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PRAGMATIC SOCIALIZATION

INTRODUCTION

As linguistic anthropologists have long recognized, cultural values, beliefs, ideologies, expectations, and preferences are indexed in everyday discourse and social interactions. A powerful contribution that the language socialization paradigm makes to an understanding of language development is its close attention to the linguistic forms that are used to socialize children and other novices into expected roles and behaviors in particular cultural contexts. The difference between language socialization and developmental pragmatics as approaches to the acquisition of communicative competence, according to Schieffelin and Ochs (1986), is only one of scope and perspective, not the object of research itself. As Ochs (1996) explains, language socialization entails "socialization to use language *meaningfully, appropriately, and effectively*" (p. 408, italics added). In this sense, most language socialization research will implicitly, if not explicitly, deal with the acquisition or development of pragmatic competence, something it is deemed "eminently capable of" examining (Kasper, 2001).

Pragmatic socialization is defined by Blum-Kulka (1997) as "the ways in which children are socialized to use language in context in socially and culturally appropriate ways" (p. 3). Most studies cited in this chapter pay special attention to the domain of pragmatic development. They reveal the acquisition of language and sociocultural competence as developmentally intertwined processes within daily routine activities in which children (or novices) learn to interpret, negotiate, and index meaning while (co-)constructing different types of social/cultural identities. Research done within the framework of pragmatic socialization reflects a more social and contextual orientation than the "cognitive/mentalistic" orientation of earlier pragmatics studies.

Researchers have explored both first language (L1) pragmatic socialization and the pragmatic (re)socialization of learners in various learning contexts in bilingual and multilingual societies (e.g., Becker, 1982; Clancy, 1986; Dufon, 1999; Gleason, Perlman, and Greif, 1984; Li, 1998, 2000; Schieffelin and Ochs, 1986; Ohta, 1994, 1999). In this chapter, I review literature in both L1 and additional language domains.

EARLY DEVELOPMENTS

The majority of early pragmatic socialization research was carried out by L1 researchers who built upon the work of child developmental pragmatics in the late 1970s and early 1980s (see Ochs and Schieffelin, Language Socialization: An Historical Overview, Volume 8) and extended the traditional microanalysis of interactions between children and their parents/caregivers by linking these processes to more general ethnographic accounts of cultural values and beliefs. The pragmatic behaviors of children, their peers, and caregivers, were compared with interactional patterns within the wider community. For instance, the Samoan children's speech act of clarification was tied to comparable routines in legal, school, and work settings (Ochs, 1988). Rhetorical questions by and to Kaluli children were compared with cultural preferences for indirect speech style or "turned over" language (Schieffelin, 1986). The speech act performance of teasing and asserting by white American working class children was linked to the value of such language competence in the community (Miller, 1986). The structure of Kwara'ae children's disagreement and conflict resolution was, similarly, guided by norms governing these activities in Kwara'ae adults' communication (Watson-Gegeo and Gegeo, 1986). The main focus of these studies was children's acquisition of a complex set of culturally specific rules such as the effective performance of interactional routines (events and acts), appropriate conversational strategies, and expressions of politeness, which are part of the pragmatic competence required to successfully participate in social communication. In addition, they examined the kind of metapragmatic input parents provide to socialize their children into and through such routines (Becker, 1994; Gleason, Perlman, and Greif, 1984; Goldfield and Snow, 1992; Ochs, 1988; Schieffelin, 1990; Schieffelin and Ochs, 1986).

Pragmatic socialization processes may be either explicit or implicit (Ochs, 1986, 1990). Explicit socialization is the process used when caregivers clearly teach social norms shared by members of society. In Ochs' (1990) terms, this is "socialization to *use* language" (p. 291). Eliciting politeness routines (e.g., "Say 'Thanks!'" or "What's the magic word?"), or offering conversational rules (e.g., "It's your brother's turn!") are examples of how language is used explicitly as a medium and object of socialization. However, even though explicit socialization is the most salient to observe, "the greatest part of sociocultural information is keyed implicitly," a case of socialization *through* the use of language (Ochs, 1990, p. 291). By observing and interacting with more expert members in language practices, novices develop an understanding of sociocultural phenomena and become competent members of a community. For example, Gleason, Perlman, and Greif (1984) found that young children learn how boys and girls (like men and women) are supposed to speak and behave by hearing gender-differentiated language at home or in other contexts.

One domain that has received considerable attention in pragmatic studies is the notion of politeness. Indeed, "politeness is embedded in all aspects of human social interaction and as such is central to pragmatic socialization," according to Blum-Kulka (1997, p. 142). Researchers in North America have described how middle-class mothers devote great efforts to socializing children into expected, polite behavior, such as the routines and expressions *please, excuse me, thank you*, and turn-taking rules, in various contexts, including "trick or treat" visits on Halloween, dinner table conversations, and other daily occurring interactions (Becker, 1994; Gleason, Perlman, and Greif, 1984).

Researchers have noted, however, that even though children are often labeled as "novices" in the pragmatic socialization process, they are not merely passive receivers but are active participants in constructing metapragmatic knowledge, and also have the potential to socialize their caregivers (Becker, 1994; Gleason, Perlman, and Greif, 1984; Schieffelin and Ochs, 1986).

MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS

In the two decades since the earliest formulation of what has become a language socialization paradigm, Ochs' (1988) groundbreaking research in Western Samoa remains the most often cited work in recent pragmatic socialization studies of "socialization through the use of language" and "socialization to use language." Particular attention is given to the socializing role of indexicals, that is, linguistic resources that derive their meaning from conventional associations with the sociocultural dimensions of context. Ochs (1996) states that "a basic tenet of language socialization research is that *socialization is in part a process of assigning situational, i.e. indexical meanings* (e.g., temporal, spatial, social identity, social act, social activity, affective or epistemic meaning) to particular forms (e.g., interrogative forms, diminutive affixes, raised pitch, and the like)" (p. 411, italics in original). Indexical knowledge is seen as "the core of linguistic and cultural competence and is the locus where language acquisition and socialization interface" (Ochs, 1996, p. 414).

One important element of social competence investigated in Ochs' (1996) study is the linguistic indexing of affective stance – culturally appropriate ways to express feelings and to recognize the moods and emotions displayed by others. Caregiver-child verbal interactions have been recorded and analyzed to demonstrate how Samoan children

acquire affective expressions of love, fear, sympathy, and shame through adults' and older siblings' use of affectively loaded linguistic forms (e.g., particles such as affective specifiers and affective intensifiers) in speech acts such as teasing, shaming, challenging, and asserting. For example, the particle "e" in Samoan can index anger, disappointment, displeasure, or irritation. Children learn at a very early age that adding this particle to an imperative sentence can signal a threat or a warning. In addition, before children acquire the neutral (unmarked) personal pronoun, they have already mastered the special first personal pronoun indexing sympathy to make their imperatives sound like "pleading" or "begging," which is a culturally preferred way of requesting in Samoan society.

The indexing of social identities (including status, roles, and relationships) is another component of language socialization. In hierarchical Western Samoan society, not only a linguistic form (e.g., a certain verb) can index a higher social rank of the speaker, but the structure and organization of discourse routines themselves can also encode social status and relationship. For example, adults may involve children in triadic or other multiparty turn-taking directives to socialize them into understandings of complex and diverse social relationships. When young Samoan children request assistance, the higher ranking caregiver directs a lower ranking caregiver who may either pass the directive on to an even lower ranking (e.g., younger) caregiver or satisfy the child's expressed need. Crucial information concerning the organization of the society is thus conveyed to Samoan children who come to understand the multiple hierarchical social relationships through such routines (Schiefflin and Ochs, 1986).

Similar work done by Schieffelin (1985) examines how mothers in the Kaluli community of Papua New Guinea socialize their young children to understand and eventually respond to two routine speech acts in social communication—teasing and shaming. These routines are pervasive in everyday social interactions of Kaluli culture, taken as important means of persuasion and crucial skills in the public management of others. Kaluli mothers try to socialize their children (from as young as 6 months old) with verbal manipulation of teasing and shaming to demonstrate the necessary linguistic and pragmatic knowledge of the conventionalized strategies. In Kaluli society, only when people acquire these culturally specific routines and affective displays can they participate appropriately in social interactions and achieve social control in the community.

Observations of children growing up in Japan also offer rich data about how children are shaped in particular, culturally constrained ways through the language of their caregivers (e.g., Clancy, 1986; Cook, 1999). In Japanese, appropriate speech is indexed by specific

linguistic features such as honorific terms and affective sentence particles, as well as appropriate social interaction routines which are indexed by interactional styles of conformity, attentive listening, and indirectness. Clancy (1986) investigated how Japanese mothers teach their children to "read the minds" of other people so as to be sensitive to their needs because people may not express themselves directly. For example, children are taught to offer food again after a refusal, or to stop making requests of a visitor even if the requests are complied with willingly.

Researchers have also documented how Japanese teachers socialize children to display appropriate interactional behavior as attentive listeners in classroom routines. Participation in these routines provides a novice with linguistic input and a normative way of interacting, given one's social status, role, and identity, with the guidance of the teacher. In comparison to the dyadic participation structure which is often seen in schools in the United States, Cook (1999) investigated the specific multiparty interactional routines in Japanese elementary school classrooms where students are required to provide initial reaction to and comments on their classmates' discourse. Cook proposes that such a participation structure helps socialize Japanese children to the culturally important skill of *attentive listening*, and contributes to shaping children to be other-oriented. In a group-oriented society such as Japan, attentive listening skills certainly help children acquire the culturally valued competence of communicating as a good, cooperative group member.

It is argued that people experience their primary pragmatic socialization not only during childhood, but that they also continue to experience pragmatic socialization throughout their lives as they enter new sociocultural contexts and take up new roles in society (Duff, 2003; Li, 1998, 2000; Schieffelin and Ochs, 1986). The language socialization paradigm, with its strong ethnographic orientation and its close attention to contextual dynamics of language behavior and human dilemmas and agency, has provided researchers of second language (L2) pragmatics a rigorous approach that is very different from and complementary to traditional L2 pragmatics research (also called "interlanguage pragmatics"). The latter has relied on data primarily drawn from experimental or otherwise controlled situations to look for nonnative speakers' "deviation" from native speakers' norms (Kasper, 2001).

Blum-Kulka (1997) is a forerunner in adopting a pragmatic socialization approach in L2 cross-cultural pragmatic research of dinner table conversations recorded in Jewish American, American Israeli, and Israeli families. Family meals, as an "intergenerationally shared social conversational event" (Blum-Kulka, 1997, p. 9), have been reported

to represent culture-specific ways of talking and therefore allow studies of pragmatic socialization into those ways (Blum-Kulka, 1997; De Geer, Tulvisteb, Mizerab, and Tryggvasona, 2002). Parents use "metapragmatic comments" (Becker, 1994; Blum-Kulka, 1997) as a linguistic tool either to point out lack of adherence to a norm or to encourage proper or desired behavior. During family dinner conversations, metapragmatic comments play a significant role in the process of language acquisition and the development of pragmatic skills, such as the choice of topics, rules of turn-taking, modes of storytelling, rules of politeness, and, in a pluralistic society, bilingual or multilingual practices (particularly for immigrant families). While all parents in Blum-Kulka's study were observed to devote considerable time and effort to metapragmatic discourse, there were marked cross-cultural differences which reflected specific styles of the three (ethnically related) cultural groups. For example, Jewish American mothers at the dinner table paid considerably more attention to following conversational norms and turn-taking than did mothers from Israel. The latter, however, made more comments about language—metalinguistic comments—and about behavior. As Blum-Kulka (1997) points out, "Fair turn allocation and the censure of untimely interruptions seem to represent the discourse corollary of American ideals of individual rights and equal opportunity for all" (p. 184). As a result, such different styles of pragmatic socialization led to bidirectional transfer between the first and second language in bilingual Hebrew–English children, thus creating a unique intercultural interactional style.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The last few decades have seen a dramatic increase in the amount, quality, and intensity of communication globally among individuals of different cultural backgrounds. As a result, more people from different ethnolinguistic backgrounds and traditions are interacting with one another to accomplish their personal and professional goals. Preferences for interactional style in such contexts are deeply rooted in people's ideological origins and cultural identities associated with their primary socialization (Gumperz, 1992; Li, 1998; Schieffelin and Ochs, 1986). More recent and currently ongoing studies uphold the major areas of concern identified in the first generation of pragmatic socialization research while also directing attention to the particularities of pragmatic socialization processes as they unfold within sociolinguistically and culturally heterogeneous settings characterized by bilingualism and multilingualism.

For example, De Geer, Tulvisteb, Mizerab, and Tryggvasona (2002), following Blum-Kulka (1997), conducted a large-scale cross-cultural study on mealtime conversation in 100 families, including Estonian, Finnish, Swedish, as well as Estonian and Finnish immigrant families living in Sweden, in order to investigate the function of metapragmatic comments as a linguistic tool of pragmatic socialization. They found that all families produced a greater proportion of comments on behavior than on language. However, the results showed variation in the content, the amount, and the way that metapragmatic comments were used by these closely related cultures, which illustrated "how much the peculiarities of language and culture affect verbal socialization" (De Geer, Tulvisteb, Mizerab, and Tryggvasona, 2002, p. 1759).

Quite a few recently published studies have focused on the pragmatic L2 socialization of adult novices (e.g., Dufon, 1999; Li, 2000; Ohta, 1999; Poole, 1992). These studies show that speakers' pragmatic competence may continue to develop well into the later years in the life cycle, when adults become socialized into new roles, statuses, and identities associated with professional and social life. The contexts of research have been extended from family and native-language schools, originally, to foreign/second/heritage language classrooms, immersion schools, overseas language study programs, job training programs, work places, and even cyberspace, as other chapters in this volume illustrate.

Second/foreign language classrooms can operate as a socializing space in which the target-language culture is made available to learners. The nature of discourse in the classroom, despite its special characteristics, reflects wider societal norms, values and beliefs. For example, one practice in Japanese classroom interaction that has been identified in the L1 socialization context, and was referred to earlier, is attentive listening (Cook, 1999). Ohta (1999) demonstrated how adult L2 learners of Japanese are similarly socialized to display attentive listening through modeling by the teacher, peripheral and guided participation, direct instruction, and peer interaction.

In a comparative language socialization study of teachers' directives in three contexts—elementary school classes in Japan, Japanese-medium classes in a Japanese immersion program in America, and English-medium classes in the same program–Falsgraf and Majors (1995) identified different directive styles and politeness features in Japanese and American teachers' interaction with the students, which revealed the teachers' implicit or explicit socialization efforts. They demonstrated how the teachers' interaction practices were influenced by social and pragmatic norms of the target culture. Teacher directives in Japanese (L2) immersion classes were significantly more direct, which accentuated status differences between the teacher and students, whereas in English-medium classes teachers tended to minimize status markers in their speech to downplay the status differential between

students and teacher. Poole (1992) also reported that American teachers in post-secondary ESL classes tried to avoid overt displays of asymmetry of power and downplay the status differential between the teacher and learners. The interactional style could reflect the white middle-class American caregivers' perspective of egalitarianism, which was implicitly conveyed to these learners. As Poole (1992) concluded, classroom discourse can be understood as largely societal in origin, and the teacher's interactional style represents "the voice of a social role" (p. 611).

The study-abroad context has been investigated by researchers to explore the advantage of sociocultural environments for pragmatic socialization which complement classroom foreign language learning. For example, in a 4-month study-abroad program, DuFon (1999) investigated the pragmatic socialization of linguistic politeness for six adult learners of Indonesian. Ethnographic data focusing on address terms, greetings, and questions about their experiences during the learners' interaction with native speakers illustrated both explicit socialization (e.g., metapragmatic instruction on how to *pamit,* or ask for permission, every time the learners wanted to leave their host family's house) and implicit socialization, through learners' participation in activities with members of the target community.

The workplace is gaining researchers' attention as a significant sociocultural context where novices, like immigrants, are socialized into new discourse systems and cultures. Li (1998, 2000) makes a unique contribution to this L2 pragmatics research by using an ethnographic approach to examine the pragmatic socialization of 20 Chinese immigrant women in an inner-city job-training center and later their workplaces. Focusing on requesting behavior, the 18-month longitudinal study dealt with the important issue of pragmatics in high-stakes social communications. The purpose of the research was not to detect the nonnative speakers' apparent deviation from native speakers' norms (as most interlanguage pragmatics studies have done), but rather to examine the interactive nature and the social function of requests that are deeply embedded within particular historical, social, and cultural contexts. The contextualized examples illustrate how these immigrant women, as novices within the L2 culture, developed their communicative competence by interacting with their peers and other more competent members in the community. As experts in their own culture and language (Chinese), they also contributed to the socialization of their American (English L1) conversational partners' communication skills and styles, when the latter seemed too impolite, for example. Linking the microanalysis of the requesting behavior and development to a more macroscopic understanding of the social structures, ideologies, and conventions in the workplace, the research vividly depicted the L2 socialization of a new generation of immigrant women: the process of discovery (e.g., of L2 conventions) and self-discovery, and the struggle of negotiating and (re)constructing new social, cultural, and linguistic identities as they adjusted to life and language use in North America and sought professional development and social integration at the same time.

In the contemporary period of globalization, everyday communication and the construction of identity and social relations is increasingly taking place in virtual environments. The worldwide use of computer technology has created a new contact zone in language learning and practice. Belz and Kinginger (2002) attest that "telecollaborative" language learning using global computer networks helps socialize foreign language learners into the development of pragmatic competence, specifically, the social status indexed "T/V" distinction in pronouns of address (*tu* vs. *vous* in French and *du* vs. *Sie* in German). They believe that the disappearance of physical boundaries in cyberspace broadens the discourse options and thereby expands the available learning opportunities of the traditional L2 classroom, providing learners easy access to communication with a variety of speakers, often native speakers, for the purpose of developing or being socialized into more target-like pragmatic competence (Belz and Kinginger, 2002).

ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

Learner Agency/Subjectivity

Earlier pragmatic socialization researchers acknowledged the agency of novices. As Schieffelin and Ochs (1986) advised, "Individuals (including young children) are viewed not as automatically internalizing others' views, but as selective and active participants in the process of constructing social worlds" (p. 165). However, many L1 research studies have tended to view the child–caregiver (novice-expert) relationship as essentially unidirectional, from expert to novice.

The extension of pragmatic socialization research to L2 and minority language speakers has helped researchers to re-conceptualize the process: from static, status-oriented social roles and identities to a more dynamic process—unpredictable, nonlinear, and affected by the agency of participants (Duff, 2003; Norton, 2000; Ochs, 1996). The expert–novice relationship has been adapted and expanded to emphasize to a greater extent the notions of bi-directionality, shifting expertise, and a recognition of learner subjectivity/agency in the process of pragmatic socialization, especially with adult learners who have had deep-rooted primary socialization in their first language(s) and culture(s).

Furthermore, research has indicated that not all language learners wish to behave pragmatically just like native speakers of the target language

(e.g., Li, 1998; Siegal, 1996). As mentioned in the previous section, Chinese immigrant women sometimes resisted more "expert" peers' pragmatic socialization based on their personal values and cultural beliefs (e.g., when it was considered inappropriate). They were also observed to have counter-socialized native speakers' (rude) pragmatic behavior in workplaces to render it more polite and collegial (Li, 1998). In Siegal (1996), the white female learner of Japanese constantly exercised agency during interactions with her male Japanese language instructor. The learner controlled the topic initiation and management, used status-incongruent linguistic choices in interaction (inappropriate pragmatic behaviors with a professor in Japanese), seemingly not because of her linguistic deficiency but due to a desire to position herself as a peer in the academic world. Some implications of these studies include a reconsideration and sensitivity toward issues of learner agency among second/foreign language educators. It is recommended that learners be informed of the various options offered by the pragmatic system of the target language—and also the consequences of these options (e.g., not sounding adequately "feminine" or "deferential" in Japanese in Siegal's study)–without being coerced into making particular choices regarding those options.

Criteria for Pragmatic Socialization Research

A language socialization perspective has been employed by more and more researchers in an attempt to bring social factors into the field of L2 pragmatics. At the same time, researchers are trying to develop the theoretical framework of language socialization by incorporating new aspects and to extend it into new directions. Caution has been issued that the term *language socialization* is sometimes used too broadly as a "catch-all" term for any research that deals with language in relation to society or identity. Kulick and Schieffelin (2004) listed three criteria for standard language socialization studies: that they should be ethnographic in design, longitudinal in perspective, and deal with linguistic and cultural practices over time and across contexts. They make the strong claim that "any study of socialization that does not document the role of language in the acquisition of cultural practices is not only incomplete, it is fundamentally flawed" (p. 12). However, some researchers are challenging these methodological principles. For example, Matsumura (2001) used a *quantitative* approach to investigate the development of pragmatic competence among university-level Japanese learners of English in study-abroad programs in Canada. Using multiple-choice written questionnaires for perceptions of social status in advice-offering situations, he found that living and studying in the target language community facilitated pragmatic

competence (or perception) development due to pragmatic socialization. The study stressed the importance of "incorporating a diachronic and comparative perspective into language socialization research" (p. 670). However, it provided little insight into actual language use in the community.

Practical Problems: The "Observer's Paradox"

Pragmatic socialization research normally takes a longitudinal approach, documenting natural communicative processes over the course of developmental time and relates these individual developmental processes to the sociocultural contexts in which they are embedded. The conflict between the necessity to observe and collect natural data and the impossibility of collecting *real* natural data with observers' intrusive presence was well captured by Labov's (1972) famous term, the "observer's paradox." There are serious methodological problems to be dealt with, such as privacy issues, ethical issues, and the asymmetry of the researcher's perceived power in relation to research participants.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Kasper (2001) suggests that "language socialization theory has a particularly rich potential for [second language acquisition] because it is inherently developmental and requires (rather than just allows) establishing links between culture, cognition, and language, between the macro-levels of sociocultural and institutional contexts and the micro-level of discourse" (p. 311).

Pragmatic socialization research represents a radical departure from the methods previously used in (interlanguage) pragmatics studies, where data were primarily drawn from experimental and controlled situations, and usually with single-sentence production, mostly in written form. A pragmatic socialization approach can offer researchers opportunities to look at the *interactive* nature and the social *function* of pragmatic behavior that is deeply embedded within particular social and cultural *contexts*. By examining pragmatic behaviors in authentic contexts of use—with their own historical antecedents, interpersonal negotiations, and personal and societal significance, researchers can contextualize the study of pragmatics in a changing, multilingual world in illuminating new ways.

See Also: *Shoshana Blum-Kulka: Language Socialization and Family Dinnertime Discourse (Volume 8); Haruko Minegishi Cook: Language Socialization in Japanese (Volume 8)*

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