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CONTRASTIVE PRAGMATICS 3 (2022) 341–350

CONTRASTIVE
PRAGMATICS
A Cross-Disciplinary Journal
brill.com/jocp

Book Reviews



Matthew J. Burdelski and Kathryn M. Howard, eds., *Language Socialization in Classrooms: Culture, Interaction, and Language Development*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2020. xv, 274 pages, ISBN: 1107187834

Scholars and practitioners of education and learning will find *Language Socialization in Classrooms: Culture, Interaction, and Language Development* to be an invaluable book. It is an edited volume with 12 chapters. Readers will first be struck by the rich and detailed ethnographic data that has been collected in classrooms where “teaching and learning are mediated by specific languages, communicative resources and practices, and culturally informed activities” (Burdelski and Howard, Chapter 1, p. 1). Using the language socialisation approach, which principally investigates both “socialization through the use of language and socialization to use language” (Schieffelin and Ochs, 1986: 163), the authors illuminate what is actually going on in the complex and dynamic space of classrooms across continents (Asia, Europe and North America), languages (Danish, English, Corsican/French, Hindi/English, Japanese, Russian and Swedish), social settings (e.g. urban and rural, religious and secular) and learners (e.g., first language, second language, immigrant heritage, child and adult). This book is also characterised by its sophisticated analysis of interactions from various angles, which provides language socialisation studies with new theoretical insights. As a researcher who is fascinated by, and has promoted (e.g., Takada, 2012), the language socialisation approach, I found the book particularly interesting and important from the following three perspectives. (Note that my characterisation and categorisation of the chapters are different from the four-part division adopted in the book, but this indicates the multifaceted nature and prolificacy of the authors’ analysis in each chapter.)

First of all, this book helps enhance our understanding regarding the organisation of cooperative and competitive actions between students and teachers, based on the empirical and detailed analyses of classroom activities.

By aligning with or contesting the power and authority typically introduced by teachers, students can construct their group identity.

For example, García-Sánchez (Chapter 2) focuses on daily interactions between students and teachers at a Spanish school designed to foster inclusion and intercultural friendships. She examines how teachers responded to student interactions during which Spanish children challenged the goals of the program by excluding Moroccan peers who tried to participate in their activities. As the author suggests, the external gaze of the teachers and the asymmetrical power relations between teachers and students inherently characterise the classroom as a 'contact zone' (Pratt, 1991). This social space may, ironically, reinforce the students' awareness of in-group identity and inter-group differences, while their teachers tended to avoid overtly formulating their troubles as political agendas. By revealing the interactional mechanisms that give rise to the moral dilemmas plaguing many teachers, the author sheds new light on the study of student socialisation into sociocultural values.

The emergent process of group dynamics in classrooms is organised in a very complex way – by a number of participants using various culturally laminated skills and knowledge – and it is difficult to fully understand its diversities. In this regard, I was attracted to Rymes and Leone-Pizzighella's (Chapter 7) attempt to use musicological concepts to characterise the unfolding process of classroom activities in a U.S. high school. Their analysis illuminates how an experienced teacher and gifted teens organise the participation frameworks (Goffman, 1981) of their interactions and accomplish their goals by learning through contrapuntal discourse. For example, two students started their side conversation as a new line of counterpoint-like 'bass clef' interaction during the initiation-response-evaluation (IRE) sequence initiated by the teacher. The offline collaboration between the two students came into relief when their re-entry to the official IRE sequence was headed off by another student, and the two students then reacted with disappointment and humour.

Intricate group dynamics are also found in the expert-novice discourse of a Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) class at a U.S. university. Focusing on four international graduate students enrolled in an MA program, Friedman (Chapter 8) shows how instructors and students participated in 'naturalising' the existence of a dichotomy between native speakers (NSs) and non-native speakers (NNSs). Consequently, the dichotomy was reproduced, and the students were socialised into separate identities as NS or NNS teachers. What is interesting here is that ideologies of NS dominance in matters of language use might be maintained or even perpetuated, even though no one is willing to profess it. Friedman's analysis indicates that the language socialisation approach is a powerful tool for revealing and

understanding how cultural systems may constrain an individual's agency to take up certain stances or resist stances ascribed by others, thereby reproducing social inequality.

Secondly, this book clarifies how students in a classroom come to share a culturally distinctive moral affect. In line with this perspective, Moore (Chapter 4) examines the use of particular vocabularies, prosody and multiple voices by teachers during classroom interactions at an Orthodox Christian, Russian heritage language school in Southern California. Various semiotic resources worked effectively to engage the students in the (often implicit) socialisation process of affective stances towards church practices. The author beautifully depicts how teachers socialise children into a particular moral affect, namely an appropriate way of feeling in the social world, through the use of assessments embedded within several hypothetical stories (e.g., "Imagine that you came to church for the first time in your life ..."). In this way, classroom interactions serve not only as a means of gaining academic knowledge and skills, but also as a method for learning and developing culturally distinctive morality.

Cekeite (Chapter 6) also deals with the socialisation of affective and epistemic stances, focusing on vocabulary explanations during Swedish as a second language (L2) lessons for children of immigrant backgrounds in a primary school classroom. She demonstrates how, in order to help students make sense of a new vocabulary item, the teacher called upon them to invoke the feelings and desires of the majority society, in line with local contexts (e.g., to explain the Swedish vocabulary item *långtar* (long for), the teacher gave an example sentence: "I long for summer", which premises that summer is a greatly appreciated season). Through manifesting the normative expectations of the dominant language and society concerning word meanings, the teacher suggested how the students ought to perceive and feel in particular social situations. Even though the teacher's utterances were usually softly spoken in a gentle manner, they could be highly political; they had the potential to arouse resistance in the L2 learners, who may not want to be ascribed the identities and affective stances of the majority communities of practice. They could also drive a wedge in the students' parent-child relationships and value systems at home.

Moral affect constitutes part of our habitus (Bourdieu, 1991). In order to examine how preschool teachers nurture children's habitus (in other words, socialise their bodies in culturally specific ways), Burdelski (Chapter 10) focuses on graduation ceremony practices at a Japanese-as-a-heritage-language preschool in the United States. He clarifies that teachers actively employed pointing, gaze and various types/manners of nuanced touching to carry out corrective feedback concerning the children's use of their bodies. These

corporeal acts attracted the children's attention to the details of *kata* (form) and its morality shared in Japanese culture. Moreover, the analysis indicates that bodily acts are sometimes more eloquent for conveying and regenerating sociocultural meanings in relation to ideologies and demeanours.

Karrebæk (Chapter 11) also tackles the subject of children's bodily experiences by examining language socialisation through food, which is often associated with health and morality (i.e., the rightness of not just food but also of people). In an ethnically diverse kindergarten classroom in Denmark, where the author conducted her extensive fieldwork, children often brought in lunches that suggested different norms to those considered appropriate by their teachers (e.g., immigrant students brought in white bread, which their families believed to be good food, while the teacher requested they bring in rye bread, which is considered healthier in Denmark). Their discursive encounters over lunch often involved the parents who had prepared the lunch boxes as (imagined) participants; the children's accounts of their teachers' utterances exhibited their alignment and misalignment to the majority culture in which teacher authority resided. As such, the language socialisation approach highlighted the details of negotiations over the multifaceted and locally constructed choices about health and morality.

Thirdly, this book demonstrates that classroom activities can work as vehicles, not only for promoting the reproduction of cultural heritages, but also for facilitating the transformation and reorganisation of existing customs. For instance, Klein (Chapter 3) analyses the heteroglossic nature of linguistic practices and moral discourses in Sikh history classes at a U.S. *gurdwara* (Sikh temple). In order to ease the students' understanding, teachers sometimes relocated the Sikh historical model of moral personhood to a contemporary American sociopolitical landscape. Thereby, the students not only cultivated group sensibilities of the diasporic community, but also fused their 'traditional' religious concepts into the postcolonial concepts of modernity. Their language practices thus shape their transnational identities, which, in turn, will influence how they navigate contemporary sociopolitical issues in the United States today and in the near future.

Reorganisation of 'traditional' group identities through performing culturally distinctive social actions is also exemplified in Jaffe's work (Chapter 5), which was conducted in two French-Corsican bilingual schools that are trying to revitalise Corsican language and culture. Jaffe examines language socialisation with respect to the *Chjam'è rispondi* (Call and Response), a traditional, improvisational poetic duel, and then asserts that the children's guided participation in the poetic genre situated them somewhere in the 'middle ground'

between the competency of school children and the expertise of poets. This 'middle ground' could redefine what speaking and writing Corsican means in the twenty-first century and potentially create new and hybrid identities of the 'authentic' minority language speaker for those children and society at large. This case study provides both clues and hope for the successful work of ethnic minorities, activists, researchers and policy makers who are struggling to achieve recognition for minority languages and cultures.

In Chapter 9, Bhattacharya and Sterponi deepen our understanding of the intricate relationships between authority, knowledge and subjectivity through their thoughtful arguments regarding the ritual of Morning Assembly, the typical start to an Indian school day. Special attention is paid to the analysis of the principal's lecture, in which he professes the distinction of different forms of knowledge, which is assumed to have a hierarchical order and to have been associated with different pedagogies and mechanisms of learning. The authors show that the practices involved in Morning Assembly integrate the different forms of knowledge in a hybrid way, in conjunction with the context of contemporary India. At the same time, the authors point out that this may weaken the power of the schooling regime to reform the subjectivities of children and society, consequently reproducing existing socioeconomic inequalities in Indian society.

Taken together, the chapters in *Language Socialization in Classrooms* showcase the breadth of theoretical and practical topics addressed by research that adopt the language socialisation approach. Although classroom interaction is a relatively new domain in studies of language socialisation (Duff, Chapter 12), it has now developed into one of the most socially required and productive research areas in such studies. This volume is a well-balanced collection of essays by both young and established scholars who have been actively promoting research on language socialisation in the classroom. It represents the achievements to date in this vibrant research field and will serve as a frame of reference for future studies. By studying this volume, readers will definitely enrich their views on the characteristics of sociality in classrooms.

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Biographical Note

Akira Takada is an associate professor at Kyoto University, Japan. He has led various research projects where he uses the language socialisation approach to delve into caregiver-child interactions and ethnic identity, and is currently exploring the cultural formation of responsibility in early childhood. He has conducted intensive field research in Botswana, Namibia and Japan. His research has been published in various academic journals including *Cognitive Science*, *Frontiers in Psychology*, *Journal of Pragmatics*, *Language & Communication*, *PLoS ONE*, *Research on Children and Social Interaction*, and in edited volumes including the *Handbook of Language Socialization* (Blackwell, 2012).