Commented Bibliography
——Language Acquisition and Socialization——

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I have been interested in the analysis of first language acquisition from the point of view of children's development in verbal and nonverbal communication. In other words, my greatest interest has been in how children acquire their language: semantic, phonological, and syntactic development observed in the gestures and the language of young children. My close comparison of the language learning of English speaking children and Japanese speaking children revealed that two elements seem essential for language learning: an innate faculty and a language environment. A language environment seems to be particularly important for children not only to acquire language but also to adopt behaviors which are appropriate in a given society. For example, my son's calling gesture was same as the Japanese adult one but different from the Western one. While acquiring language, children are learning the cultural patterns of their society. That is to say, children are socialized through acquiring language. Therefore, it is impossible to discuss language acquisition apart from socialization.

A great deal of effort has been made in the observation of children's competence and performance in the study of first language acquisition. What seems to be lacking in this field, however, is the analysis of first language acquisition from the point of view of children's socialization. There are some scholars who hold similar view concerning language acquisition. I will examine four scholars' studies about language acquisition and socialization in this paper.

Berko, Jean: "Language and Socialization", in Frank S. Kessel (ed.), *The Development of Language and Language Researchers: Essays in Honor of ROGER BROWN.* Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, New Jersey 1988.

Berko is one of the leading experts in the field of first language acquisition. Her research of the child's development of morphology (Berko, 1958) is excellent and my M.A.thesis owes a lot to her research. In this paper, she points out the deficiencies in the research on language acquisition (p.269):

> ... those who have spent our research careers studying the way that children acquire language have concentrated on linguistic systems while ignoring the cultural content of what children are acquiring along with phonology, morphology, syntax, and the lexicon.

She also regrets that psychologists have neither emphasized nor made explicit the role that language plays in the socialization of children. She insists on the importance of explaining how individuals take on the behaviors, beliefs, and values in a given society, and emphasizes the need of discussing socialization in developmental psychology. In this paper we are provided with some historical notes on the origins of Berko's interest in this problem and a proposal about the role of language in socialization.

Berko's own interest in language acquisition began with an encounter with Roger Brown in 1952, while a senior at Radcliffe, who lectured the Psychology of Speech and Communication. After finishing her undergraduate studies, she took a Master degree in the new Department of Linguistics at the Radcliffe Graduate School, and then was accepted at Harvard to study for a joint ph.D. in Linguistics and Psychology under the direction of Roger Brown in 1955.

Her early work was quite cognitive in its orientation under the influence of Roger Brown and therefore she looked for invariance in the language acquired by all children. Berko, however, became increasingly interested in communicative competence under the influence of Dell Hymes (1971). An interest in the social aspects lead her to questions about variability, about the effect of the linguistic environment, and about the various ways of children's speech in different social contexts. About 1970, while observing variation in children's language, she found that the parents' speech plays an important role in the socialization of their children. The child-directed speech is filled with instructions about how to behave, what to believe, and what to say in various contexts. She started to study fathers' and mothers' speech to children both in the

laboratory and at home, and has continued the study of input language up to the present.

Berko notes that three different processes appear to be in operation concerning the role of language in socialization (p.275):

> (1) the use of explicit instructions to the child about what to do, feel, think, etc.; (2) the use of explicit directions about what to say on various occasions; and (3) subtle but indirect socializing effects resulting from linguistic interaction:

The first process means that language to children contains specific instructions about how to be socialized: e.g., "Sit up at the table" and "Look both ways before you cross the street." The second one pertains to language itself. Speech to children contains explicit devices of how to speak the right way: e.g., "May I please have some more milk?" rather than the child's "More milk?" The third one can be found in such things as modeled differences in language, differences in interactive style, and different emphasis depends on the social and sex-role identities: e.g., parents' interruption of little girls more than boys and predictable differences between working-class and middle-class children.

In the final section Berko suggests some of the questions to be answered if we try to theorize about language and socialization (p.278):

> 1. What, in any given culture, is the set of statements about behavior, thought, and feeling made to children?—what , in other words, are the child's marching order?
> 2. Within a given family, is there consistency in what adults say, or do mothers and fathers say different things to children?
> 3. Across families within an identifiable social group, are the same things being said?
> 4. What kinds of social group differences can be identified?
> 5. What is the relative role of routines in the socialization of children in different societies? In our own, we know about politeness and a few others,

such as Halloween, but some societies have many more formulaic kinds of language: proverbs, wise sayings, and many more ritualistic utterances in general. What is the content of those sayings?

6. How do we account for the linguistic consistencies and continuities over time in the socialization styles of different cultural groups? If adults are the bearers of certain kinds of linguistic interactional styles, where did we acquire them? For instance, is it possible that as children we learn a set of statements that we carry with us until we have children of our own, to whom we say the same things that were said to us 25 or 30 years earlier?

She concludes that it is time for research both in linguistics and in developmental psychology to concentrate on the cultural content of adults' speech to children and on the psychological impact of that speech, since it becomes increasingly clear that in acquiring their language children also acquire the social systems that are embedded in language.

I think that the longitudinal research of someone's own child is available to elucidate the role of parents' speech in children's socialization and to know how children take on social rules.

Ochs, Elinor: "Input: A Socio-Cultural Perspective", in Maya Hickmann (ed.) *Social and Functional Approaches to Language and Thought.* Academic Press, Florida 1987.

In this discussion Ochs introduces a particular approach to the study of language acquisition, which is called a socio-cultural perspective as the title indicates. Most nonnatives have experienced situations in which they can understand literally each utterance but cannot grasp the point of the discourse, since they understand very little of the language in use. She wants to verify this for first language acquirers and proposes the socio-cultural perspective on language acquisition. This perspective is described as follows (p.306):

> IN MAKING SENSE OUT OF WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING AND IN SPEAKING IN A SENSIBLE FASHION THEMSELVES, CHILDREN HAVE LEARNED TO RELATE LINGUISTIC CONSTRUCTIONS TO CULTURAL DEFINITIONS OF SOCIAL SITUATIONS.

She , moreover, says this perspective is grounded in the following notion (p.307):

> ...MEANING IS EMBEDDED IN CULTURAL CONCEPTIONS OF CONTEXT AND THAT ACCORDINGLY THE PROCESS OF ACQUIRING LANGUAGE IS EMBEDDED IN THE PROCESS OF ACQUIRING CULTURE.

In order to provide a call for more research in this direction and an illustration of how language acquisition is a part of society and culture, she carried out field work on language acquisition and socialization in rural households in Western Samoa, which she compared to Anglo White middle class (WMC) language acquisition and socialization. She particularly focuses on two acquisition phenomena: egocentric speech and requests for clarification, because she believes that these two phenomena are likely universal and have a profound impact on the organization of social life.

In the section of EGOCENTRIC SPEECH we are provided with cross-cultural differences in attitudes toward children's egocentricity and in responses to such behavior at different developmental points. Ochs points out that Samoan caregivers "RESIST" children's egocentric tendencies while American WMC caregivers "GIVE IN" to these egocentric tendencies. That is to say, American WMC caregivers will often fill in missing information of infants and small children or paraphrase the child's intended message but traditional Samoan caregivers will not try to formulate the child's utterance. Western Samoa is a Polynesian society hierarchically organized and Samoans believe that egocentric speech is appropriate only for high status persons in certain contexts. Ochs says this may be the reason for Samoan's resistance to children's egocentric speech. Samoan caregivers try to sensitize children early in life to the language and actions of others around them. Samoan children are instead socialized into a socio-centric demeanor by around 4-5 years of age. Therefore, Samoan

caregivers ignore the infant egocentricity and do not engage very young children in conversational exchange until they mature a bit more. On the other hand, American WMC mothers are eager to engage their infants, who are only 24-hour-old, in greetings and other forms of conversation.

In the next section of REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATION Ochs provides her analysis about relations between thought and language development of young children. There are occurrences, where a recipient cannot make sense out of an utterance because it is garbled, or it is telegraphic, or it is not heard. Her particular interest is the alternatives observed for recipients in these contexts. She presents two strategies of recipients to make intelligible an utterance: 1 the MINIMAL GRASP STRATEGY and 2 the EXPRESSED GUESS STRATEGY. They are described as follows (p.314):

> 1 ...the recipient may initiate clarification by exhibiting minimal grasp or no grasp of what the speaker has said or done and rely on the speaker to resay or redo the unintelligible utterance.
> 2 ...recipients may themselves formulate an explicit guess as to what the problematic utterance/proposition might be, leaving the original speaker to validate or reject the hypothesis.

Ochs observes that Samoan speakers far prefer strategy 1 over strategy 2 while American WMC caregivers use both strategies or they prefer guessing rather than requesting resay. Samoan caregivers expect small children to make an unintelligible utterance intelligible. In traditional Samoan communities, moreover, persons are uncomfortable to make explicit guesses on others' thoughts that are not clearly expressed in language or demeanor. She thinks these may be bases for Samoan's preference of strategy 1.

Ochs offers three proposals from her observations mentioned above (pp.314-5):

> I propose first that THESE TWO STRATEGIES ARE UNIVERSAL and second that while both are universal, THE MINIMAL GRASP STRATEGY IS MORE PREVALENT ACROSS SOCIETIES. ... Third, I propose that THESE PREFERENCES REFLECT MORE GENERAL

PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND FOLK NOTIONS CONCERNING THE ACQUISITION AND SCOPE OF CERTAIN KNOWLEDGE.

In conclusion Ochs stresses the importance of integrating fine-grained analysis of language in situational contexts with macroanalysis of society and culture. She considers language activities or language practices as having a profound impact on thought in a given community.

The socio-cultural perspective may be also useful to consider second language acquisition. This perspective will discover difficulties which occur when we try to acquire second language as foreign language. In this case social and cultural backgrounds are often ignored by teachers and learners. Therefore, it is important for second language teaching to introduce the socio-cultural perspective.

Oldenburg, Jane: "Learning the Language and Learning through Language in Early Childhood", in M. A. K. Halliday et al.(eds.), *Learning Keeping and Using Language* -Volume 1. John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam 1990.

In this paper Oldenburg discusses some of the results of a long-term case study of her daughter Anna's early linguistic development from the age of 8 months to 2 and a half years. The actual data are compared with the linguistic development of Nigel in Halliday's study (1975) and that of Hal in Painter's study (1984). These two boys are the only sons of each author, while Anna has a sister Carla, who is 20 months her senior. Oldenburg focuses on three aspects of the development process of her daughter to make comparisons between the three children.

1. Learning through Language -Semantic Strategies
2. Learning the Language
3. The Relationship between the Language and Learning through Language

The first suggests the ways in which Anna learnt through language, that is, how she used her language to learn about the world, to interpret reality, to observe and classify

experience. To learn through language Anna used some semantic strategies which appear to consist of two kinds: interpersonal and ideational. The interpersonal semantic strategy in question/answer adjacency pairs is illustrated in the following example (p.29):

25 (27) (A. finds a wooden puzzle piece which previously had a picture of a duck in profile on it. The face of the duck has been torn off, and M. attempts to draw a new face on the piece).

M: It'll need a beak, won't it? And its head. ... we'll do an eye ... its coat. There we are ... It's all fixed up now.

A: *There beak. Where eye two?*

M: What, darling?

A: *Where('s) other eye?*

M: Another eye? Oh no, it only needs ... the other eye's over on the other side of its head and we can't see its other side.

A: *Other eye ... head.*

M: Mm. Look, I'll show you with ... what can I show you with? Here, see this duck (holding up a plastic model of a duck and turning it sideways) see, you can only see one eye when you hold it like that. If you turn it round you see its other eye.

A: *Other eye. See other eye. < > See other side ... other eye ... see other eye.*

(Note: 25 (27) indicates the child's age, 25 months and 27 days.)

In this dialogue Anna used her language to resolve the disparity between her interpretation, that ducks have two eyes, and the present reality, that a duck in profile has only one eye.

Another interpersonal semantic strategy is shown in the following example of modeling (p.30):

26 (4) C: Did Uncle break a bone?

M: Yes, Uncle Glen broke a bone.

A: *Uncle Glen broke a bone?*

M: Yes, on his motor bike.

Oldenburg insists that the function of this modelled utterance is not to learn language itself. Anna was using it to learn not only about the social world but about the discourse skills.

All Anna's ideational semantic strategies involved the observation of similarity and difference, and they were classified into five: analogy, antonymy, paradigmatic contrast of items, generalisation, and inference. I will limit myself in quoting only some examples of each classification:

Analogy (p.31)

25 (21) (A. falls off chair, and draws a comparison between her action and a character in a book, who fell off a wall)
A: (I) *fell down wall like Tom Kitten.*

Antonymy (p.32)

26 (0) A: *Yellow one torn, blue one torn* (the latter clause said while shaking her head to mean "blue one not torn").

Paradigmatic contrast of items (p.32)

25 (23) A: (to herself, as she looks at pictures in a book) *Red flower, Yellow flower, one ... two flowers(s).*

Generalisation (p.32)

27 (27) A; (after seeing two clowns in a play knock a hole in a wall)
People ... people ... people not allowed knock down walls. People should (accompanied by head shaking to signify negative) *knock down walls.*

Inference (p.32)

25 (15) A: (watching M. chop vegetables) *Knife sharp. Let me* (said with head shaking) *Mummy* (=Mummy won't let me use the sharp knife).

There were also both ideational and interpersonal strategies in Anna's conversations. However, Anna used interpersonal strategies far more frequently than ideational ones. Oldenburg suggests that the topic of Anna's texts may be concerned with human relationships and the social world may be foregrounded in her use of language to learn.

The second aspect of the development process is the way in which Anna learnt the language, that is, her grammatical development. Oldenburg especially focuses on the lexicogrammatical developments during the *transition* period (the period of transition

from protolanguage to mother tongue), since the child begins to produce adult-type lexical items during this period. She proposes two general functional contexts in which the child's utterances tend to occur: the *pragmatic* function and the *mathetic* function. The pragmatic utterances are used to obtain goods and services and the mathetic ones are to learn about and comment on the world.

Oldenburg's close comparison between Anna and two boys, Nigel and Hal, reveals interesting differences about their language development process. One salient difference is that the development of adult-like mood forms appeared earlier in Anna's language than they did in the boys' language. Another difference is that Anna's almost all structures appeared first in the pragmatic function, e.g. *want see* and *have one,* while Hal's first structures appeared in the mathetic function, e.g. *nice book* and *make tower.* Oldenburg insists that the reason for these differences may be in Anna's status as a second-born child. Anna's sister Carla played a pedagogical role. In other words, at the lexicogrammatical level Carla was the source of many of Anna's expressions and at the discourse level Carla provided Anna with a model of interactional behavior. The pragmatic utterances are more salient to a child with one or more young siblings.

The third aspect indicates Oldenburg's opinion that the young child's strategies for construing the linguistic system reflect more general strategies for construing all experience. There was a close relationship between the way in which Anna learnt her language and the way in which she learnt about the world through language.

As I mentioned before, a long-term case study of the author's own child is best to observe the child's language development in the natural contexts and therefore to know the way in which the child learns about the world through language. Research on the child's language acquisition, however, has failed to grasp the relation between learning the language and learning through language. Moreover, I also think that siblings' influence, that is the influence of older children on younger children, is without doubt very important, but we cannot affirm it for lack of data. Now I am pregnant with a second child and I would like to observe not only my first son's influence on his sibling's language development, but also my son's code switching when he talks to his younger sibling.

Clancy, Patricia: "The Acquisition of communicative style in Japanese", in B. B. Schieffelin & E. Ochs (eds.), *Language Socialization across Cultures.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1986.

In this paper communicative style is defined as follows (p.213): "the way language is used and understood in a particular culture, both reflects and reinforces fundamental cultural beliefs about the way people are and the nature of interpersonal communication." Clancy insists that Japanese communicative style is intuitive and indirect, and thinks that this style is based on the Japanese emphasis of *omoiyari* "empathy". In order to know how Japanese children learn this intuitive and indirect communicative style, she observes the verbal interactions between three mother-child (approximately 2 years of age) pairs of Japanese middle class. She considers that children's exposure to this interaction is probably one of the earliest and most important means by which they are socialized to their culture.

First, Clancy points out Japanese mothers' frequent repetitions of unresponded questions and requests which are addressed to their children by others. They intend to elicit a response from the child somehow. She analyzes that Japanese mothers' insistence of their children's paying attention and responding to others' utterances may be viewed as "empathy training", since an addressee's silence becomes meaningful to the speaker in the general rule of Japan.

Secondly, Clancy comments about the directive strategies in Japanese. She examines the directives used by Japanese mothers to discover whether, and to what extent, children are exposed to indirect imperatives. She finds that 27 percent of these mothers' directives are indirect, which do not specify explicitly what to do. Moreover, mothers almost always combine indirect imperatives with more direct equivalents to facilitate young children's comprehension. This finding reveals that Japanese children are already exposed to indirection in directive contexts as early as 2 years of age.

Thirdly, Clancy refers to empathy and conformity training. Japanese mothers attribute speech to the feelings of third parties and even of inanimate objects to teach their children to be sensitive to others. She insists that these appeals to feelings can be viewed as providing children with explicit training in empathy. Furthermore, Clancy says that in order to conform their children to social expectation Japanese mothers

appeal to imagined reactions of *hito* "other people", who are watching and evaluating the child's behavior. Therefore, she insists that early training in empathy and conformity leads Japanese children to understand the feelings and expectations of others and also to learn the expected behaviors themselves.

Lastly, Clancy suggests that Japanese mothers rarely refuse their children's requests directly, and in return they teach their children not to refuse others' requests directly. She goes on to say that as the years pass, this interaction will provide children with a model for using indirection when refusing others.

Clancy's conclusion is best described in the following (p.245):

> In Japan, the individual is seen primarily as a member of a social group, with a responsibility to uphold the interests of that group. Thus arises the need for empathy and conformity, which help to preserve group harmony and group values. The importance of empathy and conformity in Japanese culture gives rise, in turn, to certain characteristics of Japanese communicative style, such as the use of indirection both in giving and refusing directives.

Although there have been many studies dealing with the influence of "motherese" from a viewpoint of semantic and syntactic development, this study views the early mother-child interactions in the light of the acquisition of culture-specific communicative style. Clancy's all close observations surprised me, because we, Japanese mothers, always use this indirect speech unconsciously. Moreover, culture-specific aspects of one society cannot be seen well by those who live in the society. Therefore, Clancy, not a Japanese, could view the Japanese society more objectively.

The way in which children acquire language activities and behaviors that are appropriate to their society, that is, the socialization in the early stages of life may be remarkably seen in the interaction with their caregivers. Input language of parents is especially filled with instructions. Parents' unconscious talkings to their children socialize them, in other words, parents make their children suitable to their society through discourse, although there are some conscious disciplines, e.g. "Don't talk to

strangers" and "Sit up at the table". Moreover, some expressions of disciplines by language may be common across cultures, e.g. "Say, 'Thank you'", but some may be peculiar to one culture, e.g. "*Itadakimasu* (I'll start to take)" before eating in Japanese. The cross-cultural research of different expressions that parents use when they instruct their children will reveal the different thoughts, beliefs, and values in societies.

At present, however, the research of the interaction between parents and children from the social aspect is very small, since this research needs minute observation of the contexts and long-term case study. One should do more research on the social aspects of first language acquisition because children's socialization is closely related to their language acquisition.

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