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here but is dealt with in detail in chapter 12 of Jurafsky and Martin (2000). The same theoretical possibilities in terms of training from data and recovery of a best guess are available even for these more complex structures.

It is tempting to suppose that Swift's literary engine was a primitive part-of-speech tagger, that the 40 iron handles controlled the choice of appropriate urns, that the "Tenses, Moods, and Declensions" were encoded into the parts of speech corresponding to the urns, and that the chance of producing semi-coherent English text from it was greater than Gulliver was able to appreciate. Literary merit is another matter.

Conclusion

Statistical processing of language is a well-established subfield of language science, drawing on linguistics, computer science, and engineering. For extended introductions to the field, see Manning and Schütze (1999) and Jurafsky and Martin (2000), two textbooks that do a good job of representing the breadth of the field. The increasing availability of language samples in electronic form opens many possibilities for both language technology and theoretical investigation. These samples include carefully curated collections that have been annotated by expert linguists, larger but more lightly curated collections that have been annotated by semi-automatic means, and huge bodies of uncurated text culled from the World Wide Web. It is clear that all these are potentially useful sources of linguistic knowledge, but it is less clear how these sources might be used for maximum scientific and technological benefit.

See also: Classification of Text, Automatic Corpora; Corpus Linguistics; Natural Language Processing Overview; Parsing; Statistical Methods; Part-of-Speech Tagging; Part-of-Speech Tagging; Text Mining; Treebanks and Tagsets; WordNet(s).

References

(sometimes referred to as enculturation). But the two had developed quite separately from one another. Language acquisition research, rooted in developmental psychology and psycholinguistics, tended to treat language acquisition as a rather self-contained individual developmental process, largely ignoring the sociocultural contexts within which it occurs; conclusions drawn from studies conducted in mainstream North American and European settings were assumed to be universally valid. Meanwhile socialization research, rooted in anthropology and sociology, was conducted in a variety of ethnographic settings worldwide, but gave little attention to the central role of language as the primary medium through which socialization occurs. Working in collaboration with researchers from several disciplinary backgrounds (including linguistic anthropology, developmental psychology, sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, and education), Schieffelin and Ochs sought to combine the strengths of both of these established bodies of research and to bridge the gap between them.

**Axioms and Aims**

As this synthetic approach suggests, a central assumption in language socialization research is that the acquisition of language is inseparable from the acquisition of other kinds of cultural knowledge and practices. This is perhaps nowhere more clearly seen than in interactions between young children and their caregivers, which were the main focus of the earliest language socialization studies (Schieffelin and Ochs, 1986a, 1986b). As a young child is acquiring language, she or he is simultaneously developing a repertoire of social skills and a culturally specific world view. In learning how to use the language(s) of their community, children also learn how to think, how to comport themselves, and how to express (or otherwise manage) those feelings. As a developmental process, then, language acquisition is far more than a matter of learning to produce grammatically well-formed utterances. It is also a matter of learning how to use language in socially and pragmatically appropriate, locally intelligible ways, and as a means of engaging with others in culturally meaningful activities. Over the course of time, this makes it possible for the child to engage with others in an increasingly broad range of social contexts, and to assume increasingly complex roles and identities. (To varying degrees, these assumptions are shared by researchers in allied fields such as developmental psychology and developmental pragmatics; see Bloom [1998] and Bugental and Goodnow [1998] for useful overviews, and see Blum-Kulka and Snow [2002] for a recent collection of case studies.)

Language socialization research is thus concerned with the microgenesis of communicative competence (Schieffelin and Ochs, 1996), which comprises but also goes well beyond linguistic competence in the generativist sense. Communicative competence also comprises the practical knowledge, much of it predis- cursive (if not preconscious), that one must have in order to use language as a social tool, to engage in talk as a social activity, and to coconstruct meaningful interactive contexts with others. Language socialization research is thus concerned with all of the knowledge, orientations, and practices that make it possible for an individual to function as — and, crucially, to be regarded by others as — a competent member of (or participant in) a particular community, however broadly or narrowly defined.

**Examples of Key Insights and Areas of Investigation**

Since the initial formulation of the language socialization research paradigm in the early 1980s, language socialization studies have been conducted in a broad range of settings worldwide. These studies have provided the empirical foundations for various kinds of comparative insights, which in turn have given rise to new theoretical developments and productive new areas of thematic focus as the paradigm has continued to develop.

**Nonuniversality of Baby Talk**

In their pioneering comparison of language socialization practices among members of three groups — white middle-class Americans, Kaluli (of Papua New Guinea), and Samoans — Ochs and Schieffelin (1984) found important culturally based differences in several areas. One such difference concerns baby talk — the simplified, stylized register that caregivers in some groups (e.g., white middle-class Americans) use with infants and young children. Previously, language acquisition researchers had assumed, based on studies conducted in mainstream North American and European contexts, that baby talk is universal (i.e., used by caregivers in all societies), and that this ostensibly accommodative way of speaking facilitates the child's acquisition of language. Ochs and Schieffelin found that not only do Samoans and Kaluli never use baby talk; they rarely address preverbal children at all, and do not treat them as conversational partners. Even so, young Kaluli and Samoan children are immersed in a richly verbal environment from the earliest days of their lives. Ochs and Schieffelin found that they
acquire language at more or less the same age, and at the same developmental rate, as children in Western societies.

**Differing Cultural Understandings of Human Development**

Ochs and Schieffelin also found that the preverbal child's abilities and tendencies are conceptualized quite differently from one group to another, and that the professed goals of language socialization practices differ accordingly. The egalitarian Kaluli regard preverbal children as 'soft' and helpless, based on not just their lack of physical abilities, but also their inability to use language as a social tool, i.e., as a means of getting what they need or want from others (Schieffelin, 1990). For the Kaluli, a primary goal of socialization is to 'harden' children, which is largely a matter of helping them learn to use 'hard' (adult-like, socially effective) language. (From a Kaluli perspective, the use of baby talk would be antithetical to this goal.) Samoans, in contrast, regard preverbal infants as willful, defiant, and antisocial; among their foremost concerns is that children learn their place in hierarchical Samoan society, and that they learn to act and speak accordingly (Ochs, 1988). Age is an important dimension of social stratification in Samoa, so in this regard young children are near the bottom of the hierarchy. They must learn to adapt themselves to social situations, as they cannot expect their elders to accommodate them (such as by using deliberately simplified language). The first words attributed to children in these two societies reflect these differing cultural conceptions of the nature of the child: Kaluli believe that a child's first meaningful utterances will be the words for *mother* and *breast*, while Samoans expect to hear a defiant *(Eat) shit!* (Ochs and Schieffelin, 1984).

**Influence of Local Social Norms on Children's Acquisition and Production of Specific Linguistic Forms**

Language socialization researchers have demonstrated that specific aspects of culture and social organization such as those just described can influence children's acquisition of language in quite specific ways at the level of linguistic form. A striking example is Platt's (1986) study of Samoan children's acquisition of the deictic verbs *sau* 'to come' and *'aumai* 'to bring/give.' Young children frequently hear both verbs used as imperatives in everyday contexts, and *sau* is the less semantically complex of the two. Based on this information alone, the expectation would be that children would begin using *sau* productively earlier than they would begin using *'aumai*. But as noted above, young Samoan children occupy a low position in an age-stratified social hierarchy. Very rarely is it appropriate for them to tell anyone to come — it is the prerogative of higher-status persons in Samoan society to remain stationary and to have lower-ranking persons come to them. Young children are expected and encouraged to appeal to higher-status persons to give them things (such as food), however. Thus the number of persons toward whom a young child can appropriately use the imperative *give* is far greater than the number of persons whom the child can tell or ask to *come*. Young children's much more frequent use of *'aumai' 'give* can be taken as evidence that they learn the social norms that organize and constrain the use of these two verbs at the same time as they learn the linguistic forms.

**Differing Social Functions of Specific Verbal Practices across Cultures and Social Groups**

Language socialization researchers have found that the same basic type of practice or activity may serve different functions in different communities, even in the same society. A good example is verbal teasing. Teasing may be used as a means of social control, i.e., to shame a child and thereby discourage him or her from engaging in a particular behavior (perhaps as an alternative to corporal punishment or some other form of coercive physical intervention, which may be dispreferred); to toughen the child by teaching him or her how to deal with others' affronts, and how to be self-assertive in return; or as a form of interactive play that provides a basis for a child and an adult to engage each other verbally without need or expectation of exchanging substantive information (Schieffelin and Ochs, 1986b). Examples such as this reveal the potential of language socialization research to reveal both universal and culturally specific aspects of socialization practices, and of communicative practices more generally.

**Delimiting Universals of Communicative Practice**

Ways of dealing with unintelligibility provide another such example and may offer insight into a universal aspect of communicative practice. Schieffelin and Ochs (1996) propose a universal set of possible responses to unintelligibility, first making a distinction between speaker-rooted unintelligibility (in which the speaker perceives his or her own utterance to be unintelligible to an interlocutor) and addressee-rooted unintelligibility (in which the speaker perceives an interlocutor's utterance to be unintelligible). In each case, they assert, four basic responses are available to speakers everywhere. But in different communities, one response may be preferred over the other three; or two or three may be regarded as more or less equally valid options while another is strongly dispreferred.
In the case of addressee-rooted unintelligibility, the four universal options are:

1. ignore unintelligibility;
2. display nonunderstanding;
3. verbally guess at what interlocutor might be saying;
4. negatively sanction interlocutor's unintelligibility (e.g., by teasing or shaming).

Schieffelin and Ochs observe that among Kaluli and Samoans, option #3 is least preferred—quite unlike in mainstream American society. Looking beyond these three groups, one might reasonably surmise that in East Asian societies such as Japan and Korea, where the social dynamics of honorification are pervasive and subtle, empathetic and intuitive styles of interaction are strongly preferred, and there is much concern with face (one's own as well as that of one's interlocutor), option #4 would be dispreferred in most situations; whereas #1, #2, and #3 would all be more preferred, but to differing degrees under different social circumstances (e.g., #3 is much more likely to be used in casual conversation with a peer than in a workplace exchange with one's supervisor).

Language Practices at Home and in School

Certain themes addressed in early language socialization research have been carried forward and taken in new directions in subsequent years. Heath's (1983) comparative study of language use in two working-class communities in the USA (one black, one white) and the implications for children's rates of success in school has had enduring influence. Heath's work continues to inform recent studies that examine various kinds of contingencies and disjunctures between children's home environments and the classroom. The dinner table conversations of white middle-class American families (Ochs et al., 1989, 1992), for example, have been shown to foster specific types of problem-solving orientations and to encourage children to display skills that are expected and rewarded in the classroom. In other settings, cultural disjunctures between home and school lead to poor educational outcomes (Watson-Gegeo, 1992). Research on children from immigrant and other nonmainstream communities in the USA suggests that when classroom activities and modes of interaction draw on communicative practices and participant structures that are familiar to these children, their levels of participation and academic achievement improve significantly (Gutiérrez et al., 2001). Heath's influence can also be traced to other recent studies that focus on the role of narrative in language socialization. Baquedano-López (2001), for example, examines how narrative practices serve as a resource for the socialization of a transnational Mexican identity in a Catholic parish in Los Angeles; and Capps and Ochs (1995) consider the central role that narratives of personal experience play in the discursive construction, and quite possibly the social reproduction, of agoraphobia.

The Development of Subjectivities

A central theme of virtually all language socialization studies is the development of locally intelligible subjectivities, or ways of being in the social world (Kulick and Schieffelin, 2004). This is clearly seen, for example, in Clancy's (1999) study of how affective states and verbal expressions of affect are negotiated between Japanese mothers and their young children; in Schieffelin's (1990) examination of how Kaluli mothers cultivate sibling relationships among their children such that elder sisters will 'feel sorry for,' and always be willing to give to, their younger brothers; and in Fader's (2001) study of how Hasidic Jews in New York City use literacy practices in socializing girls' gender and ethnic identities—also an important means by which symbolic boundaries separating the Hasidim from other groups (including other Jewish groups) are maintained. As these examples suggest, virtually all aspects of subjectivity, including affect, morality, and desires, are shaped in culturally specific ways—and in accordance with cultural preferences, by and large—through language socialization. But in an interesting and productive reorientation of this perspective, Kulick and Schieffelin (2004) urge language socialization researchers to consider 'bad subjects'—those individuals in every community who persistently display culturally dispreferred traits and/or engage in nonnormative, deviant behaviors. As Kulick and Schieffelin point out, "the focus on expected and predictable outcomes is a weakness if there is not also an examination of cases in which socialization doesn't occur, or where it occurs in ways that are not expected or desired" (Kulick and Schieffelin, 2004: 353). Language socialization research must account for reproduction as well as "why socializing messages to behave and feel in particular ways may also produce their own inversion" (Kulick and Schieffelin, 2004: 356).

Languages and Cultures in Contact

As noted previously, recent language socialization studies explore the ways in which locally situated interactions articulate with macro-level social processes, such as cultural revitalization movements and postcolonial nation-building. Many of these studies have been conducted in settings characterized by sustained contact between languages and cultures, such as occurs in postcolonial, creole, diasporic, urban, and border communities (Baquedano-López, 2001; Fader,
These studies investigate the ways in which language socialization processes unfold in linguistically and socioculturally heterogeneous settings characterized by bilingualism and multilingualism, code-switching, language shift, and other contact-induced linguistic and sociocultural phenomena. The coexistence of two or more codes within a particular community, whatever the sociohistorical circumstances that have brought them into contact, is rarely a neutral or unproblematic state of affairs. It tends to be a focal point of discursive elaboration and social conflict, with complex linkages to other, equally contested issues that play out on multiple levels, from the household to the state. As they are socialized to use language, children are also socialized into knowledge of these intimately related issues, and of preferred and dispreferred ways of dealing with them, from their earliest years.

**Dynamics of Language Shift**

In some contact settings, language socialization practices may be an important mechanism of language shift—a point made vividly by Kulick’s (1992) study of rapid shift in a small village in Papua New Guinea. Building on Kulick’s work—which shows that local cultural and ideological factors may be of greater importance in accounting for language shift than the macrosociological (e.g., political and economic) factors that are more commonly invoked—more recent studies have shown language shift to be a contingent, nonlinear phenomenon in which language socialization practices play a crucial but often subtle mediating role. Paugh (in press) shows that young children in the Caribbean island of Dominica are encouraged by their parents and other adults to acquire English, which is contributing to language shift away from the local Afro-French creole. But in later years, as children spend increasing amounts of time interacting with peers beyond the supervision (and earshot) of adults, they increasingly use the creole in their play as a way of enacting adult roles and activities. Although ultimately it may not prevent language shift from running its course, at present such pretend play seems to provide older children with opportunities to develop some degree of proficiency in the creole. In his investigation of a quite similar situation in the Caribbean island of St. Lucia, Garrett (2005) examines code-specific genres as the basis for socialization activities in which adults encourage young children to be verbally self-assertive. Cursing, insulting, and other locally valued self-assertive ways of speaking conventionally require use of the historically stigmatized Afro-French creole language that many St. Lucian caregivers (much like their counterparts in Dominica) otherwise discourage children from using. The persistence of socialization routines in which adults playfully urge children to use the creole in self-assertive ways favors the maintenance of such code-specific genres, which in turn may be having a retarding or dampening effect on language shift.

**The Persistence of Everyday Practices**

These and other recent studies suggest that a language socialization approach can yield a more nuanced account of ongoing changes and shifts in local communicative practice than can larger-scale, quantitatively oriented studies that are less attentive to situated interactions (particularly those occurring at the critical juncture between generations). In a case where language shift is already quite far along, for example, a language socialization approach may reveal that culturally specific ways of using language persist in speakers’ use of the ‘new’ code. In her study of a Navajo community, Field (2001) demonstrates that although today’s bilingual caregivers often speak English to children, they continue to socialize traditional Navajo values of autonomy, self-determinacy, and respect through the use of a triadic participant structure in issuing directives. Based on this observation, Field (2001: 249–250) proposes that “certain aspects of language use may be more conservative, or more resistant to change, than code.” She goes on to assert, “[I]t is exactly those aspects of a speech community’s interaction that are tacitly taken for granted that are also the most basic, pervasive, and resistant to change. Furthermore, they are maintained through the most mundane routines and forms of everyday communicative practice—which also happen to be the preferred context for research on language socialization.”

**Essential Features of Language Socialization Research**

In whatever setting a particular study is conducted, and whatever specific linguistic and sociocultural phenomena are the focus of the investigation, four key features are essential to language socialization research. These four features reflect the paradigm’s interdisciplinary origins as well as its commitment to taking a maximally holistic perspective on the relationships among language, culture, and society.

1. **Longitudinal study design.** Language socialization researchers closely track developmental changes in individual subjects by periodically recording their participation in naturally occurring socialization interactions and activities over a developmentally significant span of time. In order for such tracking to be feasible, a language socialization study
usually focuses on a relatively small number of children or novices—typically three to six, or a single small cohort (if the study is conducted in a school or other institutional setting). Qualitative depth of analysis is emphasized over quantitative breadth. Data in the form of naturalistic audio and/or audio-video recordings of the focal children or novices interacting with caregivers and other community members are collected at regular intervals (e.g., monthly), usually over the course of a year or more of sustained fieldwork. Some researchers revisit their field sites periodically over several years or even decades (e.g., Schieffelin, 1996) in order to keep up with individual and community development over longer spans of time.

2. Field-based collection and analysis of a substantial corpus of naturalistic audio or audio-video data. Regular, periodic data collection as described above gives rise to a large corpus of recordings; a year-long study typically yields 75–100 hours. A corpus of this size strikes a balance between ethnographic and longitudinal adequacy and practical manageability. But collection of the recordings is only a first step; in order for them to serve as a meaningful data set, the researcher must transcribe and annotate them while in the field. This is accomplished with the aid of local consultants, usually members of the community in which the research is being conducted (such as older relatives of the focal children). For language socialization researchers, this one-on-one collaboration with local consultants is indispensable. In addition to assisting with the most basic aspects of transcription (such as clarifying specific words and phrases captured in the recordings), consultants can bring to the researcher’s attention layers of meaning that would otherwise escape his or her notice or understanding. Collaborative transcription also provides ongoing opportunities for the researcher to benefit from consultants’ native-speaker intuitions about the use of particular linguistic forms and variants, and their perspectives on many other aspects of local social life.

3. A holistic, theoretically informed ethnographic perspective. This is achieved in part through sustained fieldwork and a commitment to ethnographic methods (including participant observation), and in part through familiarity with current theoretical issues and debates concerning such methods. Both depth and breadth of ethnographic observation are important in language socialization research. In addition to tracking individuals over the course of time (as described above), the researcher must observe and record in a broad variety of contexts in order to understand how different social settings may influence those individuals’ language usage and modes of participation. Doing so allows the researcher to observe and record a broad range of persons as well; in effect, tracking a particular focal subject across contexts provides access to an entire social network, and often to a broad cross-section of the community that includes fictive kin, peers, neighbors, etc. Although most recorded data are collected during everyday activities, the researcher must be attentive as well to exceptional events (i.e., those that occur rarely or unpredictably) and to periodic activities such as those associated with agricultural, political, and ritual cycles. The systematic collection of recorded data that is central to any language socialization study may be supplemented by surveys, interviews, elicitation sessions, or other methods, depending upon the kinds of data that are needed in order to address the study’s central research questions. Whatever complementary methods are chosen, the researcher should have a thorough understanding of the theoretical issues in which they are based.

4. Attention to both micro and macro levels of analysis, and to linkages between them. This can be considered part of the ethnographic perspective outlined above, but is important enough to merit consideration in its own right. Language socialization research is not just a matter of producing detailed ethnographic accounts of individual developmental processes and the local contexts in which they occur. An overarching goal is to understand how such individual developmental processes relate to larger sociocultural and historical processes. As they analyze their recordings and other microethnographic data, language socialization researchers are constantly on the lookout for patterns and principles that may also be discernible at macro levels of analysis. Likewise, when they make macroethnographic observations, they consider various ways in which the patterns or principles identified may be writ small in their recorded data. Ultimately, the language socialization paradigm is comparative in perspective, recognizing that while some aspects of language socialization are universal, others vary considerably from one sociocultural setting (or historical period) to another. Attention to micro–macro connections is an important means by which researchers are able to distinguish between the universal and the culturally specific, and to consider the relationships between them.

In recent years, some researchers who have claimed to be doing language socialization research have
largely if not completely ignored one or more of these four essential areas. (See Kulick and Schieffelin [2004] and Watson-Gegeo and Nielsen [2003] for recent comments on language socialization research design and methodology.) A short-term study that offers no longitudinal observations, a study based solely on questionnaires and interviews, or one that makes use of naturalistic recordings but is not ethnographic in any meaningful sense simply does not constitute language socialization research. (Such a study may yield interesting data and may contribute meaningfully to other research paradigms, of course.)

That said, the language socialization paradigm is sufficiently flexible to comprise a broad range of studies that place varying degrees of emphasis on the four features outlined above. Since the paradigm's initial formulation, certain trends have emerged in language socialization research that reflect broader trends in the social sciences. Most early language socialization studies were conducted in small-scale non-Western communities and focused primarily on microethnographic levels of analysis. These studies yielded classic ethnographic descriptions of these communities as well as fine-grained, strongly longitudinal accounts of how individual developmental processes unfold within them. More recent studies, many of them conducted in Western societies and in various kinds of socioculturally and sociolinguistically heterogeneous settings, have tended to emphasize the ways in which individuals and local communities are implicated in macro-level processes such as those associated with globalization phenomena, and the ways in which everyday practices of individuals shape and are shaped by those processes (Garrett and Baquedano-López, 2002). Similarly, language socialization studies conducted by researchers of different disciplinary backgrounds show certain broad differences in orientation, such as whether they place greater emphasis on ethnographic topics and issues of social theory, or on grammatical development and the functions and distribution of specific linguistic forms and structures (Ochs and Schieffelin, 1995).

Language Socialization across the Lifespan

Language socialization is always a reciprocal, dialectical process in which the learner, regardless of age or level of experience, is much more than a passive recipient of input. The child or novice plays an active role in coconstructing every interaction in which she or he participates, however limited that participation might be; even a preverbal infant must be regarded as an emergent participant (de León, 1998), who, while being socialized himself or herself, is in various ways socializing others into such roles as mother, father, and elder sibling. Novices can often be observed to resist socialization, or to steer socializing interactions in new, sometimes unexpected directions. Older children may even assume the role of expert vis-à-vis their elders, as when a school-age child introduces his or her parents to a new technology (e.g., computers), or when adult immigrants with limited proficiency in the language of the host society rely on their bilingual children to assist them in dealing with persons and institutions outside the household.

Although the majority of studies conducted thus far have focused on young children, others, particularly in recent years, have focused on language socialization later in the life cycle: in middle childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. As this suggests, language socialization researchers consider socialization to be a lifelong process. Even those who study young children avoid treating child development as unilinear progression toward a static, monolithic adult status. Likewise, in studies of older children and adolescents, it is not assumed that they are gradually taking on pre-existing adult roles and identities; on the contrary, they can often be observed, particularly within their peer groups, to contest and renegotiate the tropes and discourses of identity (including gender and racial/ethnic stereotypes) that circulate among adults in their communities and in society at large.

Entry into adult status, however locally defined, is by no means the end of socialization. Adults continue to be socialized into new roles, statuses, identities, and practices, many of which involve new ways of using language. Adults may find it necessary or desirable to master new registers or styles associated with changes in their vocational or professional lives, or with new avocations or other activities that broaden their social horizons and involve participation in new communities of practice. Similarly, emigration, religious conversion, and other significant life changes may make it necessary or desirable for adults to master new codes and/or new discursive genres, which may involve either spoken or written forms of language (Schieffelin, 1996).

Reproduction and Continuity

For language socialization researchers, close analyses of individuals' participation in naturally occurring interactions are not ends in themselves, but provide empirical points of entry into larger issues of sociocultural reproduction and transformation. Among the most significant contributions of language socialization research is the insight that it yields into the everyday life of a community – the mundane activities and interactions in which ordinary individuals
participate on a daily basis, constituting the warp and weft of social life. As linguistic anthropologists have long recognized, a community’s norms, values, ideologies, patterns of social organization, and cultural preferences of various kinds are inscribed in—and to a great extent, constituted by—everyday communicative practices and social interactions. For language socialization researchers, this means that it is possible to investigate the ways in which everyday exchanges such as those between a young child and his or her primary caregiver relate to other domains of social structure and cultural meaning such as cosmological belief systems, kinship, and patterns of exchange and reciprocity.

The cultural knowledge that guides an individual’s participation in mundane social interactions tends to be difficult for the anthropologist or other investigator to tap into because it is implicit, common-sense knowledge that is seldom reflected upon or articulated. But even adults or experts for whom it is second nature realize that it does not just come naturally to the child or novice. Virtually all socialization activities (even those that do not involve explicit teaching) are routinized to some degree, so as to provide the child or novice with opportunities to engage in more or less predictable, schematically structured interactions with caregivers, teachers, or other more experienced persons. Socialization activities are thus contexts in which the background knowledge that adults or experts draw upon during the course of everyday activities tends to be discursively formulated and explicitly articulated for the benefit of children or novices. To be sure, the routinized, explicit qualities of socialization activities also make them a prime analytic focus for the investigator seeking to understand the underlying cultural principles that organize day-to-day social life in the community as a whole.

**Transformation and Change**

Language socialization research is not merely a matter of accounting for linguistic and cultural reproduction and continuity, however. Language socialization researchers recognize that everyday communicative practices are finely guided by preferences, orientations, and dispositions that are social in origin and culturally specific in nature. But at the same time, they are creatively and strategically deployed by individuals whose particular configurations of interests, intentions, and goals are uniquely their own. Language socialization research therefore highlights the open-ended, negotiated, sometimes contested nature of everyday life, and recognizes that the most ordinary activities may be sites of innovation and far-reaching change.

Languages themselves change over time, and language is a crucial medium through which virtually any aspect of culture may be contested, resisted, renegotiated, and ultimately transformed. Recognizing this, language socialization researchers regard both language and culture as fundamentally emergent, dynamic, open-ended domains that partake of all of the ebbs and flows of social life. A corollary of this is that any given language or culture greatly exceeds the capacities (cognitive, practical, and otherwise) of any individual speaker or social actor; every individual’s access, therefore, is necessarily partial (Schiefelin, 1990). This partiality is contingent on specific configurations of social variables (gender, birth order, class, ethnicity, etc.) that in turn shape, and are shaped by, the individual’s lived experiences. The variation among individuals that inevitably results—even among children in the same household, or students in the same classroom cohort—is a primordial source of social dynamics, which over the course of time give rise to innovation and change in language and culture alike.

**Toward a Relational, Nonlinear Perspective on Human Development**

Language socialization researchers therefore avoid conceptualizing human development as a matter of individuals acquiring pre-existent bodies of cultural knowledge, linguistic forms, etc., that are static and bounded. Rather, language and culture, and individuals’ acquisition thereof, are conceptualized in relational terms, emphasizing their symbolically mediated, coconstructed, dynamically emergent qualities (Kramsch, 2002).

This is not to say that the heuristic value of established notions of system and structure are spurned in favor of a radical antiformalism. In practical terms, the processes with which language socialization research is centrally concerned can hardly be described and analyzed without reference to some such notions (e.g., grammar, code, speech community), nor without due regard for the demonstrable formal and structural properties that make them coherent units of analysis. The challenge is to avoid unduly reifying such systems and structures: to avoid treating them as self-contained, autonomous entities that somehow exist apart from the historically particular social worlds and lived experiences out of which they emerge, and by virtue of which they can be discerned, labeled, and posited as units of analysis in the first place. The grammar of a given language, for example, is better regarded as a precipitate of or distillation from the ongoing flow and flux of communicative
practice (at a specific historical moment in the social lives of actual speakers) than as an abstract, timeless basis for or prerequisite of communicative practice (by hypothetical speakers within an idealized, homogeneous community).

Similar concerns inform language socialization researchers' nonteleological perspectives on the outcomes of socialization (Kramsch, 2002). Individual development is recognized to be variable, contingent, nonlinear, and ultimately open-ended. Differing degrees and types of developmental progress and multiple kinds of successful outcomes are recognized—even when the arena of investigation is a classroom or other institutional context in which the participants themselves differentiate success and failure in much starker terms.

The relational tensions that language socialization researchers seek to explore are well captured by Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Habitus can be defined as an integrated set of durable, embodied dispositions which predispose the individual to act and react in ways that are more or less specifiable, more or less predictable, but ultimately open-ended and underdetermined. Habitus is the emergent outcome of numerous densely intersecting factors—virtually all of them mediated and substantially influenced by culture ranging from gender and class status to the particulars of individual life experience. An individual's habitus predisposes him or her to perceive, think, and act in semi-routinized ways, and to regard certain conditions in the world around him or her as normal. But habitus does not rigidly determine that individual's behavior; it is open-ended, allowing for creativity, improvisation, and innovation.

A defining characteristic of habitus is that it is inculcated, i.e., socialized; the dispositions to which Bourdieu refers are said to be acquired largely through socialization, particularly during the early years of the lifespan. Bourdieu's work says very little about how socialization actually comes about, however. Language socialization research strives to fill this gap in our knowledge of human development by means of empirically grounded studies, and in so doing, to contribute to understandings of the multiplex relationships among language, society, and culture.

See also: Anthropological Linguistics: Overview; Bilingual Language Development: Early Years; Communicative Competence; Communities of Practice; Cross-Linguistic Comparative Approaches to Language Acquisition; Early Socialization and Language; Identity in Sociocultural Anthropology and Language; Language Acquisition Research Methods; Language Change and Cultural Change; Language Development: Overview; Language Ideology; Linguistic Anthropology; Social Aspects of Pragmatics; Socialization; Speech and Language Community.

Bibliography


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**Language Spread**

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The term 'language spread' alternates in the literature with such other terms as 'language expansion,' 'language dispersal,' and 'language diffusion' in reference to the fact that a language acquires more speakers who use it as a vernacular or as a lingua franca. The process may or may not be a concomitant of geographical expansion due, for instance, to trade or to the colonization of other territories by its speakers. A critical factor is its adoption by another group, not the demographic increase of the original population. This explanation applies as much to the fact that English has been gaining more and more speakers around the world as to the fact that it gradually acquired more and more speakers among the Celts in the British Isles, having originated between the 6th and 7th centuries as the language of the Germanic invaders. It is also as true of the spread of Latin from Rome to the surrounding areas, in Italy, in the 4th century B.C. as of its dispersal in the Roman Empire, where it transformed into the Romance languages. It likewise applies to the gradual Romanization of the Romance countries, at the expense of the more indigenous Celtic languages, as well as to the dispersal of some of the Romance languages (French, Portuguese, and Spanish) around the world and their transformation in some places (e.g., the Caribbean and Indian Ocean former plantation settlement colonies) into vernaculars now disfranchised as Creoles. The evolution is just as true of Swahili too, in East Africa, bearing in mind that it was so named by the Arab traders in the 7th century in association with the coastal populations who spoke related Bantu languages from Kenya to Mozambique. They used its