Intercultural Language Socialization: Theory and Methodology

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Abstract

In order to have a fuller interpretation of second language socialization processes in intercultural communication contexts, this study sketches an overarching theoretical framework of *intercultural language socialization* by infusing intercultural transformation perspective into language socialization theory. An elaboration of such a framework enables a more panoramic interrogation of L2 learners' joint development of language competence and sociocultural knowledge in complex intercultural communicative contexts. Based on the theoretical analysis, the study discusses the feasibility of combining macroscopic ethnographic perspective and microscopic conversation analysis as research methodology. The result of the study will enable investigation into second language learners' micro and macro layers of social practices and second language performance and will capture their developmental trajectory of second language socialization.

As an interdisciplinary approach to the joint processes of enculturation and language acquisition, language socialization (LS), a very vigorous research paradigm, is located at the crossroads between anthropology, developmental psychology, and sociolinguistics. This domain of study grew out of concerns with the narrowness of child language acquisition theories in the 1960s and 1970s. It is rooted in the notion that novices across the life span are socialized into using language and socialized through language not only in the immediate/local discourse context but also in the context of historically and culturally grounded social beliefs, values, and expectations, that is, in socio-culturally recognized and organized practices associated with membership in a social group (Ochs 2002; Schieffelin & Ochs 1986).

In language socialization study, it is increasingly acknowledged that people not only experience their *primary language socialization* during childhood but continue to experience *secondary language socialization* throughout their lives as they enter new sociocultural contexts, join new communities of practice (e.g. a workplace, an educational program) (Lave & Wagner 1991), assume new roles in society, and/or acquire a new language. As Ochs (2002) notes, any expert-novice interaction involves language socialization. This expansion in the realm of LS allows it to stretch beyond its initial research interests in first language acquisition into the fields of bilingualism, multilingualism and second language acquisition. While most of the pioneering studies of language socialization were conducted in small-scale societies or on relatively homogeneous monolingual communities (e.g. Heath 1983; Schieffelin & Ochs 1986; Watson-Gegeo 2004), more and more recent and currently ongoing studies have begun to pay attention to the particularities of secondary language socialization processes within linguistically and socioculturally heterogeneous settings associated with contact between two or more languages and cultures (e.g. Bayley & Schecter 2003; Crago

1992; Duff et. al. 2000; Katz 2000; Willett 1995). In fact, young as LS is in the field of SLA, it has quickly become one of the most informative, sophisticated, and promising domains of second language acquisition inquiry (Watson-Gegeo 2004).

This study emphasizes that for L2 learners/users "who have both physically and symbolically crossed the border" (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2001, p.174) their secondary language socialization is a process of *intercultural language socialization*. When the individuals venture into a new sociocultural and linguistic environment, any of their conversational exchanges with a native speaker in the target culture can be a form of intercultural communication encounter. Situated in an intercultural communication context, cross-cultural interlocutors tend to use diverse culturally-based communicative strategies with different discourse conventions even though they share the same linguistic code (Saville-Troike, 2003; Scollon & Scollon, 1995, 2001).

In order to have a fuller observation and interpretation of second language socialization processes in intercultural communication contexts, in this study, I will sketch an overarching theoretical framework of *intercultural language socialization* by infusing the intercultural transformation perspective (Kim, 1988; Pavlenko, 2001c) into LS theory and weaving it with some basic assumptions highlighted in previous second language socialization studies. An elaboration of such a framework not only helps us to unpack the heavily-loaded tenets of LS itself, but also to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of L2 learning/use in heterogeneous intercultural contexts. Based on the theoretical analysis, I will discuss the feasibility of combining ethnographic communication and conversation analysis as the research methodology to investigate intercultural language socialization. Through a combination of a macroscopic ethnographic perspective and microscopic conversation analysis, we may achieve the compensatory power to make critical connections between micro and macro layers of social practices with second language performance to capture the developmental trajectory in the process of L2 learners' second language socialization.

Intercultural Language Socialization — Basic Assumptions
1. *"Language learning and enculturation are part of the same process"* (Watson-Gegeo 2004:339).

Heath (1983) once argued: "all language learning is culture learning" (p.5). Promoting the same viewpoint, Agar (1994) coined the term *languaculture* to emphasize that language and culture are so tightly interwoven that neither should be studied in isolation from the other, otherwise both concepts will be distorted. Such a belief in the inextricably entwined nexus between language and culture forms the basic premise of language socialization theory. In LS, language and culture co-constitute and co-contextualize each other. Language learning is regarded as the simultaneous acquisition of both linguistic knowledge and sociocultural knowledge (Schieffelin & Ochs 1986). In the languacultural acquisition process, language is "the primary symbolic medium through which cultural knowledge is communicated and instantiated, negotiated and contested, reproduced and transformed" (Garret & Baquedano-Lopez 2002: 339); while culturally based practices, settings and interactions are the primary vehicles which powerfully and necessarily affect both language teaching and learning processes (Poole 1992).

2. Language, as a sociocultural and contextualized phenomenon, is acquired through interactive practices and socializing routines.

Language socialization theory cautions against regarding language only as an intra-psychological cognitive representation and development. Instead, LS argues that knowledge, including knowledge of language, is not only transmitted but also used, acquired and created through concrete interactive practices in specific historical, political, and sociocultural contexts. As Watson-Gegeo (2004) argues, "there is no context-free learning" (p. 340). Knowledge should be properly viewed as inter-psychologically distributed and constructed. Thus, a complete and valid interpretation of many significant aspects of language acquisition and performance in immediate contexts (micro) cannot be fulfilled apart from the relevant sociocultural and political contexts (macro), which mediate "which linguistic forms are available or taught and how they are represented" (p. 340).

Under this dialectical theoretical umbrella, LS contends that the sociocultural ecology of home, community, school or workplace impacts strongly on the second language learners' communicative practices, which construct and reconstruct the learners' interactive routines and strategies. In LS, the focus of research tends to be located on the socioculturally contextualized routines, which are formed through recurrent, sociohistorically grounded as well as contextually situated activities. LS emphasizes the role of interactive routines since they can provide structured opportunities for children/novices to engage with caregivers/experts and other community members. Theorists contend that as repetitive routines become increasingly proceduralized in learners' interactional ability, the structural and predictable properties of the interactive practices facilitate novices' increasing participation in them, which forms a vehicle for learners to acquire the target language proficiency and sociocultural norms.

For example, in the Japanese immersion kindergarten investigated by Kanagy (1999), the interactional routines- greeting, attendance, and personal introduction- were either implicitly or explicitly conveyed through the teacher's verbal and nonverbal modeling, repetition, praise, corrective feedback, and scaffoldings. Over time, the use of formulaic speech decreased, use of voluntary expressions increased, and use of repetition decreased. The children were gradually socialized to engage competently in the target discourse practices through repeated participation in the formulaic routines.

In a study of a second language learner/user's language socialization in the workplace, Li (2000) illustrates how through exposure and participation in social interactions and with the scaffolding of experts or more competent peers, a Chinese immigrant woman came to internalize target language and cultural norms and develop appropriate sociolinguistic competence to make requests strategically and more directly in the target culture workplace for her own rights and benefits.

Although the above studies approach language socialization processes in different settings and from different perspectives, they all demonstrate that in the process of second language socialization, second-language-mediated routines and the consequent intercultural interactions form the major tools for conveying sociocultural knowledge and powerful media of socialization, in which the target culture sociolinguistic conventions and competences are encoded and through which they are transmitted to the learners.

3. In second language socialization, congruency or incongruency between home and target languaculture can impact the L2 learners' learning processes and learning outcomes in very influential ways.

Unlike child language socialization, which normally takes place in a supportive environment, the process of second language socialization frequently occurs within a much less favorable ecology. Being socialized to draw on their home and community linguistic and sociocultural repertoires, second language learners will inevitably experience cross-cultural communication difficulties, to different degrees, when they plunge into the host cultural environments where communicative interactions are governed by the target cultural behavioral standards and cultural values. Generally speaking, intercultural misunderstandings, communication breakdowns, ridicule, and discrimination together with strong feelings of inadequacy will be the ineluctable "tuition and fees" second language learners have to "pay" on their way to becoming bilingual/bicultural individuals. For second language learners, the intercultural language learning/using contexts constitute extremely powerful and influential settings for secondary socialization. As Ochs (2002) argues, in intercultural communication,

> … there is considerable overlap across speech communities in how language users signal actions and psychological stances but considerable differences in how communities use actions and stances to realize particular activities and identities … commonalities assist novice second language acquirers who venture across geographical and social borders. Alternatively, … cross-cultural differences often thwart the language socialization of novices trying to access second cultures… (p.114).

For example, one study, while three ESL girls were appreciated as successful learners because they strategically enacted and elaborated interaction routines culturally congruent with the English-medium first-grade classroom environment, the only ESL boy in the classroom was regarded as a problematic learner and was blocked from sufficient access to the languaculture of the classroom because he failed to construct the desirable target culture identities, relations, and ideologies. In the workplace, as shown in Katz's (2000) research in a California electronic cable manufacturing plant, the different politeness systems between employees and managers and the insistence of the employees to keep their own cultural values and social identities lead to misunderstanding between the two parties, at the cost of the employees' being negatively and unfairly assessed as resistant, uncooperative, and even incompetent.

As demonstrated by Willet's and Katz's studies, the "survival of the fittest" principle permeates various settings on one's way to language socialization. While acculturation can facilitate learners' second language socialization, resistance to adaptation and significant sociocultural discontinuities not only impede their language practices but also mediate their learning opportunities, cultural obligations, and social identity establishment.

4. On their way to accomplishing second language socialization, L2 learners are very likely to confront gatekeeping forces and unequal power relations.

According to Bourdieu (1991), linguistic resources possess symbolic power, because they "can be converted into economic and social capital" by providing "access to more prestigious form of education, desired positions in the workforce or social mobility ladder" (cited from Pavlenko, 2001, p. 123). Thus, cultural capital (with linguistic resources as a major part) can replace real capital to construct power relations among individuals,

institutions and communities, through which symbolic and material resources in a society are produced, reproduced, validated and distributed.

Partly influenced by Bourdieu's symbolic capital theory, Norton (2000) contends that: "power relations play a crucial role in social interactions between language learners and target language speakers" (p. 12). Based on her longitudinal ethnographic study of five immigrant women in Canada, whose second-language-learning environment is "frequently hostile and uninviting" (p. 113), Norton argues that, in second language learning contexts, target language speakers always control both material and linguistic resources. Thus, second language learners' language acquisition and social identity reestablishment processes must be understood with reference to larger, and frequently inequitable social structures.

Along this line of reasoning, many scholars in the field of LS inquire into second language socialization by discussing the inextricable relationship between language and power. For example, Lotherington (2003) finds that in the school setting she examined only the mainstream linguistic and sociocultural capital is valued. In that school, Cambodian-Australian and Vietnamese-Australian adolescents' home literacy is not considered an adequate form of literacy, because "not all literacies are of equal value… School notions of literacy tend to be socially and linguistically hegemonic" (p. 203). In Australia, "the concept of literacy and the social demands for literacy tend to be narrowly constructed and expressed in terms of language proficiencies in specific, powerful languages" (p. 202). In the process of the youths' secondary socialization, English literacy, together with the mainstream cultural norms, is legitimized as "perpetual tests of sufficient Australianness" (p. 216), and the L2 learners' heritage culture and literacy are correspondingly devalued.

In the workplace, as shown in Sarangi and Roberts's study (2002), an international candidate failed the oral membership examination in a medical gate-keeping interview at the Royal College of General Practitioners in the UK. She failed not because of her lack of professional competence but rather because of her "inappropriate conversational and activity-specific inferences" (p. 198), which were not aligned with those expected in professional discourse. According to the authors, the gatekeeping discourse is a hybrid form of institutional, professional, and personal experience modes of talk, which requires a highly sophisticated and demanding form and process of language socialization. For professionals with different cultural, linguistic and social class backgrounds, it can be extremely difficult to be socialized into their profession in a new environment and to perform in institutionally and professionally ratified ways at the same time. However, interactional management of the hybrid institutional discourse has been a major measure of socialization and a prerequisite for success for international and intercultural employees. Failure to meet this demand can rapidly result in negative judgments, or simply exclusion from the professional space (Sarangi & Roberts, 2002).

From the above examples, we realize the strong impact that can be caused by the unequal socio-cultural power, which opaquely but actively functions in one's second language learning/using contexts. Usually, it is the dominant group's languacultural conventions that are more widely acknowledged as the norms. This bestows the dominant group higher symbolic power to orient what is legitimate, who is legitimate; "who is in, who is out" (Sarangi & Roberts, 2002, p. 197).

5. With dynamic agencies, L2 learners tend to take multi-layered actions and reactions in their process of second language socialization.

Although there are always unequal power relations inherently existing in the host culture and the institution in which newcomers' secondary socialization takes place, novices do not just passively absorb or internalize the repertoires of communicative norms and behavioral values poured down on them by institutional structures. Instead, with their own agencies or subjectivities (Norton 2000), novices are involved in a reciprocal process, one in which they actively co-construct their socialization. In the co-construction process, while novices/newcomers participate in new social and linguistic practices, in which they both learn and contribute, they do not simply co-construct agreement through assimilation (e.g. Li 2000; Duff, Wong & Early 2000); they can sometimes resist and reframe their participation in socializing interactions as well (e.g. Katz 2000; Atkinson 2003). Thus, language socialization is far from being a one-way process by which learners blindly appropriate static knowledge, skills and shared understandings. Instead, it occurs through dynamic and discursive social interactions. As novices/newcomers act and react themselves in the host languacultural contexts, they individually and/or collectively make intercultural socialization choices, evaluate and contest the target cultural values and beliefs, struggle to broaden their individual agendas, and actively negotiate and reestablish their own multiple identities, ideologies and social networks (McKay & Wong 1996; Norton 2000; Pavlenko 2001). These interactions do not happen in an insulating institutional environment; instead, they are embedded in and shaped by multifaceted and complex historical, political and social-structural contexts (e.g. race, gender, class, and ethnicity, etc.). Situated in such multifaceted social, political and intercultural constructions, novices'/newcomers' secondary socialization interaction will go through multiple, dynamic, challenging, and sometimes conflicting subjectifying or identification processes. In the process, a speaker may use the indexical value of language to "position" the self within a particular identity in response to particular interactional moments. Any facet of speakers' "repertoire of identities" may be fronted or indexed at a particular moment according to the context of an utterance and the specific goals they are trying to achieve. With such agencies, L2 learners can reproduce, elaborate, resist, or transform the very structures that shape them (Garret & Baquedano-Lopez 2002).

6. In second language socialization processes, L2 learners will naturally and necessarily go through intercultural transformation.

As mentioned above, for most second language learners, their second language socialization begins after their primary socialization in their original cultures has been more or less completed. That is, before they immerse themselves in the target languacultural contexts, they have already formed a pretty robust sense of "self image" or "identity" together with their own norms of communication, which are forged by their primary cultural, personal, situational, and relational experiences. When they start a boundary-crossing journey, through a continuous or prolonged intercultural contact with a new and unfamiliar languaculture, the newcomers will naturally and necessarily (although sometimes unconsciously) experience intercultural transformation at different paces and with different intensity (Kim, 1988). In the process, the communicative conventions of the learners' native languages and cultures are very likely to be transported across borders, which are infused with, corroded by and finally even replaced by newly constructed meanings and knowledge.

In this intercultural socialization process, challenged by the new cultural environment, second language learners tend to go through an internal transformation "in the direction of increasing fitness and compatibility in that environment" (Kim, 1988, p. 9). During the procedure, learners constantly construe, validate, and reformulate the meaning of their cross-cultural experiences. When they discover that their primary meaning structures are ineffective, problematic or even conflictual when they attempt to reflect on or to integrate new knowledge or experience structures, they tend to conduct a critical self-examination to reassess or critique the presuppositions formed in their primary socialization, which leads them to renegotiate and reconstruct their orientation to cultural belief, values, and behaviors. On the basis of the reevaluation and repositioning, adaptive transformation occurs, which is a procedure of becoming critically aware of how and why their presuppositions have come to "manipulate" the way they perceive, understand, and feel the new world. In the ever-ongoing socializing/transforming process, learners may critically adjust themselves linguistically and socioculturally. Through the transformation, the learners gradually 1) expand their repertoire of language resources and social identities, 2) become more inclusive, discriminating, and integrating in cross-cultural perspectives, and 3) develop multiple lenses to view and make sense of their worlds. All these contribute to promote second language learners'/users' cross-cultural sensitivity and their abilities to operate in different intercultural communication settings with appropriate, effective, and meaningful communicative performance.

In this complex process of intercultural socialization, cross-cultural transformation can occur with multiple facets and in multiple dimensions. For example, it can occur in the form of changes in perceptions, attitudes, and behavioral patterns; changes in linguistic proficiency and communicative competence; and changes in social, ethnic, or cultural identities. All these changes are constituted by, as well as constitute the transformation in intercultural transition and/or adaptation. With more integrative cross-cultural perspectives and smoother communicative practices, second language learners/users will gradually rediscover a full-fledged intercultural self-identity, which may finally lead them to achieve legitimate participation in a new community (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

To understand the intercultural secondary socialization process better, Kramsch's (1993) concept --- "*third place*"--- might be illuminating. To borrow and then to extend this concept (which originally referred to language classrooms), intercultural language socialization, which oftentimes occurs in institutional contexts (e.g. schools, workplaces), happens in the third place, which "*grows in the interstices between the cultures* the learner grew up with and the new cultures he or she is being introduced to" (p. 236, emphasis added). That is, the intercultural secondary socialization process unavoidably involves the interference which derives from primary language socialization, but second languaculture learners can find themselves more adapted or socialized to the intercultural settings when the overlap (third place) between the first and the second languaculture is *extended* through linguistic and sociocultural contacts and the consequent intercultural adaptive transformation. Through cultivating or facilitating intercultural transformation in secondary socialization, the "overlap across speech communities" tends to be enlarged, thus the communication "across geographical and social borders" (Ochs, 2002, p. 114) tends to be smoothened.

From all the above, we can see that second language socialization is an extremely complex process. Through the lens of intercultural language socialization, we emphasize that for second language learners/users, their second language socialization happens through

complex intercultural communication in multiple sociocultural contexts. During the developmental processes, language and cultural acquisition are co-constructed by veteran and novice participants in socializing routines and interactions. Since interactive routines tend to be socioculturally reflective and constitutive of cultural beliefs and interactive norms, sociolinguistic activities in such interactive contexts are the sites where local values, ideologies, and cultural preferences are inscribed, and where knowledge and skills are acquired and enhanced. As the main medium and tool to acquire intercultural communicative competence, social interactions in the target culture institutions (e.g. schools, workplace) form the arena for L2 learners/users to practice their agency, (re)establish their identities, and perform their intercultural transformations. In the process, the hospitality or hostility of the institutions can lead to either empowerment or disempowerment (Au, 1998); either socialization or "dys-socialization" (Atkinson, 2003) on the part of novices/newcomers.

Recognizing the increasingly intercultural/multicultural trend in educational settings, educators need to raise their intercultural communication sensitivity to avoid impeding gate-keeping forces in intercultural education, and to seek facilitating methodologies to empower second language learners' intercultural transformation. To achieve this purpose, SLA researchers need to scrutinize L2 learners' interactive practices and participatory routines socialized in target cultural institutional settings. They are the legitimate lenses through which researchers can investigate the forms, processes and consequences of L2 learners' intercultural language socialization in its immediate communicative contexts, which provide raw materials of empirical analysis and serve as windows on underlying principles of intercultural social organization and orientation. To capture a more holistic picture in such research, I argue for the feasibility of employing multiple methodologies to connect the micro level of the learners' situated interactions in communicative contexts with macro levels of sociocultural, historical, political, and other institutional factors to come to a fuller understanding of the L2 learners' multiple and dynamic developmental processes in intercultural communication settings. To achieve such multi-dimensional perspectives, ethnography of communication (EC) and conversation analysis (CA) are recommended to be integrated to look into L2 learner' intercultural language socialization.

Multiple Research Methodologies from Multifaceted Research Perspectives
Ethnography of Communication

Generally speaking, language socialization studies intend to capture how learners' communicative and interactional ability evolves over time by scrutinizing the fluid and complex contextual opportunities that different sociocultural activities and participation structures offer during the developmental process. Accordingly, Kulick and Schieffelin (2004) argue that, "language socialization studies should fulfill three criteria. They should *be ethnographic in design, longitudinal in perspective*, and they should *demonstrate the acquisition (or not) of particular linguistic and cultural practices over time and across contexts"* (emphasis added) (p. 350).

While ethnography, as a tradition, is privileged as the most appropriate approach to language socialization (Kulick & Shieffelin, 2004; Watson-Gegeo 2004), ethnography of communication (EC), as an important ethnographic approach particularly designed to the study of cultural meanings and communicative practices at different levels (Saville-Troike, 2003), can be especially suitable for (intercultural) LS studies.

As concluded by Saville-Troike (2003), the principal concerns of EC include:

"patterns and functions of communication, nature and definition of speech community, means of communicating, components of communicative competence, relationship of language to world view and social organization, and linguistic and social universals and inequalities" (p.10). That is, through the lens of EC, we can look at the role of communicative behavior in the conduct of social life as well as the larger sociopolitical contexts within which culturally situated language practices takes place. As we can see, this research orientation is very much in accordance with the foci of LS studies.

Also, with the intention of exploring both the universal and the specific sociolinguistic patterns in different sociocultural communities, ethnographers of communication adopt a comparative approach with a belief in "cultural relativism" (Saville-Troike, 2003, p. 97) in data collection, description and analysis. They believe that by comparing and contrasting forms and functions of communication in diverse languages and social settings, researchers can become sensitive to the fact that "many of the communicative practices assumed to be 'natural' or 'logical' are in fact as culturally unique and conventional as the language code itself" (Saville-Troike, 2003, p. 3). Through using the typical ethnographic techniques for data collection and data analysis, such as intensive participant observation in the field, triangulation of data collection, and thick description of data sources, and through its cultural relativism perspective, EC holds promise for a deeper exploration of intercultural communication by being able to uncover and compare the underlying social, cultural, historical meaning systems.

As once argued by Ochs (1996),

Culture like God, seems unknowable. Central to understanding the relation of language and culture in human development is long-term, rigorous ethnographic observation, recording, description, and analysis of displayed preferences and expectations for encoding and displaying psychological stances and social actions, and their historical and ontogenetic enduring and changing relation to social identities and activities. Without this ethnographic knowledge, it is difficult to grasp the realms of social meaning that novice and veteran members of communities are building when they interact, and the sociocultural fissure points that land them in tangled webs of miscommunication (p. 102).

Based on the above understandings, we can see that in order to achieve the purpose of combining language socialization and intercultural communication research paradigms to track and explain L2 learners' second language socialization experiences in intercultural communication contexts, ethnography of communication can provide a practical and powerful methodological tool "to guide the collection and analysis of descriptive data about the ways in which social meaning is conveyed" (Saville-Troike, p. 2).

Conversation Analysis

As a microsociological approach, conversation analysis has the overall objective of illuminating how social order is interactionally constituted (Markee, 2000; Seedhouse, 2004; Ten Have, 1999). Consistent with its ethnomethodological perspective, conversation analysis centers on social members' shared "methods" of producing meaning and inter-subjectivity through their talk exchanges. It therefore examines in detail the procedures by which participants' communicative interactions display their orientations and understandings.

Conversation analysts have shown that conversations everywhere are governed by universal principles of interactional ordering, so that participating in a verbal encounter involves

more than simply putting ones' own ideas into words. Conversing must be viewed as a cooperative activity where speakers must work to gain and maintain others' attention. As conversations move along on constantly shifting ground, conversationalists keep pace with one another by adapting to each other's shifting perspectives and by interpreting how messages combine to form coherent themes (Markee, 2000; Seedhouse, 2004; Ten Have, 1999). When talk flows on, participants jointly negotiate and arrive at interpretations of communicative intent. Talk is sequentially organized in accordance with local principles, such as those governing changes of speakers (turn-taking) at appropriate points in a conversation (Sacks, et al. 1974). The analyst's task is to "develop an emic perspective, to uncover and describe the organization and order; the main interest is in uncovering the underlying machinery which enables interactants to achieve this organization and order" (Seedhouse, 2004, p. 11).

With the above tenets, CA looks beyond individual words, utterances and the things they signify. Instead, it focuses on investigating some fine-grained signaling mechanisms. CA practitioners believe it is precisely these subtle details that lead to either successful or misplaced interpretation of interactions. It is recognized that some apparently trivial discourse markers, such as, turning-taking (Sacks et al. 1974), backchanelling (Tao & Thompson, 1991), and interruption (West, 1998) have significant cohesive forces. Ignorance of the culturally appropriate placement of such trivial discourse markers may cause misinterpretation of status, participation and power relationship between interlocutors. Insensitivity to such microscopic contextualization cues can frequently take on macro-importance and cause alarming consequences. The sequential accomplishment of the cohesive devices are crucial to the operation, success, or failure of an exchange in talk-in-interaction (Seedhouse, 2004; Ten Have, 1999). For example, in educational settings, misplacement and misinterpretation of the above culturally-based discourse markers may cause accumulative communication breakdown, misunderstanding, and frustration in intercultural interactions, for which second language learners are always the victims to impose the blame on, who may gradually internalize it into feelings of inadequacy. This may seriously curtail their investment and access to linguistic resources, interactional opportunities and academic/economic advancement available in the target language and cultural contexts (Norton, 2000; Pavlenko, 2001a).

As has been recognized, in intercultural communication between interlocutors from different cultures, it is frequently not the linguistic codes but the underlying differences in communicative strategies, discourse conventions and culturally-based inferential systems that lead to cross-cultural miscommunications. As the approach to interactional competence with a quite long research tradition (e.g. Sacks, et al. 1974), together with rigorous analytical practices, conversation analysis forms an ideal microscopic tool to examine how apparently subtle discourse markers are used and perceived within the turns and sequences of an exchange to signify participants' engagements and orientations during the ongoing interactive activity. Since it has the analytical capability to capture the intricate details of interactions, CA holds promises to reveal the causes of success or failure of exchanges in intercultural communication by scrutinizing underlying culturally based communicative conventions, and to capture L2 learners' developmental trajectory of acquiring intercultural communicative competence through tracking their process of adaptation to more target-like discourse markers in interactions.

Combining EC and CA

Whether EC and CA can be "seamlessly" combined can be a contentious issue. While it might be impossible to argue for a complete compatibility between these approaches, following some conversation analysts who claim that the incorporation of ethnographic information into their analyses promises a complete understanding of talk-in-interaction (e.g. Ten Have, 1999), as well as the scholars, who either advocate (e.g. Kasper, 2001) or have successfully integrated CA into their LS studies (Kanagy, 1999), I argue that it can be feasible and effective of extracting and combining the best parts of each approach to conduct research on intercultural language socialization studies. From the lens of EC, we can achieve a macroscopic description of the structure of a community of practice, determine the nature and significance of contextual features, and identify the patterns and functions of language in the community. Meanwhile, the typical longitudinal participation observation and multiple interviews required by EC will help the researcher to obtain first-hand observation on learners' languacultural developmental process. With the analytical tool of CA, the researcher can get the necessary method and microscopic perspective to examine L2 learners' communicative competence in interaction. The micro-analyzed data made possible by CA can make some developmental patterns stand out. A concrete study conducted with combined research methodologies that allow micro-and-macroscopic perspectives may be a promising academic attempt. How to integrate them to the best fit, however, can be a very intriguing, promising, and challenging research topic, which definitely deserves further examinations.

Conclusion

There is a growing awareness in recent years that "research has barely begun to attend to socialization of more than one language and one culture in linguistically and culturally heterogeneous communities" (He, 2000, p.142). Thus, scholars in the fields of SLA are calling for "a significantly enhanced awareness of the contextual and interactional dimensions of language use" in SLA (Firth and Wagner, 1997). To answer this call, this article manages to integrate the tenets of language socialization with the interests of intercultural communication studies to create a more inclusive explanatory framework. This effort may expand and enrich the two research paradigms themselves and compensate for the dearth of research in this interdisciplinary field. It may also enable a more panoramic interrogation of the joint development of L2 learners' language competence and sociocultural knowledge in complex intercultural communicative contexts. Methodologically speaking, by suggesting the combination of ethnography of communication with conversation analysis, we may capture the developmental trajectory of second language learners' intercultural socialization from both micro and macro perspectives, which can compensate each other to make a more comprehensive exploration of L2 learners' everyday communicative interaction. The intention to bridge the language socialization theory and intercultural communication theory, accompanying by a more holistic and multifaceted research methodology, may form a more integrative research approach to examine the experiences, barriers, transformations, and outcomes associated with second language socialization. It may also provide theoretical guide to examine the factors that either promote or impede second language acquisition.

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