the two orientations; for example, the common practice of saying something and prompting a child to repeat what is said is at the same time child and situation oriented. These prompts both orient the child to some situation at hand and simultaneously facilitate his/her appropriate participation. We find this practice characteristic of both highly child-oriented and highly situation-oriented socializing contexts. However, the frequency and scope of situations in which prompting routines are used is generally greater in societies where caregiving is highly situation centered. In these societies, the utterances to be repeated by the child are usually well formed and grammatically complex.

Using the variable of communicative accommodation, we can talk more specifically about how different social groups organize communication with infants and young children. We find, for example, that social groups differ in the extent of accommodation to children, in social situations where one or the

other orientation is appropriate, and in the developmental point at which one or the other orientation is emphasized.

To evaluate the extent of child centeredness, it is important to distinguish two major forms of communicative accommodation to children: (*a*) accommodation by helping a child get his/her own intentions across, and (*b*) accommodation by helping a child to understand the utterances of others. We can find social groups making use of either one, both, or none of these accommodations to children at some developmental point, with the following constraint. While there are groups that frequently practice *b* but not *a* [e.g. Quiche Mayan (171, 172) caregivers with children who vocalize but who do not yet produce conventional linguistic form], we have not seen any reports of groups which practice *a*, but not *b*. This suggests an implicational hierarchy whereby the presence of *a* in a society implies the presence of *b*. This of course is a tentative generalization given the paucity of language socialization studies across social groups.

On the level of situational variation, we have reports that communicative accommodation varies within a social group according to the social identity of the child's communicative partner, setting, and/or activity and focus. For example, in AWMC society, fathers and siblings communicating with young children do not expand and simplify to the extent characteristic of mothers' speech (4, 12, 84, 87). Japanese caregivers accommodate far more in private than in public settings, e.g. when guests are present (40, 41).

With respect to variation in communicative accommodation according to age of the child, we note the obvious, namely, that first, in all societies members accommodate somewhat in their communication with children, and ultimately all societies socialize their children to behave in socially sensitive ways. What is of cross-cultural interest is the developmental point at which these orientations are emphasized. In some societies (Kaluli, Samoan) highly situation-centered communication is emphasized in early infancy and continues throughout childhood. In other societies, situation-centered communication is characteristic of early interactions with infants, but some child-centered accommodation is made to the toddler producing sensible speech (Mayan). In yet other societies, e.g. AWMC (32, 181, 209, 217), we find a child-centered orientation prevailing from early infancy through late childhood, although the orientation lessens as the child ages.

LANGUAGE SOCIALIZATION OF STATUS AND ROLE

To fully discuss the coordination of communication and social identity in socialization contexts is a task that exceeds the bounds of a brief review article such as this. Rather than plunge into the complexities of social life in several societies and trace their roots in language socialization practices, we will

instead speak more generally of communicative structures that seem to organize children's understandings of their own and others' identities, illustrating our points as we go along.

We take as a given that children's understandings of social identities is a function of their subjective involvements in interactions with others. In all societies, children within the first year of life manifest an understanding of identities of significant others in their lives (34, 209, 217). The burst of articles in the relatively new field of social cognition is a response to the discovery of just how early such social understanding emerges. Infants as young as two months display different eye gaze, facial expression, and body tension patterns when attending to persons as opposed to objects (119, 121, 217). By six months, they rely on significant others as reference points before approaching novel persons or objects (34, 123, 124). We know from this literature that infants are predisposed to be social in ways outlined by Vygotsky and others working within a sociohistorical framework (128, 130, 131, 218, 219, 233). The relation of this competence to the cultural organization of social experiences is not at all clear. What follows are to be considered by the reader as possible communicative parameters, affecting children's knowledge of social statuses, roles, and relationships.

Given that children's understanding is partially a function of their experiences, the nature of their communicative environment is an important variable. One important dimension of the communicative environment is turn-taking organization. Turn-taking in itself is a complex phenomenon (80, 179), and here we stress only a few interesting facets. Universally, members of society engage in two major types of interaction, namely, dyadic and multiparty. However, we suggest that the predominance of one or the other in terms of frequency and scope of social context seems to be cross-culturally variable. Certainly studies of language socialization indicate that children are acquiring linguistic and social knowledge in predominantly one or the other type of communicative interaction. For example, AWMC children are exposed to and participate in primarily dyadic verbal interactions, whereas children in societies such as Kwara'ae (227, 228), Basotho (59), Kaluli (182, 183), Marquesan (136), Mexican-American (27, 64), and Samoan (158, 169) are immersed in multiparty verbal interactions.

One possible outcome of these communicative arrangements is that AWMC children, particularly first-borns, may initially understand social relationships as involving only two members at any one time. This understanding is enhanced by other features of the AWMC communicative settings, for example, the fact that dyadic conversations take place in walled-in surroundings which restrict access by others, and that a shift in communicative partner often entails a shift in physical setting. The emphasis on two-at-a-time as a communicative unit is reflected in the AWMC language

development literature, where analysis of communication is based on dyadic units such as mother-child, father-child, and child-child.

In contrast, children exposed to multiparty interactions as a matter of course in their households may understand early on that social relations are complex configurations which most of the time involve three or more parties. This understanding is enhanced when children are involved in different communicative roles in multiparty conversation (24, 27, 59, 158, 169, 186, 225–227). For example, children in these environments are often involved as spokespersons for others (messengers, mediators) and must learn to design messages appropriate not only to addressees (as primary recipients of messages) but to audiences (as secondary recipients of messages), senders (as sources of messages), and to themselves (as speakers/spokesperson) (62). Very often these children can see that their own utterances are differentially responded to by others present, and these responses indicate how different parties are expected to behave in relation to the child and to one another. For example, when young Samoan children indicate that they need assistance, typically the first response will be a directive by a higher ranking caregiver to a lower ranking caregiver who may either pass the directive on to an even lower ranking (e.g. younger) caregiver or satisfy the child's expressed need. Samoan children come to understand through such turn-taking procedures (A → B → C . . . → A etc) about multiple hierarchical relationships (152, 157).

We wish to emphasize here that cross-cultural differences with respect to turn-taking are not absolute, but rather consist of differences in frequency, contextual scope, and interpretation. While children acquiring language in AWMC nuclear families also engage in multiparty interactions, particularly if they also participate in play group interactions, the range and types of social relationships involved in these interactions, the proportion of the child's communicative interactions taken up by these interactions, and/or the developmental point at which children habitually participate in these interactions generally differ from the language socialization contexts we have just described.

While we have just discussed how conversational turn-taking procedures socialize children into understandings of social relationships, we could just as easily have introduced other features of language use to illustrate this area of language socialization. We have substantial evidence that children use at least some of these features in the early years of their language development to instantiate social relationships. Andersen (1, 3) reports that AWMC children first utilize prosody to signal different social identities and roles, and subsequently use topic, lexicon (including pronominal reference), speech act variants, discourse markers, and morphosyntactic modification. Through selection of these features, children are able to use language appropriate to such roles as mother, father, child, teacher, student, doctor, nurse, patient.

Children's early competence in the verbal aspects of the caregiving role is noted for several societies, including not only AWMC, but also Anglo white working class (60, 144, 146) and Kwara'ae (227, 228). In some of these studies, these adjustments are seen as part of the mothering role (2, 3, 78, 146), whereas in other studies, these adjustments are seen as expressive of the sibling relationship (228). These differences reflect different expectations across societies concerning children's behavior regarding caregiving responsibilities.

While there is a growing interest in peer interaction and play among preschool children (50, 78, 79, 118), there have been few detailed ethnographic studies of these contexts as sources of information about children's knowledge of status and role. As Corsaro (55) has pointed out, there are serious methodological problems to be dealt with: intrusion, negotiation with adult caretakers, and the asymmetry of the researcher's perceived power and physical size. In addition, adults' conceptions of children's activities tend to bias their observations, making it difficult for them to view child culture in its own terms. In his ethnography of a Northern California nursery school, Corsaro demonstrates how language use in both cross-status (i.e. parent-child) and same-status (i.e. mother-father) role play denotes children's clear understanding of status as power. He finds that children's knowledge of role expectations may lag behind their knowledge of status because of differences in experience. Children are direct participants in cross-status interactions but usually observers in same-status interactions. Therefore, peer interaction offers children the opportunity for experience with same-status interactions that may often not be available in the family unit. Corsaro (54, 55) also points out the importance of friendship in children's acquisition of social and cultural knowledge, showing how "peer culture in the nursery school was characterized by the children's persistent attempts to gain *control* over their lives through the *communal production* and *sharing* of social activities with peers" (55, pp. 271-72). This was done primarily through the use of language and discourse. The importance of communicative skills and the strong egalitarian tendency in peer group socialization continues beyond nursery school into the elementary years, as shown by the work of Streek (210), Mehan (140), and Cazden (38) among others.

SOCIALIZING AFFECT THROUGH LANGUAGE

As part of becoming socially and linguistically competent members of particular social groups, children must learn how to appropriately convey their feelings to others as well as to recognize the moods and emotions that others display. The role that language plays in this process is an important component in the study of language socialization, both as a source of information

to caregivers and young learners and as a resource for the analyst in the investigation of affect displays.

Interest in the linguistic expression of affect from both socialization and developmental perspectives is a relatively recent concern in the language socialization literature. This interest in affect has been shaped by several different approaches. Anthropologists have emphasized the importance of a phenomenological approach to socialization as communication of emotions for understanding how infants become members of specific societies (81, 156, 186). Another major influence comes from the reformulation of psychological anthropology and culture and personality studies in the form of ethnopsychology, the study of indigenous concepts of the self, person, and the cultural meaning and organization of emotion (132, 176, 199, 235). Within this cultural perspective, researchers have investigated native concepts of the child, including the child's culturally considered emotional, linguistic, and intellectual development (132, 136, 158, 170, 186, 228). Other anthropologists concerned with the development of affect have focused on issues closer to developmental psychology, for example, nonverbal emotional displays and bonding (212).

From linguistic anthropology comes an interest in the communication of affect and the role of cultural and linguistic systems in that process (117, 157, 183). This work in cultural, linguistic, and psychological anthropology has contributed to the study of the linguistic expression of affect and its role in language socialization.

Analyses of the linguistic expression of affect have been based on cross-cultural longitudinal tape-recorded investigations of children learning to talk. A key methodological feature of these ethnographic studies is that children were observed in recurring and familiar contexts, interacting with those people with whom they were regularly involved. Working with transcripts of ongoing exchanges, researchers were impressed by the variety and pervasiveness of routines in which affect was linguistically encoded by adults, siblings, and young children. These contexts provided opportunities for the investigation of affective structures, contexts, and the social relations that connected them.

For example, teasing in socializing contexts has been interpreted in a number of speech communities as serving a wide range of functions: as an effective means of social control, as part of verbal play, and as a way of displaying an assertive or public self among others (65, 103, 145, 165, 185). These studies have taken an interactional approach to the analysis of the speech acts, speech genres, and sociocultural meanings of these speech events and have argued for the importance of understanding the role of verbal and nonverbal cues for signaling the frame in these potentially ambiguous events.

Miller (145) points out that in urban white working class families in South

Baltimore, teasing is a key to language socialization and is found in contexts that are affectionate and playful. But more importantly, teasing reveals the high value placed on interpersonal and verbal skills of self-assertion and self-defense, especially in situations of threat and conflict. Eisenberg (65) focuses on teasing in two Mexican immigrant families in Northern California. Adults tease children not only for fun and to control their behavior but also to convey social messages. However, Eisenberg emphasizes that teasing is a way to interact without being dependent on the exchange of information and is important in building intimate social relations.

Other studies have detailed the linguistic means available for encoding affect (41, 156, 185), Ochs (156) analyzes affect-loaded grammatical forms in teasing, shaming, challenging, and assertions of love and sympathy in interactions with Western Samoan children. High affect forms, such as first-person pronouns used in eliciting sympathy, are acquired by these young learners at the one-word stage before more neutral forms are used. This finding of saliency and the early acquisition of high affect forms by young children is also supported by Schieffelin's work on pronouns, word order, and casemarking in Kaluli (185) and Clancy's work on affect morphology (40).

In contrast to studies of societies where assertive affect displays are valued, Clancy (40, 41) describes Japanese society where interpersonal communication is based on intuition and empathy and indirection is a preferred communicative style, especially in refusing requests. Through a close analysis of transcripts, Clancy demonstrates the various directive strategies Japanese caregivers use in encouraging their young children to be sensitive to the needs of others and to fear their criticism and disapproval.

LITERACY SOCIALIZATION

Increasingly anthropologists and other social scientists have been addressing questions concerning the nature and role of literacy in society (8, 91–93, 196, 197, 211, 213). Within this framework, ethnographic and sociolinguistic approaches to the study of language have been influential in providing a conceptual framework for studying the acquisition of literacy skills (108, 116). The ground rules in this research paradigm require that one determines the range of linguistic resources in a speech community, including reading and writing, how they are socially distributed, and the relationships among them. Furthermore, one must investigate how these linguistic resources are acquired by members. The research focus is on the relationship among attitudes, values, beliefs, and skills that are culturally transmitted to learners in relation to the development of literacy skills. The social relationships and interactions in which an orientation to literacy is presented to the learner are fundamental to understanding the social and cultural processes of literacy

socialization. Given these factors, close attention must be paid to the structure of discourse in family and school settings in order to understand the ways in which literacy socialization may be facilitated. From this perspective the study of literacy acquisition is easily integrated within the general study of language socialization.

One of the most important notions in the study of literacy socialization has been the literacy event, that is, "any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of participants' interactions and their interpretive processes" (104, p. 93). Included in this concept is the necessity of determining interactional norms in order to understand the structure and meaning of the event for participants.

Children's first experiences in literacy events are usually with their caregivers interacting with story and picture books. In many American families, caregivers direct children to attend to pictures, elicit names of objects, and label and comment on those objects during structured interactions (6, 110, 111, 147, 150, 205, 214). However, the role played by these early interactions in the later acquisition of literacy skills is a topic of considerable debate (5, 109, 147, 215).

The notion of literacy event is embedded within a broader orientation focusing on the social organization and meaning of such activities. Literacy (reading and writing) is not taken as a set of technical skills, but as "a way of taking meaning from the environment" (105, p. 49). Heath's analyses of literacy events in "mainstream" families (105, 107) are further supported by Cochran-Smith's study (43, 44) of a nursery school in the northeastern United States. In these settings young children are routinely involved in literacy events as part of their interactions with adults and eventually one another. Storyreading is an interactive negotiation during which time certain sequences of interaction are acquired and ways of organizing narrative are presented and mediated through the adults who display to children ways of taking information and giving it back.

Heath (105, 107) contrasts these patterns with the ways language and literacy are used in two nonmainstream communities, one black and one white. She documents a number of critical differences in orientations to and assumptions regarding literacy, appropriate ways of displaying knowledge, and forms of narratives. Ward's study (223) in a southern rural black community and Miller et al's study (147) in a white working class community in South Baltimore also demonstrate that literacy activities, like other forms of communication, are culturally organized and vary both within and across cultures according to ideology in general and specifically in relation to parent-child interactions and patterns of socialization.

Research comparing the ways of using language learned at home and the ways of using language required at school also addresses the effects of

“discontinuity” or “mismatch.” This literature has focused on how continuity provides access to learning for mainstream children while inhibiting access for nonmainstream children. Several specific genres and speech acts have been considered in detail, including the use of questions (23, 106, 134, 194) and the form and function of narrative (24, 47, 107, 111, 142, 143, 188, 193, 206, 225, 226, 238). However, the extent to which patterns of oral language acquired in family settings enable the child to make a successful transition to patterns of language use in the classroom and the acquisition of literacy skills is not a simple developmental issue (see 108). As Boggs (24) and others (63, 108, 166, 187) have demonstrated, particular patterns of language use must be considered in conjunction with the social organization of interactions. For example, Boggs (24) points out that at home, Hawaiian children learn that routines are arranged according to a social hierarchy which determines patterns of turn-taking and other conversational procedures. These children, like those described by Heath (107), are not experienced in answering detailed questions about the “there and then” (178). Instead they develop language skills appropriate to the speech economy of their community, in this case involving a rich variety of verbal routines that include various forms of deliberate distortion: punning, alliteration, rhyming, and cospeaking (225, 226). Thus, the language socialization of these children at home does not facilitate their success in traditional Western classrooms. It is only when a bridge is built in classrooms between traditional speech events and participant structures that children can successfully participate in literacy activities (7, 24, 37, 216).

Another more recent research perspective on literacy and oral language use examines the relationships between speaking and writing, investigating the ways in which competencies in one mode can facilitate the development of interest and skill in other modes. This research draws on the basic tenets of sociolinguistic and ethnographic perspectives and looks at contexts in which young children within specific social relationships carry out meaningful communication through writing letters and dialogue journals (17, 26, 99, 207, 208).

Yet another perspective on language socialization and literacy comes from an interest in peer culture and how literacy is defined, owned, and controlled by children in ways that may not be consistent with the goals of formal educational institutions (125). Gilmore’s research on urban black elementary school children (82, 83) demonstrates that within peer-organized activities students display competencies in a range of oral and written performances identified by the school as those in which those students were considered deficient.

To extend studies of literacy into the framework of language socialization, more research is needed that details patterns of language use across a range of

activities so that the linguistic repertoire available to individuals can be understood. This is especially important given that literacy is being introduced and developed in traditionally nonliterate societies in many parts of the world with complex social and political consequences (63, 187, 211, 220). For example, Duranti & Ochs (63) report that in the context of formal literacy instruction in Western Samoa (which is heavily influenced by Western literate and religious ideology), a wide range of social and cultural skills, knowledge, and a particular set of expectations are introduced. These have consequences for the structure of child/adult relationships, issues of personal identity, and traditional definitions of task and achievement. Studies such as these show the importance of considering literacy activities in light of other cultural events (61, 154) as well as the importance of focusing on the organization and structure of literacy events with close attention to the form, function, and content of the discourse itself. Thus, socialization for literacy is considered within a larger sociocultural framework concerned with how individuals are presented with information, modes of negotiating or interpreting information, a world view.

CONCLUSION

Language is a major source of information for children learning the ways and world views of their culture. Language socialization research has shown that conversational activities involving small children vary in ways that systematically relate to cultural beliefs, values, and social order. The primary concern of caregivers is to ensure that their children are able to display and understand behaviors appropriate to social situations, and one of the major means by which this accomplished is through language. Children acquire sociocultural knowledge through exposure to and participation in everyday verbal exchanges. Further, the prelinguistic and linguistic behaviors of the child must be examined for the ways they are continually and selectively affected by values and beliefs held by those members of society who interact with the child. What a child says and how he or she says it will be influenced by local cultural processes.

Language is also a critical resource for those who wish to understand the nature of culture and how cultural knowledge and beliefs are transmitted both from generation to generation and in everyday interaction. We can investigate how the acquisition of language and the acquisition of culture influence each other by examining the ways in which language is used to express relationships and cultural meanings in interactions involving children and adults. To this end, research in language socialization has incorporated theoretical and methodological perspectives from anthropology, sociology, linguistics,

and psychology. Therefore, language socialization, which focuses on how children are socialized through the use of language as well as how children are socialized to use language, can further our understanding of the functional and symbolic interface between language and culture.

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CONTENTS

OVERVIEW

- On Being a Linguistic Anthropologist, *Joseph H. Greenberg* 1

ARCHAEOLOGY

- Prehistoric Archaeology in the Southeastern United States,
1970-1985, *Vincas P. Steponaitis* 363
- The Emerging Picture of Prehistoric Arabia, *Maurizio Tosi* 461

BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

- The Changing Role of Women in Models of Human Evolution,
Linda Marie Fedigan 25
- New World Primate Field Studies: What's in It for
Anthropology?, *Warren G. Kinzey* 121
- The Neandertals and Modern Human Origins, *Erik Trinkaus* 193

LINGUISTICS

- The Study of Language Use in Oceania, *K. A. Watson-Gegeo* 149
- Language Socialization, *Bambi B. Schieffelin and Elinor Ochs* 163
- Acoustic-Phonetic Issues in Speech Perception, *Arthur G.
Samuel and Vivien C. Tarter* 247

REGIONAL STUDIES

- Amazon Ecology and Adaptation, *Leslie E. Sponsel* 67
- Indigenous States of Southeast Asia, *G. Carter Bentley* 275

CULTURAL-SOCIAL

- System and Process, 1974-1985, *Joan Vincent* 99
- Demographic Anthropology, *Nancy Howell* 219
- Groups That Don't Want In: Gypsies and Other Artisan, Trader,
and Entertainer Minorities, *Sharon Bohn Gmelch* 307
- From the Invisible Hand to Visible Feet: Anthropological
Studies of Migration and Development, *Michael Kearney* 331

(Continued) v

vi CONTENTS (Continued)

The Anthropology of Emotions, <i>Catherine Lutz and Geoffrey M. White</i>	405
Frontiers, Settlements, and Development in Folklore Studies, 1972-1985, <i>J. E. Limón and M. J. Young</i>	437

INDEXES

Author Index	491
Subject Index	509
Cumulative Index of Contributing Authors, Volumes 7-15	529
Cumulative Index of Chapter Titles, Volumes 7-15	531