Language and Intercultural Communication in the New Era

Studies of intercultural communication in applied linguistics initially focused on miscommunication, mainly between native and non-native speakers of English. The advent of the twenty-first century has witnessed, however, a revolution in the contexts and contents of intercultural communication; technological advances such as chat rooms, emails, personal weblogs, Facebook, Twitter, mobile text messaging on the one hand, and the accelerated pace of people’s international mobility on the other have given a new meaning to the term “intercultural communication”.

The remarkable growth in intercultural communication among people from many cultural backgrounds has provided new opportunities, as well as challenges, for the study of intercultural communication and its increasingly complex nature. This book showcases recent studies in the field in a multitude of contexts to enable a collective effort towards advancements in the area.

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Language and Intercultural Communication in the New Era

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1 Language and Intercultural Communication
From the Old Era to the New One
Farzad Sharifian and Maryam Jamarani

BACKGROUND

Tracing back the history of interest in studying intercultural communication across time is difficult not only for historical reasons, but for the multiplicity of locations, approaches, and scholarly traditions that can be identified as having had research interests in intercultural communication. As Martin, Nakayama, and Carbaugh (2012, 17) put it: “The study of intercultural communication and applied linguistics developed in different ways at different times in various world regions, with scholars in each region following particular research trajectories, including accepted practices as well as disjunctures.” Martin, Nakayama, and Carbaugh (ibid.) argue that even the works of scholars such as Charles Darwin, Sigmund Freud, and Karl Marx could be viewed as instrumental to laying the foundations of research and thinking in the area of intercultural communication. This overview, therefore, is not intended as a thorough historical review but as simply providing a brief backdrop to traditional research in the area of intercultural communication, as a preamble for the current volume.

One important aspect of research on intercultural communication is exploring the intricate relationship between language, thought, and culture, the study of which dates back at least to the nineteenth century. Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835), Franz Boas (1858–1942), Edward Sapir (1884–1939), and Benjamin Whorf (1897–1941) are prominent scholars who all emphasized the relationship between language, thought, and culture. Humboldt viewed language as expressing the spirit of a nation. He argued that every language is entrenched in a particular worldview, and therefore diversity of languages reflects diversity of thought patterns, driven by different worldviews. This view was later followed and extended by Sapir and Whorf, who believed that differences in the way languages encode cultural and cognitive categories affect the way people think, and this is known as the “linguistic relativity hypothesis.” In other words, they argued that linguistic categories influence the language user’s perception of the world. This version of the hypothesis became known as the “strong version.” The weaker version simply views language, thought, and perception...
as interrelated. Implicit in this trend of thought is the idea that culture is a cognitive system, which exists in the mind.

During the 1920s and 1930s a group of American anthropologists, among them Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, Gregory Bateson, and Clyde Kluckhohn, worked on the themes of the notion of culture as a homogenizing factor and the effect of culture on personality, which contributed significantly to laying the foundation of the discipline of intercultural communication (Martin, Nakayama, and Carbaugh 2012).

The rise of the discipline of intercultural communication occurred around the middle of the twentieth century, when the Foreign Service Institute in the United States recruited a number of anthropologists and linguists to provide language and culture training to Foreign Service officers and other State Department personnel (Martin, Nakayama, and Carbaugh 2012). Among these was anthropologist Edward T. Hall, who is viewed by many to be the founder of the field of intercultural communication. His book, *The Silent Language* (Hall, 1959), is considered “the founding document of the new field of intercultural communication, although it was not written with this purpose in mind, nor was it even directed at an academic audience” (Rogers, Hart, and Miike 2002, 11). The book mainly focused on nonverbal communication and introduced the concept of *proxemics*, or the study of how people use “space” to communicate, and *chronemics*, or the study of the use of time in nonverbal communication.

Interest in studies of intercultural communication grew in a parallel fashion in some other parts of the world, for example, in Japan and Europe (see Martin, Nakayama, and Carbaugh 2012). Japanese scholars explored aspects of intercultural communication, including aspects of nonverbal communication, such as bowing and silence (Kitao and Kitao 1989). In Europe, interest in the study of intercultural communication “was firmly oriented towards language issues—the role of language in intercultural encounters and the role of intercultural communication in language education” (Martin, Nakayama, and Carbaugh 2012, 22).

In the areas of business and politics, researchers interested in intercultural communication have typically examined negotiation between politicians and business delegates from different nations. A main focus of such research has been toward intercultural communication skills training. A key notion in this area of research has been “national negotiating style” (e.g., Gabrielidis et al. 1997; Graham 1983, 1985; Graham and Andrews 1987). Extensive work has been carried out, for example, on Chinese negotiating style, Japanese negotiating style, Brazilian style, etc.

A tradition was also established following the work of sociolinguists Dell Hymes and John Gumperz (e.g., Gumperz and Hymes 1972), who placed the study of language within the context of culture and society. Hymes and Gumperz, Hymes in particular, established a framework for the ethnography of communication, or culturally distinctive means of communication. A significant contribution of this tradition is the focus on
the *emic*, or the insider, perspective, as opposed to the *etic*, or the outsider. This focus is also fundamental to Hall’s work.

During the 1980s and 1990s, a large number of studies began to appear that explored topics such as storytelling (narrative) in different cultures, discourse structures across cultures, and cultural influences on thought patterns and language. Clyne (1994) classifies studies of intercultural communication in that period into three categories, based on their approach adopted, as follows:

a) Contrastive approach
b) Interlanguage approach
c) Interactive intercultural approach

Studies that followed a contrastive approach compared discourse across cultures, mainly between native speakers (NS) and nonnative speakers (NNS). An example of this was the study of the speech act of apology across different languages and cultures (e.g., Olshtain 1989). The interlanguage approach examined the discourse of nonnative speakers in their L2, often in comparison with their L1 or with native speakers of the language. An example of this was the study of apology in L2 by Venezuelan speakers in comparison with speakers of American English (Garcia 1989). The interactive approach examined and compared “the discourse of people of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds interacting either in a lingua franca or in one of the interlocutors’ languages” (Clyne 1994, 3). This approach was adopted, for example, in Clyne’s (1994) study of the use of English as a lingua franca by speakers from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds in the Australian workplace. It is to be noted here that some scholars have used the term “cross-cultural communication” for studies that fall under the category of (a) and have reserved the term “intercultural communication” for those that adopted the interactive intercultural approach (c).

The period between the 1970s and 1990s also saw the publication of an increasing number of edited books and monographs (e.g., Asante and Gudykunst 1989; Carbaugh 1990; Coupland, Giles, and Wiemann 1991; Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey 1988; Kim 1988; Pride 1985). A number of academic journals have also been launched in recent decades that focus on publishing research in the area of intercultural and cross-cultural communication, including *Multilingua*, *Journal of Language and Intercultural Communication*, and *Intercultural Pragmatics*. As time went by, research in the area of intercultural communication turned its attention to factors other than culture itself that in one way or another had a bearing on the dynamics of intercultural communication, such as notions of “gender” and “power” (e.g., Henley and Kramarae 1991; Scollon and Scollon 2001a; Tannen 1990, 1994; Uchida 1997).

Another line of recent work on language and culture that is relevant to intercultural communication is the development by Paul Friedrich of
the notion of *linguaculture*, which he defined as “a domain of experience that fuses and intermingles the vocabulary, many semantic aspects of grammar, and the verbal aspect of culture” (1989, 306). Influenced by Friedrich’s work, Michael Agar used the term *linguaculture* to refer to the nexus between language and culture. Agar’s book, *Language Shock: Understanding the Culture of Conversation* (1995), is considered a classic work that deals with miscommunication as a result of cultural differences. This work is further developed in Risager’s (2006) treatment of “global flows and local complexity,” where she explores the intricate relationship between language and culture from a transnational perspective, presenting a critique of simplified accounts of language and culture. This view emphasizes the fact that “linguistic and cultural practices change and spread through social networks along partially different routes, principally on the basis of transnational patterns of migration and markets” (Risager 2006, 2).

**INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN THE NEW ERA**

The advent of the twenty-first century has witnessed a revolution in the contexts and contents of intercultural communication. Technological advances such as chat rooms, e-mails, personal weblogs, Facebook, Twitter, and mobile text messaging, on the one hand, and the accelerated pace of people’s international mobility, on the other, have given a new meaning to the words “intercultural communication.” For many people across the globe, intercultural communication is now the default context of communication in everyday life. The remarkable growth in the prevalence of intercultural communication among people from many cultural backgrounds, and across many contexts and channels, now requires more sophisticated approaches, theoretical frameworks, and analytical tools to be developed and applied to the study of intercultural communication. Scholarly literature has already seen an upsurge of many studies that explore various aspects of communication in the new era, in particular in cyberspace (see Ess and Sudweeks 2001; Macfadyen, Roche, and Doff 2004) and within the context of globalization (e.g., Kramsch and Boner 2010).

Some of the changes to the nature of intercultural and international communication are demographic. For example, when it comes to English as a language of intercultural communication, it has been estimated that more than 80 percent of communication in English is now taking place, in the absence of native speakers, among the so-called “nonnative” speakers of the language (Crystal 1997). Graddol (2006, 29) observes:

There were around 763 million international travellers in 2004, but nearly three-quarters of visits involved visitors from a non-English-speaking country travelling to a non-English-speaking destination.
This demonstrates the scale of need for face-to-face international communication and a growing role for global English.

The scale of intercultural communication that is now taking place between speakers who do not speak English as a native language makes traditional studies of intercultural communication that mainly focused on native–non-native communication less relevant and thus calls for further studies that explore communication between nonnative speakers.

The demographic changes and the ever-increasing complexity of the nature of communication in the new era, among other things, have led to proposals regarding certain types of “competence” that either naturally arise from the complexity of modern forms and contexts of communication or appear to be required for successful and smooth communication. Among these are the notions of “intercultural communicative competence” (e.g., Byram 1997), “multidialectal competence” (Canagarajah 2006), “symbolic competence” (e.g., Kramsch 2006), and “metacultural competence” (Sharifian, this volume). For example, as for the notion of “multidialectal competence,” Canagarajah (2006, 233) notes, “In a context where we have to constantly shuttle between different varieties [of English] and communities, proficiency becomes complex. . . . One needs the capacity to negotiate diverse varieties to facilitate communication.” For Canagarajah, this capacity to some extent involves “multidialectal competence,” part of which is “passive competence to understand new varieties [of English]” (ibid.).

Globalization has brought peoples from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds closer to each other and has thus led to an increase in multilingualism and people learning each others’ languages and speaking multiple languages during intercultural communication, resulting in what Kramsch (2008, 400) calls “symbolic competence,” described as follows:

Social actors in multilingual settings, even if they are non-native speakers of the languages they use, seem to activate more than a communicative competence that would enable them to communicate accurately, effectively and appropriately with one another. They seem to display a particularly acute ability to play with various linguistic codes and with the various spatial and temporal resonances of these codes.

The growth in interest in studies of intercultural communication in recent years has led, on the one hand, to an increasing number of projects focusing on the examination of communication between speakers from different cultural backgrounds in various contexts and across different channels. On the other hand, a number of scholars have, at the theoretical level, reexamined the very basic notions of “language,” “culture,” and “interculture,” the main concepts in studies of intercultural communication, from various perspectives. The contributions to this volume represent this spectrum, beginning with theoretical advancements, moving on to exploring the interplay
between intercultural communication and new technologies, and finally examining intercultural communication across different contexts.

THEORETICAL ADVANCEMENTS

In her chapter, “History and Memory in the Development of Intercultural Competence,” Kramsch, adopting a post-structuralist approach to critical discourse analysis, expands the notion of “culture” to include historical and political consciousness. Kramsch points out that culture includes both the objective history of historians (discourse on history) and the subjective collective memories of people who have personally experienced events or learned about them in school textbooks and in the news (discourse from history). Teaching language as discourse places emphasis on the primacy of historical and cultural meanings, as realized in language and other symbolic systems like pictures, charts, and diagrams. Kramsch argues that foreign-language textbooks, through their language exercises and through the texts and pictures they choose to feature, represent historical events in a way that either minimizes or maximizes the gaps between their discourse and that of other discourses in the students’ culture. They can choose to minimize these gaps if they want to show that their discourse on and from history is shared by L1 and L2 speakers alike; on the contrary, they can choose to maximize the gap to show that members of the foreign culture might have interpretations that are quite different from members of the students’ culture. Kramsch’s analysis of the two textbooks argues that intercultural competence always includes a responsibility for the teacher to provide multiple perspectives on events, and for the student to question the perspective of the textbook as cultural artifact.

In Chapter 3, Kecskes attempts to shed theoretical light on the notion of “interculture.” In his chapter, “Intercultures, Encyclopedic Knowledge and Cultural Models,” he discusses the nature of what he calls “intercultures” from a socio-cognitive perspective, presenting them as third spaces created from two kinds of knowledge: prior encyclopedic knowledge and knowledge emerging from the actual situational contexts in which communication takes place. Encyclopedic knowledge is attributed to cultural models that exist on a metalevel as cognitive frames, abstracted from cultural experiences. These are held to guide us in interpreting and organizing new experiences. This socio-cognitive approach to communication and pragmatics presents a balanced view of intercultural spaces as both drawing on relatively definable cultural models that characterize speech communities as well as more immediate knowledge that is socially constructed during the course of interaction between the interlocutors. In this sense, intercultures have a normative dimension, that of culture, through cultural models, and an emergent one, through situationally evolving components of interactions. For Kecskes, this is a synthesis of the positivist view and the social
constructivist view, which acknowledges the societal and individual factors in meaning making and interpreting experience.

Kecskes views a close link between language and cultural models in the sense that the link plays an important role in the development and reinforcement of cultural models. He considers formulaic language as mediating between language and cultural models. That is, formulaic language depends on cultural models for their understanding. In general, Kecskes views intercultural communication as a space for the construction and co-construction of intercultures, from socially and contextually situated meanings as well as those that are informed by relatively definable cultural models that characterize speech communities.

A parallel attempt to relate recent theoretical advancements to studies of intercultural communication is presented in “Cultural Linguistics and Intercultural Communication,” by Sharifi an, who shows how the analytical tools and notions of the emerging field of Cultural Linguistics can prove to be beneficial to studies of intercultural communication. Cultural Linguistics grew from a multidisciplinary attempt to develop a synthesis between the analytical tools and theoretical frameworks of cognitive linguistics; linguistic anthropology; cognitive anthropology; and, more recently, areas of cognitive science such as distributed cognition and complex adaptive systems. The main analytical tools of Cultural Linguistics are cultural schemas (or cultural models), cultural categories, and cultural-conceptual metaphors, collectively referred to as “cultural conceptualizations.”

From the perspective of Cultural Linguistics, during intercultural communication, interlocutors draw on their cultural conceptualizations in constructing, interpreting, and negotiating intercultural meanings. Through presenting several examples, Sharifi an shows how unfamiliarity with systems of cultural conceptualizations that interlocutors draw on could lead to alternative interpretations, and in some cases damaging miscommunication. Sharifi an argues that exposure to different systems of cultural conceptualizations, either explicitly, for example, through training, or implicitly through extended engagement in intercultural communication, could potentially develop speakers’ metacultural competence. This competence enables individuals to participate with flexibility in intercultural communication and effectively articulate their cultural conceptualizations to their interlocutors when the need arises.

NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

The emergence of new channels of intercultural communication, such as the Internet, has added to the complexity of intercultural communication at various levels. At the level of identity, for example, speakers may now communicate with each other without foregrounding their cultural identities,
or they may even choose to hide them on purpose. The emergence of sociodigital interactions in recent decades and global mobility has presented some challenges for the very notions of “culture” and “intercultural” in many contexts, for example, where people’s lives have been substantially organized around, and therefore influenced by, communication through new technology. Some scholars have even questioned the helpfulness of the notions of “culture” and “intercultural” in the context of postmodern thinking about the nature of interactions in the new era. In “International Sociodigital Interaction: What Politics of Interculturality?”, Dervin represents such thinking by addressing what he calls the “politics of interculturality.” He presents a critique of the essentialists’ understanding of culture, those that tend to stereotype people and view people as being imprisoned in the walls of their culture. The essentialist views of culture often assigned certain value judgments to cultural norms and therefore viewed some cultures, and thus their members, as being superior to others.

From this postmodern perspective of understanding culture and interculturality during international interactions, speakers constantly construct and negotiate their plural identities. Dervin undertakes a close analysis of two sociodigital cases of interaction and reveals their subtle differences and unique characteristics. In the first one, the participants engage in the co-construction of discourses, which among other things leads to the recognition of each other’s identities and self-images. The second interaction takes place in a webinar, in which participants mainly attend a seminar online and “talk” about the topics that they are all interested in. Dervin notices that in such interactions participants hardly engage in constructing, or what he calls “doing,” interculturality. He argues, thus, that analysis of such interactions does not seem to benefit from a “cultural differences” perspective, and he, therefore, calls for alternative frameworks to be adopted. Dervin’s findings and arguments highlight the significance of context (for example, online webinar as opposed to face-to-face interactions) in determining an appropriate framework and analytical tools for the analysis of interactions.

When originally introduced to the field of language learning, computers were mainly used as an interactive textbook to check for structural accuracy and later language development through communicative exercises. Their use was primarily limited to the pedagogical aspects of language learning and did not necessarily promote the cultural components of the language being learned. However, with the fast-progressing speed of technology, we have witnessed great developments in the field of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). Computers are used today as a tool to create a platform where speakers and learners of a language, regardless of their geographical and/or cultural distances, are able to converse. Language learners are now able to engage in real-time conversation with other native or nonnative speakers of the language they are learning. And this has resulted in a significant shift in the language learning paradigm.
The “intercultural” aspect of this platform is gaining increasing attention from language teachers and researchers in the field alike, who aim to develop the intercultural communicative competence of language learners. Anderson and Corbett investigate the intercultural potential of online environments in their chapter, “Shaping Intercultural Competence? Creating a Virtual Space for Intercultural Communicative Competence.” They elaborate on how they employed a telecollaborative medium to enable English-speaking students to communicate in real time with English teachers and learners in a number of different countries. Over the seven years of the project, they observed how the participants were becoming aware of their cultural values and beliefs while reflecting on their interpretations of the other’s cultural practices and beliefs. Through their examples, Anderson and Corbett reveal how such intercultural awareness could be achieved even when the participants were actually talking around theoretical and practical issues surrounding English as a Foreign Language (EFL), and effectively “chatting,” rather than addressing cultural issues directly. Their contribution offers insights into the indirect means by which intercultural communicative competence might be attained.

In many cases, people’s interest in certain topics or experiences brings them together for communication in a way that makes cultural identity less relevant. In some other contexts, culture interacts with the new technology in intricate ways (e.g., Hanna and de Nooy 2004; Kim and Bonk 2002). For example, traditionally, almost all cultures have certain norms for face-to-face communication, such as norms about personal space, facial gestures, and eye contact, as well as politeness norms. The use of the new technology now in many cases diminishes the constraints that were sometimes felt to be associated with such norms as part of face-to-face intercultural communication. It is well established that during the course of a face-to-face conversation, a large part of the message is communicated through nonverbal behavior (NVB) compared to the amount received from the verbal component of the message. In other words, the interlocutors consciously or unconsciously rely immensely on paralinguistic (e.g., tone, pitch, volume) and nonlinguistic (e.g., facial expression and body posture) features of the communication as providing more information and/or regulating the interaction. It is shown in the literature that nonverbal behaviors are culturally shaped and could differ from one culture to another culture (e.g., Segerstråle and Molnar 1997). It should be noted that these results were the outcome of research into face-to-face communication where interlocutors had immediate access to each other’s nonverbal behaviors and were hence able to achieve a fuller understanding of the verbal codes, or their absence when there was a silence in the interaction.

Even though these findings came from studies of face-to-face interaction, they could be equally valid if the medium of communication was shifted from the spoken word to written text, as is the case of computer-mediated communication (CMC). When participating in CMC, however, the
interlocutors often do not have the privilege of using or observing nonver-
bal behaviors. That is, of course, with the exception of using emoticons,
typing in CAPITAL LETTERS, and typing acronyms like lol to add some
emotion to the written text. Today, a great deal of interaction—often of
multilingual and multicultural nature—is text based and occurs through
using some type of technology; namely, e-mails, text messages, online text
chats, Facebook, or Twitter. Hwang and Matsumoto, in “Nonverbal Behav-
iors and Cross-Cultural Communication in the New Era,” address the issue
of the absence of nonverbal behavior in CMC. They provide a thorough
review of the literature on nonverbal behaviors, and their role in (intercul-
tural) communication. They further continue to elaborate on attempts to
modify nonverbal behaviors (NVB) in an attempt to adapt them to the new
computer-based medium of communication. In doing so, they highlight the
importance of being aware of culture-specific displays and rules that are
being practiced in using and interpreting NVB in CMC. They elaborate
on examples of text-based emoticons produced by one person that could
be misunderstood or not understood at all by his/her culturally different
interlocutor. Hwang and Matsumoto’s chapter underscores the need for
more systematic research in the rather novel and understudied field of NVB
in computer-mediated intercultural communication.

At the level of power, communication through the new technology has
entailed expertise in the use of hardware and software that does not nec-
essarily, or unduly, empower people from particular racial and cultural
backgrounds. For instance, in electronic intercultural communication, in
many cases the person who is more expert in the use of the technology and
of particular sites is now in the place of power. This has caused certain
speakers, for example native speakers of the language that is being used for
communication, to lose much of their automatic domination.

As we have argued earlier, the hierarchical distinctions between native-
speaker (NS) and nonnative-speaker (NNS) categories tend to have lost
their relevance and significance in an era where more than 80 percent of
the English-speaking population of the world does not involve the native
speaker of the language. It also becomes even less relevant when speakers
use technology-based mediums of communication that surpass geograph-
ic and linguistic boundaries as were originally defined. Traditionally
speaking, the NS of a language was assigned more symbolic power when
interacting with an NNS of that language. However, the significance
of the language competency that used to be the criteria of nativeness in
face-to-face interactions is increasingly giving way to technological com-
petence when the medium of communication is moved from verbal to
text-based chat.

Focusing on the context of general hobby or pastime activity, Pas-
field-Neofitou, in “‘Digital Natives’ and ‘Native Speakers’: Competence
in Computer-Mediated Communication,” discusses the relevance of the
term “native” in CMC, either in relation to digital nativeness or linguistic
nativeness. She elaborates on turn taking as a component of communication to demonstrate how sometimes, in the online setting, technical competence can be as important as linguistic competence. By providing examples from a large corpus of intercultural communication data from online interactions, Pasfield-Neofitou underlines the importance of having online communication skills in order to be regarded as a competent communicator. Pasfield-Neofitou also argues that linguistic boundaries do exist, even in the virtual domain, for example, in the case of language-specific chat rooms where NS–NNS can be distinguished.

Research into online politeness, or netiquette, is a rather novel branch of CMC research. To date there has been limited research in the area of politeness norms and rules in online communication and even less on online intercultural communication. Stroińska and Cecchetto, in their chapter “Facework in Intercultural E-Mail Communication in the Academic Environment,” delve into this very important, yet less researched, dilemma by focusing on requests as a speech act in student–teacher e-mail exchanges in a multinational classroom. In doing so, they revisit Goffman’s (1967) facework principles, which were initially developed for face-to-face interactions. They specifically highlight the prevalence of the inherent face-threatening acts in those e-mails. The chapter particularly focuses on linguistic behaviors that violate the commonly agreed-upon politeness norms in Canadian universities, and it shows how politeness strategies used or not used in e-mails from students might potentially unintentionally affect the teacher’s opinion of that student. Through providing examples from a corpus of student-initiated e-mail correspondences with their teachers, Stroińska and Cecchetto question the applicability of available facework and politeness formulas when the medium of communication shifts from face-to-face to the virtual world. By presenting this argument they open a forum for a possible organized formulation of netiquette suitable for this new medium of communication.

The issue of NS–NNS as it relates to online communication surfaces again in Liddicoat and Tudini’s chapter, “Expert–Novice Orientations: Native-Speaker Power and the Didactic Voice in Online Intercultural Interaction.” They analyze online interactions between a group of NNS and a group NS of Italian. The interactions were conducted out-of-class with the aim of providing an opportunity for the NNS to benefit from communicating with the native speakers of the language they were learning. Liddicoat and Tudini observe that while in online interactions with a social focus, NNS and NS have equal status in terms of managing them, power asymmetries exist and surface when the interaction turns into a language education activity. That is, they observe that in some cases, the NS participant foregrounds his/her NS identity and adopts the role of a teacher by correcting errors, explaining linguistic forms, and evaluating linguistic performance. Liddicoat and Tudini refer to this manifestation of NS identity as “didactic voice.”
Liddicoat and Tudini’s analysis also reveals the asymmetrical NS–NNS roles of expert–novice are in some cases readily accepted and even endorsed by the NNS. The construction of such asymmetries in online interactions, which have an identity dimension as well as a linguistic–capital dimension are a microlevel construction of and exercise of the power of the native speaker. Finally, Liddicoat and Tudini maintain that in cases of online interaction where both interlocutors have access to the first language of the other, the asymmetries associated with NS–NNS identity dichotomy may become more balanced as both participants have the chance to move in and out of their NS or NNS identities.

Cowley and Hanna’s chapter, “Anglophones, Francophones, Telephones: The Case of a Disputed Wikipedia Entry,” is concerned with the cultural construction of knowledge in discourse. Wikipedia, with its three hundred languages, is the largest international and multilingual work-in-progress encyclopedia, and it is becoming a standard resource for students and researchers alike. The wide range of Wikipedia entries attracts a broad readership. However, very often these users treat Wikipedia as a monolingual resource, only accessing it through one language portal. While uniform in their visual and structural aspects, different language portals in Wikipedia may present contrasting accounts of the same topic. These accounts can represent different culturally determined viewpoints or concerns. They can also echo opposed currents of thought existing among the speakers of the same language. While the successive published versions of an entry may reflect the struggle to impose a certain point of view, or, quite often, to include opposing views, it is on the “Talk” pages that we can see the actual discussion that underpins the surface articles.

By exposing the fractious undercurrents below the calm surface of apparently banal Wikipedia entries, Cowley and Hanna elaborate on the potential for intercultural training hidden within this multilingual resource. They build their argument on the premise of the language learner as a developing intercultural agent whose goal should surpass mere knowledge of a language, and they include sensitivity to the cultural conceptualizations of the speakers of that language. In their intriguing discussion of the entries “Telephone” and “Téléphone,” they walk us backstage to the discussion pages in both English and French, where we discover that the debate over the invention of the telephone does not and indeed cannot function in the same way across the two languages. Aiming at developing the critical thinking of language learners, Cowley and Hanna propose practical ways language teachers can benefit from effectively using this easily accessible resource. By assigning language learners the task of going beyond the entry pages of topics in Wikipedia and studying the debates that occur behind the scenes, they envisage a resource for the development of interculturally competent speakers, able to appreciate and negotiate different sociocultural perceptions of the world associated with particular languages and cultural groups.
INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN CONTEXT

It should be noted at this juncture that although the new era has witnessed an unprecedented increase in the size and complexity of communication due to technological advancements, the prevalence of face-to-face intercultural communication should not be underestimated. Global mobility, for example, through migration and asylum seeking, continues to increase, and in many contexts these groups of speakers engage in face-to-face interactions with speakers from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Interculturality now lies at the heart of many people’s lives, and speakers respond to different forces associated with the interculturality of life in complex ways that require sophisticated approaches to the analysis of people’s intercultural narratives.

Along with the reasons stated in the preceding section, the increasing expansion of business activities into the international market and international recruitment have made linguistic and cultural diversity common attributes of a majority of workplaces in the world today, where most of the daily interaction among people inevitably involves intercultural communication. The advent of multicultural/multilingual workplaces has further motivated a great body of research on the necessity of providing intercultural training for both the employees and the employers. The existing intercultural training paradigm, however, underestimates the complexity of culture and tends to advocate a rather reductionist perspective. Such a view often results in stereotyped understanding of culture and language. It fails to appreciate the dynamic nature of culture and communication, which is impacted by the context in which, and the interlocutor(s) with whom, communication is happening. It also reduces language competency to a bare minimum of linguistic proficiency. A more recent constructionist approach to culture and communication has drawn attention to the dynamic and the in-process nature of both, which are impacted by the context and the process of communication.

Fostering a constructionist perspective, Angouri and Miglbauer, in “Local Languages and Communication Challenges in the Multinational Workplace,” investigate the discursive context in which communication in multilingual workplaces takes place. By providing examples from twelve multilingual companies, they examine employees’ perceptions of the challenges that language choice and language use can create. Language choice in a multilingual/multicultural workplace could have great intercultural implications, where often a single language is regarded as the language of the workplace. The choice of one official workplace language would automatically advantage or disadvantage different members of that workplace based on their confidence and competency in that language. This can in turn have an impact on the interpersonal interactions between different linguistic groups represented in that workplace. Moreover, proficiency in the language of the workplace could work as social capital, enabling the speaker to access...
various communication channels and form beneficial social groupings. At the same time, individuals who lack that capital become isolated, which in turn can result in miscommunication and/or lack of communication between different language clusters within the same workplace. Recognizing all these issues, Angouri and Miglbauer argue for the need for a more comprehensive intercultural training for multilingual/multicultural workplaces which also addresses the issue of pragmatic fluency in a language rather than mere language proficiency. While the latter is needed for managing the overall success of a multilingual context, it is the former, they argue, that is required for the deeper layer of identity construction of individuals interacting with each other in such a context.

Migrant studies, as we have already mentioned, is another field that highlights the inevitability of intercultural communication. During the course of an intercultural encounter, more so than during communication between people from the same cultural background, there is the potential for miscommunication and misunderstanding. The potential often has direct correlation with the language proficiency of the interactants in the language in which they are communicating. One of the significant sources of miscommunication is the failure of the interlocutors to culturally contextualize the behavior and utterances of each other. Despite the existing body of literature on the general issues pertaining to intercultural communication, there is still need for more research on the topic when the intercultural communication and the resulting miscommunication have immediate social, physical, or health consequences for either party. One such case is the NS doctor and NNS (migrant) patient encounters, where two layers of culture (i.e., medicine as a culture and community as a culture) remove the interlocutors from each other. This gap becomes quite critical, particularly if either party lacks intercultural awareness and functions on the preexisting stereotypes they might have of their interlocutors. Miscommunication is likely to occur, which in turn leads to feelings of perceived discrimination and anxiety, particularly in the NNS patient.

Medical practices and health beliefs are often quite diverse in different cultures, and miscommunication/misunderstanding arising from various practices and beliefs could have a range of consequences for the patient—ranging from developing uncertainty, anxiety, and stress to even death. Regardless of the significance of the issue, so far there has been minimal research into intercultural challenges in the health sector, particularly in migrant receiving countries. Addressing current health disparities among diverse groups in the United States, Marlow and Giles discuss the language and cultural challenges that Chinese immigrant women face in their chapter, “I Don’t Know How to Speak, so I Just Stay Silent: Uncertainty Management among Chinese Immigrant Women in the United States.” Their work provides several information-seeking strategies utilized by Chinese migrant women who face gaps in medical information and proposes an accommodative process model for better understanding intercultural
encounters. They set out to analyze narratives of Chinese migrant women in America expressing their health-care-seeking attitudes and experiences. Their findings identified the complex and situation-dependent information-seeking strategies that these utilized in reducing the information gap emerging from language and cultural issues during medical interactions. Informed by research in acculturation studies and the social identity theories, Marlow and Giles critically revisit the current uncertainty avoidance/management theories and frameworks. Identifying the gap in the existing theoretical frameworks, and informed by the narratives of Chinese migrant women, Marlow and Giles propose an accommodative process model for intercultural encounters. Their model aims to raise awareness of the implications of language and cultural diversity relevant to practitioners in the health professions. Developing increased attention and public discussion about the cultural and language issues inherent during intercultural communication will ideally initiate a shift in the existing paradigm, which will provide increased medical access and inclusion to immigrants in the United States.

As discussed previously, a discipline that is closely linked with intercultural communication is that of second-language teaching, as the main aim of learning a second language is usually to be able to communicate with other speakers of the language, who in most cases do not share a cultural background with the learners. The field of second-language education has traditionally been predominantly concerned with developing learners’ linguistic competence in the target language, using native speakers as the model for learning. In the area of English-language teaching (ELT), the NS model, which attaches superiority to the native-speaking teacher (NEST), however, has been challenged on different grounds (e.g., Braine 1999). To begin with, the global mobility of people and their exposure to complex multilingual contexts has blurred the distinction between “native” and “non-native” speaker. Often, assigning the status of “native speaker” is based on nonlinguistic factors, such as race, color of skin, place of birth, first name, surname, etc., rather than linguistic competence. Also, some speakers identify themselves either as a native speaker or a nonnative speaker based on identity factors rather than linguistic repertoire. Moreover, in the current state of the world, with the majority of the English-speaking population not being NS, the issue of “nativeness” becomes rather irrelevant.

However, regardless of the disputed status of the NEST model among scholars in the field, in many circles, the public opinion among English learners tends to favor the NEST model. And this could be witnessed from the preference of English-language institutes in certain parts of the non-English-speaking world to advertise for and employ NS teachers. As maintained by Kirkpatrick, Patkin, and Wu, in “The Multilingual Teacher and the Multicultural Curriculum: An Asian Example for Intercultural Communication in the New Era,” the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), where English is used as a lingua franca for the majority of
people, provides examples where the NEST model is being strongly practiced. Kirkpatrick, Patkin, and Wu critically question the effectiveness of the NEST model from a rather fresh perspective, and that is the purpose of English-language learning in ASEAN countries. By closely analyzing examples of interaction in English between speakers in ASEAN countries, the authors endeavor to highlight the critical role intercultural competence and shared sociocultural knowledge play in effective communication. Kirkpatrick and his colleagues argue for the higher effectiveness of local nonnative English-speaking teachers (NNEST), who, regardless of their nonnative status, have the cognitive knowledge and flexibility to conceptualize language use based on the sociocultural schemas that they share with their local students. Hence, by viewing language from Bourdieu’s (1999) perspective, which regards language as a symbolic resource that is used to express sociocultural beliefs and interpretations, Kirkpatrick, Patkin, and Wu propose a local multilingual English-language teacher model that emphasizes developing intercultural competence among regional learners of English.

A further reason for questioning the validity of the NS model is that in the past few decades research in the field of language education has brought to the fore the relevance of culture to language learning/teaching. This has resulted in the emergence of a new branch of research devoted to intercultural competence. The research carried out by Scollon and Scollon (2001b) was among the pioneering studies in drawing attention to the inherent yet implicit role of culture in the communication between people in a language that is not the first language of at least one of the interlocutors.

Drawing on Scollon and Scollon’s work, Woodin in her chapter, “Native or Intercultural Speakers? An Examination of Dyadic Conversations between Spanish—and English—Speaking Tandem Learners,” contextualizes her argument within the intercultural speaker framework and questions the applicability of the NS model in language learning/teaching in the new era. Woodin contests the practicality of totally rejecting the NS model, especially when a language learner who is lacking linguistic knowledge resorts to the native speaker’s knowledge for help. However, she argues that the native-speaker model becomes rather irrelevant in terms of word meaning. As also discussed by Sharifian and Jamarani (2011), word meaning denotes a cultural conceptualization that is not necessarily shared among different languages. Woodin opts for embracing an intercultural speaker model, initially proposed by Byram (1997), which promotes an awareness of possible differences in word meanings between languages. The intercultural speaker model endorses a syllabus that gives the language learner not just the linguistic proficiency, but more importantly the tools and the skills to consider different cultural conceptualizations a word could invoke in different languages.

Woodin gives a chronological overview of intercultural syllabi from their orientation in the early days toward believing in culture merely as a set of
behaviors that could be taught in the same way language was being taught, to more recent approaches that show a more analytical understanding of the complexities of culture as a set of attributes, perspectives, and conceptualizations. She then moves on to discussing tools required for training and educating the intercultural speaker. The available assessment tools, principally developed within the native-speaker model, all aim at evaluating the linguistic competency of the language learner. This leaves a gap in the literature with respect to appropriate assessment tools for measuring the intercultural competence of a language learner. Woodin addresses this gap and presents a discussion on a possible pedagogy that employs tandem learning, language learning based on mutual language exchange between language partners in a bilingual conversation, for teaching and assessing intercultural competence. Woodin makes a distinction between the linguistic knowledge of a word as opposed to the word meaning and disputes any privilege for the native speaker over the latter. By providing examples from communications between tandem learners, she focuses on word meaning as a culturally informed element of a language and presents a pedagogical discussion on ways of raising intercultural awareness in and evaluating the intercultural competence of language learners. In agreement with Kirkpatrick, Patkin, and Wu, Woodin proposes an intercultural model while at the same time recognizing the place of the native-speaker model when it comes to linguistic knowledge.

Overall, the developments and observations discussed in this introductory chapter have provided new opportunities, as well as challenges, for the study of intercultural communication and its increasingly complex nature in the early twenty-first century. This volume serves as a forum for exploring some of these challenges and possibilities with contributions from leading scholars from various backgrounds and scholarly interests. By inviting scholars to contribute to this forum, there has been an attempt, as far as is possible, to provide an opportunity for the presentation of a range of diverse perspectives, approaches, and contexts. It is hoped that this volume as a whole presents a glimpse of the complexity that characterizes intercultural communication in the new era, and paves the way for further thinking and research in this area.

REFERENCES


Part I

Theoretical Advancements
2 History and Memory in the Development of Intercultural Competence

Claire Kramsch

With the subjective turn in language study (see Kramsch 2009b, 2012) applied linguists have been focusing on language learners’ emotions, perceptions, and memories, as vividly captured by published language memoirs, narrative testimonies, and other autobiographical accounts of multilingual individuals and immigrants. Such a focus has responded to the desire to validate the linguistic and cultural experiences of nonnative speakers striving to acquire the native speakers’ dominant language, and to give a voice to learners that are often minority immigrants in powerful industrialized societies. These efforts aim to strengthen the ability of autochthones and newcomers to understand each other across cultural divides.

However, if culture is more than the superficial triad—foods, fairs, and folklore—if it is also different narratives of history and collective ways of remembering the past, then it is not enough to let learners tell their story. The story has to be socially acceptable, worthy of being listened and responded to. While the narratives of voluntary or involuntary immigrants often focus on the hardships of expatriation and exile, and on the collective memories of people who share the same language and culture, they rarely make an explicit link between their own individual trajectory and the larger workings of history as studied by social scientists and historians. Individual and collective narratives are by definition steeped in subjective experiences, they are associated with moral values often attached to a narrator’s sense of ethnic, social, or national identity. They are easier to empathize with and to accept precisely because they do not claim to represent universal values and global identities. They don’t put into question the learner’s dominant cultural narrative. History, in contrast, requires taking multiple perspectives, embracing variable viewpoints, dealing with conflicting interpretations of events, taking less a moral and more an analytical stance. The question for learners of a foreign language, whose avowed purpose is to understand foreign cultures and worldviews, is: Which perspective should they take on the historical events that form the cultural context in which the language is learned? How can they best develop, as the report from the Modern Language Association advocates, “historical and political consciousness” (MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages 2007:238)?
In this chapter, I draw on the post-structuralist kind of critical discourse analysis offered by Jan Blommaert (2005) to explore the possibility of expanding the notion of cultural context to meet these historical and political goals. After briefly sketching the post-structuralist approach to language, discourse, and culture that I will use, I examine various discourses of history and remembrance as they are presented in two intermediate level German textbooks, published around the fiftieth and the sixtieth anniversaries of the end of World War II to teach German as a foreign language in Germany and in the United States, respectively. Through an ecologically inspired discourse analysis I try to conceptualize how these textbooks deal with historical content in the various reading and communicative activities that they offer. I argue that a globalized historical and political consciousness must necessarily rethink the presentation of text and context in language textbooks if it does not want to fall into parochialism or even anachronism.

LANGUAGE AS DISCOURSE

Intercultural communication studies have generally neglected the discourse dimension of culture (Kramsch 1993, 2009a). Language as discourse is not a closed linguistic system of symbolic forms and semantic meanings enshrined in grammars and dictionaries, but a living cultural and historical “social semiotic” (Halliday 1978), or meaning-making system that links text and social context in multiple ways. Language as cultural practice (Kramsch 1993), as communicative practice (Hanks 1996), as discursive practice (Young 2009), as social practice (Fairclough 1989, 17)—these characterizations strive to go beyond Saussurian structural linguistics and draw on contextualized linguistic studies in psycho- or sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, discourse stylistics, or cognitive linguistics to link stretches of spoken/written text (discourse) with sociohistorical context (culture).

Beyond the study of discourse as the spoken and written texts produced by individual speakers and writers, applied linguists engage in an exploration of discourse as the larger systems of meaning produced and reproduced by speech communities and theorized by critical theorists like Michel Foucault (1980) and feminist poststructuralist thinkers like Chris Weedon (1997). Echoing Foucault’s insight that “it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together” (1980, 100), Weedon defines discourse as follows:

Discourse is a structuring principle of society, in social institutions, modes of thought and individual subjectivity . . . Meanings do not exist prior to their articulation in language and language is not an abstract system, but is always socially and historically located in discourses. Discourses represent political interests and in consequence are constantly vying for status and power. The site of this battle for power...
is the subjectivity of the individual and it is a battle in which the individual is an active but not sovereign protagonist. (1997, 41)

Following post-structuralist theory, applied linguists like Alastair Pennycook and critical educational linguists like Gunther Kress mean by “discourse” more than just linguistic and stylistic forms and their meanings within a spoken or written text. They are interested in the various ways of making and communicating meaning and of making that meaning acceptable to others—not always in verbal form, but never without symbolic power struggles. Here, for example, is Pennycook’s definition of discourse:

Discourses map out what can be said and thought about what they define as their respective domains . . . In a Foucauldian sense, discourse does not refer to language or uses of language, but to ways of organizing meaning that are often, though not exclusively, realized through language. Discourses are about the creation and limitation of possibilities, they are systems of power/knowledge (pouvoir/savoir) within which we take up subject positions. (1994, 128)

Kress, applying post-structuralist theory to educational contexts, introduces the notion of genre, which plays a crucial role in the transmission of knowledge in educational institutions:

Discourses are systems of meaning embedded in certain institutions, which in turn are determined by ideologies in response to larger social structures. On the microlevel is the text, determined by discourse and genre, in turn determined by ideology; on the macrolevel is the larger social structure. (1985, 31)

As we examine in the following the representation of historical events in foreign-language textbooks that are today all more or less committed to the development of intercultural competence in a foreign language, we are confronted with the difficult task of teaching discourses that both thematize historical events and are indicative of speakers’ and writers’ subject positions in history. Jan Blommaert (2005, 156) distinguishes in this respect discourse on history, i.e., the accounts of historical events by historians and textbook writers, and discourse from history, i.e., the historical subject positions of speakers and writers and their personal memories as represented in textbooks and as instantiated by the textbook authors themselves. For example, the veterans of the War in the Pacific during World War II might speak of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki from their own perspective of lived history, whereas the curators of the Smithsonian Institute who organized an exhibition on the anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bomb used a discourse on history, nourished by the multidimensional historicity of the event (Linenthal and Engelhardt 1996). Similarly,
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a teacher of German, born and educated in the GDR, might have quite a
different interpretation of the bombing of Dresden in 1944 than a German
teacher born and educated in the United States. For both, the historical
event might not be accessible to experiential memory, but it is accessible to
the memories of differing accounts encountered in school textbooks and in
the media.

To understand the discourses on and from history in language text-
books we need to understand the textbook genre. Unlike literary studies
that focus on genre as a cluster of formal features characteristic of certain
text types involved in the production and reception of acceptable literary
forms, discourse studies see genre as ways of organizing meaning. As lin-
guistic anthropologists have it: “Genre is not a structural property of texts
but an orienting framework for the production and reception of discourse”
(Briggs and Bauman 1992, 143). Briggs and Bauman are interested in the
way genres are open to manipulation and change. “A text can be linked to
generic precedents in multiple ways; generic framings of texts are thus often
mixed, blurred, ambiguous, contradictory” (1992, 163). Generic links neces-
narily produce an intertextual gap between the text and its generic prec-
edents. Thus a language textbook can manipulate the accounts of historical
events through the questions it asks on the text, the exercises and activities
it proposes based on the text, the choice of texts it chooses to juxtapose in
a given chapter, and the visual or audio commentaries it decides to make
available to the students.

Textbook authors have strategies for minimizing or maximizing inter-
textual gaps. Minimizing intertextual gaps bears on discussions of social
processes involved in the construction of history, tradition, authenticity,
ethnicity, and identity—the building of an ideologically imagined commu-
ity of practice called the classroom, the community, or the nation.
Minimizing strategies minimize the distance between texts and genres,
thus rendering the discourse maximally interpretable through the use of
generic precedents.

But in foreign-language education minimizing strategies risk neutraliz-
ing the difference between various versions of history.

[The use of minimizing strategies] sustains highly conservative, tradi-
tionalizing modes of creating textual authority . . . [In contrast] maxi-
mizing intertextual gaps are strategies for building authority through
claims of individual creativity and innovation . . . resistance to hege-
monic structures associated with established genres and other motives
for distancing oneself from textual precedents. (Briggs and Bauman
1992, 149)

In that respect school textbooks are crucial instruments in the shaping of
the future citizenry of a nation or of the global community to which these
citizens will belong.
If the teaching of culture, as taught in foreign-language classes, is to be conceived not as the transmission of facts based on a fixed unitary national narrative of either the source or the target culture, but, as the MLA advocated, as “transcultural competence,” (MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages 2007:237) “critical language awareness,” and “historical and political consciousness” (ibidem:238), then we should expect language textbooks to play a leading role in the re-entextualization of historical events and the meaning that is thereby given to them. However, textbooks themselves are subject to the constraints of the publishing houses of monolingual and monocultural states. Historical analogies made by politicians and the media create what Jan Blommaert has called “layered simultaneities” (2005, 130) that conflate different timescales (Lemke 2000) in ways that serve the nation-state. For example: the timescale of an eighteen-year-old in an American language classroom in 2003 intersected with the historic timescale of a war in Iraq that was purported by the media to liberate Iraq from a cruel dictator in analogy to the liberation of Germany by American forces in 1945. Textbook authors can either minimize or maximize intertextual gaps. They can offer a synchronized version of events or on the contrary thematize asynchronicity and critically examine the construction of simultaneity (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1992). In the following, I examine one US and one German textbook currently used to teach German as a foreign language at the intermediate level in the United States and in Germany, respectively. The two textbooks were selected as two representative instances of the textbook genre and the discourse through which they teach historical and political consciousness in German-language classes. They were not chosen for their commercial success but because they represent two different visions currently on the market regarding how to deal with history in the development of intercultural competence.

Rückblick (Retrospective), a US intermediate-level textbook published in 1995 presents, according to the authors, the development and diversity of German culture over the last fifty years within clear historical and interdisciplinary parameters that validate experiences from all walks of life, “including the voices of women and minorities.” It adopts a reverse chronological order that, conflating history and memory, “contributes to understanding the lessons of the past.” The authors explain:

The hindsight perspective also follows the mind’s own pattern of remembrance, and thus more closely resembles the nature of human memory itself . . . The historical framework encourages an interdisciplinary exploration of German Studies, while the authenticity of the materials provides the basis for cross-cultural insights into the diverse spectrum of daily life in the German-speaking countries. (Lixl-Purcell 1995, x)
Understanding the lessons of the past assumes a didactic, moral stance (we learn from the past how to behave and how not to behave in the present) that encourages American learners to “remember” the past, both their own and that of Germany, and to draw cross-cultural comparisons between the two.

Erinnerungsorte (Sites of Remembrance), published in 2007, is built around historical sites that serve as “crystallization points of collective memory that form the identity of a culture, a nation, a society like so many mosaic stones” (Schmidt and Schmidt 2007, 5). It deliberately encourages learners to critically explore differing perspectives on historical events. Both textbooks have as their avowed goal the ability to see events from multiple perspectives. However, they each go about it quite differently. In my analysis, I will consider three questions: (1) How are historical events related to World War II entextualized in German-language textbooks? (2) How do the textbooks represent layered simultaneities? (3) Do they maximize or minimize intertextual gaps? All quotes from textbooks are my translations from the German except when indicated otherwise.

ANALYSIS 1: RÜCKBLICK. TEXTE UND BILDER NACH 1945.
AN INTERMEDIATE GERMAN STUDIES READER (1995)

The textbook is composed of seven parts from 1995 back to 1945 in periods of six to ten years. Part VI, titled “Kultur im Atomzeitalter” (Culture in the Atomic Era), covers 1949 to 1955 and will be the object of analysis. It is located between Part V (“Alltag unter geteiltem Himmel 1955–1965” [Everyday Life in Divided Germany 1955–1965]) and Part VII (“Als das Leben wieder anfang 1945–1949” [When Life Started Again 1945–1949]). Each part has three chapters composed of three documents and three texts, respectively. I focus here on the last chapter of Part VI and some features of Part VII.

Part VI is introduced by a brief “cultural context” insert in English:

The fifties were a receptive decade in Germany, full of Nachholbedarf (need to catch up) and expectations of overcoming the stigma of the Nazi past and realigning Germany with European traditions. The era was dominated by Cold War hostilities, anti-Soviet uprisings in Eastern Europe, the nuclear arms race, and the integration of the two German states into eastern and western alliances. The German Democratic Republic became a dedicated member of the socialist bloc and sealed itself off from capitalist economies. In West Germany, a conservative democracy emerged based on a free market economy. (236)

This cultural synopsis is in its brevity typical of what each chapter offers in terms of historical background. It seems to assume that the reader is already familiar with the events referred to and the way of categorizing them (e.g., the Cold War, anti-Soviet uprisings, nuclear arms race). The
lack of context is striking: “need to catch up” with what or whom? Which “European traditions”? How did the Cold War between the United States and the USSR trigger the currency reform, the uprisings in Eastern Europe, the nuclear arms race, and the two alliances? How did the American hostility toward the USSR indeed trigger the bombing of Hiroshima and the nuclear era featured in the previous chapter? The chapter offers no explanation as to why or how “the era was dominated by Cold War hostilities.”

The text is surprisingly silent on the role of the Soviets in the years before 1949. Events happen autonomously as evidenced by passive voice constructions or intransitive verbs: “the era was dominated . . . the GDR became . . . sealed itself off . . . a democracy emerged.”

This cultural context is followed by a photograph of a sculpture by Ossip Zadkine memorializing the aerial destruction of Rotterdam by the Germans in 1940. The following questions are set up for discussion.

How does this allegorical sculpture express the fear of man of the modern war machines?

Such questions address the textbook’s desire to show the spirit of the fifties through its art, as does the immediately following poem by Marie Luise Kaschnitz, titled “Hiroshima,” to which the following introduction is given:

The nuclear explosions of 1945 over Japan were only rarely a topic in literature. The number of victims—over 200,000—seemed to preclude any literary treatment. In her poem “Hiroshima,” Kaschnitz raised the question of responsibility and her “eye” is directed at the person of the pilot of the American bomber. The poem was written in the mid-fifties, at a time when the superpowers were testing new atomic and hydrogen bombs almost every year.

The students are required to go to the library and to find information on the atomic bomb explosions over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, in 1945 and answer the questions:

When? Who? Why? Result? And write an essay. Topics for discussion include:

- Do you think that the responsibility for modern bombs lies with the physicists, the politicians, and the military, or that today everyone is responsible for the politics of his/her time? Why? Why not?
- Do you think mankind has already gotten used to nuclear weapons? Why? Why not?

The Kaschnitz poem is followed by a GDR poster from the year 1952 titled “Caution RIAS Poison.” It shows poison drops in the form of bombs falling on the socialist state—from the radio station in Berlin’s American Sector. This poster serves as a springboard to practice such lexical items as:
die Hetze (inflammatory speech), betzen (to inflame), die Verleumdung (slander), verleumden (to slander), lügen (to lie), and die Lüge (lie). It also asks the students to write an essay for an East German newspaper warning against the danger of American rock music and popular culture.

Part VII contains, like the other six, a timeline:

- 1948: Monetary reform in the western occupied zones, later also in the eastern zones of occupation.
- 1948–1949: The monetary reform and Stalin’s blockade of West Berlin lead to the division of Germany.

The listing of events outside of any context severs the events from their causes and their effects grounded in the Cold War between the United States and the USSR. Two black-and-white documents serve as illustrations.

Document 1 features a map of the occupied zones in 1945 followed by the sentences: “Three years later there occurred the blockade of Berlin through the Soviet Union and one year later the division of Germany. From the three western zones of occupation in Germany there emerged in 1949 the Federal Republic (FRG); from the Soviet occupation zone there emerged the German Democratic Republic (GDR).” It is difficult to see how historical and political consciousness or even understanding can be achieved through this depiction of impersonal happenings—“there occurred” (es kam), “there emerged” (es entstand), severed from any relational context.

Document 4 is a poster from the American occupation forces in 1947 titled “Germany Is at the Crossroads. Is Your Example Guiding Them along the Right Road?” It was intended for American GI’s stationed in Germany. It features an American officer showing a German man the way under a road sign with the following options in English: “resentment of Americans/fairness; persecution of minorities/respect for right of others; disrespect for US Army/honesty; contempt for democracy/democracy; black market activities/peacefulness; an outcast nation/a respected nation.” The following exercise asks American students to “find the right English translation for the following options from the list, e.g., Verfolgung der Minderheiten (persecution of minorities), Gerechtigkeit (justice),” thus suggesting a recategorization of German concepts into the original American ones—a metonymy for the Americanization of West Germany after the war.

DISCUSSION

If the textbook’s aim was to lead students to “understand the lessons of the past,” it is not clear how they can reach an understanding different from the one they already have.
The exercises and discussion topics deal with decontextualized facts and the works of art—sculptures, poems—are not interpreted in a way that would show the complexity of various perspectives on history. Intertextual gaps between texts and genres are kept to a minimum. For example, by failing to analyze the highly nuanced Kaschnitz poem on Hiroshima, the author minimizes the intertextual gap between the poem and the Cold War rhetoric of the East German poster that is placed directly after it. Hiroshima 1945 becomes implicitly justified by the Cold War, even though the Cold War is said to have started only with the Truman doctrine in 1947 (252). Furthermore, by recategorizing the bombing of Hiroshima as one of the many nuclear tests conducted by the superpowers in that time period, the textbook maximizes the synchronization of nuclear bombings. This strategy of synchronization diffuses the responsibility for Hiroshima by recategorizing the actor from the American pilot to the superpowers (Grossmächte) and their many nuclear tests.

The topics presented for discussion on the nuclear bomb issue offer a good example of minimization of the textual gap between the textbook narrative and the dominant narrative about the bombing of Hiroshima in the United States. Rückblick was published in 1995, just around the time of the national debate surrounding the Enola Gay exhibit at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, DC, for the fiftieth anniversary of the dropping of the bomb. The debate pitted the historians, who wanted to discuss the complexities of history, against the World War II veterans, who were keen on maintaining the untainted view of history that dominated school textbooks at the time. The veterans won and the planned exhibit did not take place (see Linenthal and Engelhardt 1996). Rückblick does not draw on this ongoing historical debate, nor does it mention the Historikerstreit ( historians’ dispute) that raged in Germany at the end of the eighties. Instead, by juxtaposing the German aerial bombing of a European city (Rotterdam), the American bombing of Hiroshima, and the East German portrayal of Radio Free Europe as “poison bombs,” Part VI establishes equivalences or synchronies between the three events. Indeed, we have here a phenomenon of synchronization that leads the reader to compare the three events as tit for tat, and to justify the use of the atomic bomb as a defense against fascism and communism by virtue of its middle position in this sequence.

What to make of the role-play proposed in Part VII, which requires American students to compose an East German poster warning against American pop culture? Is this not an activity that requires temporarily adopting an East German perspective—one of the first steps in raising the students’ political consciousness? As a re-entextualization exercise, such a role-play is to be encouraged if it does not merely replace one stereotype with another but explores and discusses the nature of myths and stereotypes on both sides, and what both sides gain by using these stereotypes. As Briggs and Bauman suggest, entextualization is an process of historicization that is indispensable for the development of historical and political consciousness.
IN SUMMARY

The textbook Rückblick uses a historical framework to teach German language and culture over the last fifty years. It draws on a variety of modalities (visual, acoustic, verbal) and modes of artistic expression to impart historical and cultural consciousness in addition to communicative proficiency. However, the text provides minimal intertextual gaps between the expectations of the genre and the historical narrative provided by the American media. History is taught in a synchronized way that reinforces dominant ideologies and facilitates cross-cultural comparisons with American history. Despite its stated goal of offering multiple perspectives, the text presents an exclusively American Cold War perspective on World War II, with no mention of the role of the Soviets in putting an end to the war, nor of the role of the United States in fueling the Cold War. The Iron Curtain has fallen on this textbook as it has on historic fact. Rückblick remains silent or uninformative on those aspects of the end of World War II that have been the object of recent historical controversies: Hiroshima, the Nuremberg trials, denazification, and most of all the Cold War between the United States and the USSR, which was responsible for so much of what happened between 1945 and 1990.

One could argue that the text thus teaches neither a discourse on history (including the historians’ debates on that history) nor a discourse from history (based on various German and American memories of the events). Even though the communicative approach favors asking learners for their opinions, these opinions are not historicized and learners are not shown how to contextualize them. The result is often anachronistic. As one instructor exclaimed:

Most of my students were too young to remember a time when socialism was a viable worldview, and class discussions showed that their interpretations and evaluations of texts by East German authors were colored by their post-communist American viewpoint. Even more distressingly, they seemed unable to recognize that their perspective was influenced by their historical and ideological circumstances. (Byram and Kramsch 2008, 28)

The instructor decided to ask the students to analyze the very representation of history provided by this textbook. This had the effect of maximizing the intertextual gap between the text and the dominant narrative. In a sense, she taught against the textbook—with fruitful results.

ANALYSIS II. ERINNERUNGSORTE. DEUTSCHE GESCHICHTE IM DAF-UNTERRICHT. 2007

This second textbook, written twelve years later by a group of teachers of German as a Foreign Language (DaF) with the support of the German
Academic Exchange Service, is explicitly guided by some of the principles common to a post-structuralist approach to discourse, as explained in the introduction to the book:

- History is a discursive process of construction of historical meaning.
- There is no one right interpretation, but, rather, learners should be engaged in the process of evaluating and comparing at times contradictory interpretations of historical events.
- Original documents give the learners the opportunity to become aware of these documents' foreignness.
- Understanding of the other and the foreign comes about through an awareness of new perspectives, but also through understanding the historical specificity of one's own perspective.
- Discussion activities offer the opportunity to make multiple links between past historical events and current events and for comparisons and reflections across cultures.

The textbook focuses on twelve sites that correspond to thirteen dossiers, e.g., Cologne and its cathedral, the cities of the Hanseatic League, the Paul's church in Frankfurt, and the Wartburg. The first two dossiers are dedicated to Berlin—the Berlin of the 1920s and the Berlin Wall. Each dossier offers a variation on the theme of collective remembrance and forms of commemoration. Chapter 3 features the different discourses of remembrance built around the memories of victors and vanquished in the bombing of Dresden on February 13, 1945, and gives a taste of the controversy surrounding the sixtieth anniversary of the destruction of the city by the Allies.

Chapter 3 is divided into five parts:

I. Dresden as it was: pictures, names, facts, and a passage from Erich Kästner’s memoir Als ich ein kleiner junger war (When I Was a Little Boy) (1957) on the beauty and the destruction of his hometown. Here is an extract:

Yes, Dresden was a beautiful city. You can believe me. Indeed, you must believe me. Not one of you, however rich his father might be, can take the train and go and see if I am right. For the city of Dresden no longer exists. Except for a few remains, it has disappeared from the surface of the earth. The Second World War, in a single night and by a tiny motion of the hand, wiped it out. Centuries were spent building its incomparable beauty. A few seconds were enough to magically make it disappear. This happened on the 13th of February 1945. Eight hundred airplanes threw explosive and fire bombs. What remained was a desert. With a few gigantic ruins that looked like stranded ocean liners.

This text is followed by six questions that require the learners to retrieve information and evaluate the author’s description of the bombing:
1. What information does Kästner give his young readers on the bombing of Dresden on February 13, 1945, and its consequences?

2. What linguistic details did you notice?

3. What do you think of the way Kästner described the bombing of Dresden?

4. What further information do you have?

5. Can you think of legitimate reasons why a war party might destroy a whole city and kill its inhabitants?

6. Do you know of such reasons that were given in past history?

II. Comparison of two information texts on the bombing of Dresden, one a narrative from the German Historic Museum, the other a chronology from the website of Phoenix TV, a German TV station. The learners are to write a comparative essay using logical connectors and cohesive devices.

III. How to commemorate? One newspaper article published on the sixtieth anniversary, titled “Das missbrauchte Gedenken” (Misused Commemoration), serves as a point of departure for a discussion of history and memory and the instrumentalization of memory in recent years for political and commercial purposes.

IV. Was the bombing of Dresden justified? The CD offers four different voices, two from within history: a Dresden schoolgirl and a writer, Victor Klemperer. The other two are on history: an interview with two historians—Frederick Taylor, who argues that it was necessary to destroy the city, and Harry Mulisch for whom the whole bombing was just a warning to the Soviets of things to come.

V. Warning memorial or reconstruction? This part discusses the rebuilding of the Frauenkirche (Church of our Lady). Two opposite statements are presented: that of the British, who want reconstruction in the name of reconciliation, and that of the American writer Kurt Vonnegut, who wants to leave the ruin as a warning against war. The learners are to discuss the merits of each position.

This textbook was written for the teaching of German to immigrants coming to Europe, and German-speaking countries in particular, and to anyone enrolled in Goethe Institute courses around the world. It bespeaks a distinctly relational view of history as co-constructed in dialogue among speakers and between readers and writers. It is explicit in its convictions that there are multiple interpretations of history and it is best to let the learners discuss their interpretations openly. In this respect it looks like a direct application of the post-structuralist approach to the study of discourse discussed earlier in this chapter. The questions on the text lead students to discuss the way in which the author, by not naming the perpetrators, tries
to occupy the difficult position of a narrator who, in 1957, did not want to be associated with the Nazi warmongers but at the same time loved his hometown and mourns its destruction. Through a detailed analysis of Kästner’s discourse and its subjective features, the students can appreciate the nuances of the narrator’s love and mourning.

Indeed, Erinnerungsorte echoes in its design the admirable collaborative efforts by a Franco-German team of historian educators to write a common French-German textbook for teaching European and world history since 1945 at French and German high schools (Geiss and LeQuintrec 2006). In this textbook, chapter 6, titled “Divided Europe,” deals with the confrontation between capitalism and communism on both sides of the Iron Curtain after 1945—a confrontation that affected all aspects of life, from the monetary reform to the Berlin blockade to the very separations of the two Germanies. The text features how the United States was seen from Moscow and how the USSR was seen from Washington, and how both fought for their version of “democracy.” By featuring Europe as the stake in the much larger United States–USSR Cold War, the text gives equal weight to the Eastern and the Western perspective. It positions Europe not just in the Western camp, as Rückblick does, but between East and West, or as both East and West. It thereby manages to transpose the frame of reference in terms of which communicative action is possible (Hanks 1987) and makes the production of such a textbook into a historically specific communicative action that changes the traditional textbook genre and the educational balance of power. Bringing into the discussion the larger timescale of the European Union reveals the outer bounds of a context that remained forgotten in the Rückblick textbook.

The European message of Erinnerungsorte, however, might not be as globally accessible to all learners of German, as suggested in the introduction to the textbook. As recounted in Kramsch (2011:360–61), one German instructor using this text in an intensive language course with American students in Germany found that the students resisted discussing history in language classes: “The language classroom is not really the place to learn about values, history, and culture.” They resented being put on the spot to discuss the destruction of Dresden by British and American forces: “Some German instructors want to raise our consciousness about us being Americans. It’s debilitating.” And yet in the last fifteen years, there has been enough of a debate among historians regarding responsibilities for aerial bombings during World War II (Linenthal and Engelhardt 1996; Maier 2005) to justify at least raising the question in a German-language textbook. But what is discussable among historians seems to become, for some, taboo in the foreign-language classroom.

This is where we have to consider the genres associated with foreign-language education. The speech event “language lesson” or the speech genre “language textbook” are “orienting frameworks, interpretive procedures and sets of expectations” (Hanks 2000, 135) that determine how
various groups of students receive spoken and written texts and how they may develop historical and political consciousness. Undergraduates from American universities studying German in Germany might require a different consciousness-raising pedagogy than, say, Turkish immigrants studying German in Germany or Chinese businessmen learning German at a Goethe Institute in China. While a communicative language pedagogy can be used to help all learners acquire spoken fluency in the language, it can also serve to analyze and interpret the various entextualizations of history presented in a textbook, including the textbook itself. Most educators will agree that the ability to analyze texts should be part and parcel of a well-rounded education. Textualization of sensitive issues and spoken or written role-play have always been distancing strategies available to the language teacher eager to raise adolescents’ critical historical awareness without offending their legitimate sensibilities.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have examined two texts used for the teaching of intercultural competence in foreign-language education. They both belong to a genre that has at once commercial and educational/ideological stakes. Thus it was appropriate to examine this genre not as structural form but as social practice. We saw how within this genre:

- Texts play an informational and a didactic role in various modalities.
- Contexts are synchronized or historicized to various degrees.
- Intertextual gaps are minimized in the name of access and comprehensibility, or maximized in the name of critical language awareness.
- Texts are subject to re-entextualization, manipulation, and change through different exercises and activities.

Different kinds of intertextual strategies are rewarded in different educational systems. Textbooks in particular “provide efficient means of controlling access to symbolic capital and evaluating the discursive competence of individuals” (Briggs and Bauman 1992, 161). Of course, textbooks are not the end-all-be-all of foreign-language education: they can be followed slavishly, selectively, or used against the grain. However, they do reflect one cultural narrative that gets rewarded by the segment of society for whom the textbook is intended. In a globalized world, the question becomes: “Who is the audience?” The analyses proposed in this chapter lead practitioners directly into the economy of financial power held by publishing houses. In a globalized world, American foreign-language textbooks are going to have to find other frames of reference for the representation of historic events. These new frames will require a focus on the en- and re-entextualizations
of historical events and the maximization of intertextual gaps. They will need to present views both on and from history. Intercultural education needs both memory and history.

REFERENCES

3 Intercultures, Encyclopedic Knowledge, and Cultural Models

Istvan Kecskes

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the nature, emergence, and use of intercultures and their relation to encyclopedic knowledge and cultural models in the framework of a socio-cognitive approach to communication and pragmatics (Kecskes 2008; Kecskes and Zhang 2009; Kecskes 2010a). Intercultures as defined by Kecskes (2011) are situationally emergent and co-constructed phenomena that rely on relatively definable cultural models and norms as well as situationally evolving features. According to this definition, interculturality has both relatively normative and emergent components. This approach somewhat differs from other researchers’ views (e.g., Nishizaka 1995; Blum-Kulka et al. 2008), in which it was pointed out that interculturality is a situationally emergent rather than a normatively fixed phenomenon. However, the socio-cognitive approach (Kecskes 2008; Kecskes and Zhang 2009; Kecskes 2010a), to be explained later, goes one step further and defines interculturality as a phenomenon that is not only interactionally and socially constructed in the course of communication, but also relies on relatively definable cultural models and norms that represent the speech communities to which the interlocutors belong.

Intercultures are usually ad hoc creations. They are generated in a communicative process in which cultural norms and models brought into the interaction from prior experience of interlocutors blend with features created ad hoc in the interaction in a synergetic way. The result is intercultural discourse in which there is mutual transformation of knowledge and communicative behavior rather than transmission.

“Encyclopedic knowledge” refers to the knowledge of the world as distinguished from knowledge of the language system. The encyclopedic view represents a model of the system of conceptual knowledge that underlies linguistic meaning. This system plays a profound role in how human beings make sense in communication. Traditionally, the division between the ontology and the lexicon illustrates the distinction between encyclopedic and dictionary knowledge. Dictionary knowledge is supposed to cover the idiosyncrasies of particular words, whereas encyclopedic knowledge covers everything regarding the underlying concepts. In cognitive linguistics, however, meaning, emerging from language use, is a function of the activation of conceptual knowledge structures as guided by context. Consequently, there is no principled distinction between semantics and pragmatics (e.g.,
Evans 2006; Fauconnier 1994; 1997). In cognitive approaches, practically no sentence encodes a complete thought. Certain processes of contextual filling-in are required before anything of a propositional nature emerges at all (Carston 1998).

Encyclopedic knowledge is mostly represented in cultural models that provide scenarios or action plans for individuals of how to interpret and behave in a particular situation or how to interpret the behavior of others in one or another situation. In the socio-cognitive paradigm (to be introduced in the following section) culture is seen as a socially constituted set of various kinds of knowledge structures that individuals turn to as relevant situations permit, enable, and usually encourage.

In emerging intercultures, encyclopedic knowledge represents the relatively definable cultural models and norms that the interlocutors bring into the communicative situation based on their prior experience. This individual prior knowledge blends with the knowledge and information emerging from the actual situational context, and this blend creates a third space that we call intercultures.

THE SOCIO-COGNITIVE APPROACH (SCA)

The socio-cognitive approach unites the societal and individual features of interaction and considers communication a dynamic process in which individuals are not only constrained by societal conditions, but they also shape them at the same time. Speaker and hearer are equal participants in the communicative process. They both produce and comprehend speech, relying on their most accessible and salient knowledge expressed in their private contexts in production and comprehension. Consequently, only a holistic interpretation of utterances from both the perspective of the speaker and the perspective of the hearer can give us an adequate account of language communication.

The socio-cognitive approach to communication and knowledge transfer (Kecskes 2008; Kecskes and Zhang 2009; Kecskes 2010a) emphasizes the complex role of cultural and private mental models, and how these are applied categorically and/or reflectively by individuals in response to sociocultural environmental feedback mechanisms, and how this leads to and explains different meaning outcomes and knowledge transfer. In meaning construction and comprehension, individuals rely on both preexisting encyclopedic knowledge and knowledge created in the process of interaction.

A Synthesis of Positivist and Social Constructivist Perspectives

The socio-cognitive approach tries to make a dialectical synthesis of positivism and social constructivism. According to the positivist epistemology, knowledge consists of objective facts that can be measured independently of the inquiring, interpreting, and creative mind. Bernstein (1983, 8) argued...
that “there is some permanent, ahistorical matrix or framework to which
we can ultimately appeal in determining the nature of rationality, knowl-
edge, truth, reality, goodness, or rightness.” In this paradigm, research
focuses on procedural measures rather than interpretive perspectives. It is
usually assumed that stored knowledge provides templates for thinking as
well as acting (e.g., Alvesson and Kärreman 2001). Meaning is embedded
in words and symbols rather than in the mind that perceives them. In con-
trast to the positivist approach, the social constructivist perspective holds
that knowledge and meaning are socially constructed. They are constituted
and transferred through practices and activities (e.g., Wittgenstein 1953;
Gherardi 2000, 2001; Brown and Duguid 2001). According to Vygotsky
(1978; 1987), social reality and meaning only exist as we create them.
Social constructivists see language use as sociocultural construction. They
put an emphasis on usage and value the ways people currently use the lan-
guage. Instead of looking for one self-professed authority to pronounce
correct usage, constructivists would take a consensus of expert users. In
sum, positivists consider words and texts as carriers of objectified meaning,
while for social constructivists practice (action, doing) plays that role.

The socio-cognitive approach argues that to equate practice with knowl-
edge is to ignore the huge amount of preexisting knowledge that both speak-
ers and hearers must have in common for the hearer to infer and categorize
the intended meaning of a practice. Practice can hardly work without the
presence of relevant cultural mental models with which people process the
observed practice, or which they use to actually create practice. Even when
we pass along simple routines by sharing them in practice (e.g., how to make
a dish) we rely on the presence of a large amount of preexisting knowledge.
Besides, practice does not provide semantic codes for its own decoding (i.e.,
sense making). Those codes must already exist in the mind of the interpreter
(Ringberg and Reihlen 2008). However, they are dynamic rather than static
constructs that can be flexibly tailored as each actual situational context
requires. Without taking into account that meaning is mediated by people’s
mental predisposed sociocultural models, practice-based research is unable
to explain creativity, innovation, and the transfer of meaning among inter-
locutors. The social character of communication and knowledge transfer
should not put community-of-practice theory at odds with individualistic
approaches to knowledge. After all, social practices pass “through the heads
of people, and it is such heads that do the feeling, perceiving, thinking, and
the like” (Bunge 1996, 303). While communities of practice exist, members
of those communities may still interpret shared practices differently. Col-
lective cultural models are distributed to individuals in a privatized way.
In order for members to share the meaning of a particular practice a huge
amount of shared knowledge must already be present to assure common
ground. Levinthal and Rerup (2006) argued that practice is similar to sen-
tences in a text. Its grammar or structure is not meaningful apart from the
meaning that is assigned by the receiver.
The synthesis of the positivist and social constructivist views is a socio-cognitive approach that acknowledges the importance of both societal and individual factors in meaning creation and comprehension as well as knowledge transfer. Shared cultural models privatized through individuals' private experiences and prior knowledge interact with the actual situational context in social interaction and practices (Kecskes 2008).

Communication in the Socio-Cognitive Paradigm

In the socio-cognitive paradigm, communication is driven by the interplay of cooperation required by societal conditions and egocentrism rooted in prior experience of the individual. Consequently, egocentrism and cooperation are not mutually exclusive phenomena. They are both present in all stages of communication to a different extent because they represent the individual and societal traits of the dynamic process of communication (Kecskes and Zhang 2009). On the one hand, speakers and hearers are constrained by societal conditions; on the other hand, as individuals they all have their own goals, intentions, desires, etc., which are freely expressed and recognized in the flow of interaction.

In the socio-cognitive approach, framed by the dynamic model of meaning (Kecskes 2008; Kecskes and Zhang 2009), communication is characterized by the interplay of two traits that are inseparable, mutually supportive, and interactive:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual trait:</th>
<th>Social trait:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>attention</td>
<td>intention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prior experience</td>
<td>actual situational experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>egocentrism</td>
<td>cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>salience</td>
<td>relevance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Communication is the result of the interplay of intention and attention motivated by sociocultural background that is privatized individually by interlocutors. The sociocultural background is composed of encyclopedic knowledge of interlocutors deriving from their prior experience tied to the linguistic expressions they use and the current experience in which those expressions create and convey meaning. The process of privatization, through which the individual blends his prior experience with the actual situational (current) experience results in a dynamic process of meaning construction in which nothing is static. The two sides (prior and current) constantly change and affect each other. The definition of intercultures in the preceding emphasized that meaning construction relies both on relatively definable cultural models and norms as well as situationally evolving features. Prior experience is represented in relatively definable cultural models and norms that are related and/or blended with actual situational experience.
The socio-cognitive approach integrates the pragmatic view of cooperation and the cognitive view of egocentrism and emphasizes that both cooperation and egocentrism are manifested in all phases of communication to a varying extent. While cooperation is an intention-directed practice and governed by relevance, egocentrism is an attention-oriented trait and governed by salience. Consequently, in communication we show our two sides. We cooperate by generating and formulating intention that is relevant to the given actual situational context. At the same time, our egocentrism means that we activate the most salient information to our attention in the construction (speaker) and comprehension (hearer) of utterances. Language processing is anchored in the assumption that what is salient or accessible to oneself will also be accessible to one’s interlocutors (Giora 2003; Barr and Keysar 2004; Kecskes 2007).

ENCYCOLOPEDIC KNOWLEDGE

Cognitive semanticists usually reject the idea that there is a distinction between “core” (dictionary) meaning on the one hand, and pragmatic, social, or cultural meaning on the other. According to this approach, there is no autonomous mental lexicon that contains semantic knowledge separately from other kinds of (linguistic or nonlinguistic) knowledge. Consequently, opposed to the traditional view, in the cognitive paradigm there is no distinction between dictionary knowledge and encyclopedic knowledge. There is only encyclopedic knowledge, which incorporates both linguistic and extralinguistic knowledge.

In cognitive linguistics, encyclopedic knowledge is viewed as a structured system of knowledge, organized as a network. Moreover, not all aspects of the knowledge that is, in principle, accessible by a single word has equal standing (e.g., Evans 2006). Several terms have been used to denote the structured system of knowledge. These terms only slightly differ from each other. Frames are preconceived understandings of a new situation (e.g., we have a faculty meeting). Scripts are sequences of activities that we associate with a particular situation (we have procedures to follow when having a faculty meeting). Scenarios are sets of organized units in cognitive processes. They are components we anticipate for any new situation that has been given a label that we understand (we have an understanding of who and what should be present during a faculty meeting). Schemata are higher-level knowledge that helps us understand a situation (our knowledge of practice in a faculty meeting). Mental or cultural models are logical sequences of thought that explain a situation and give sense to a situation. There is some overlap between these terms, but they give us some perspective from which to analyze our data.

Encyclopedic meaning arises in context(s) of use. The “selection” of actual situational meaning is informed/determined by contextual factors.
In the dictionary view of meaning, there is a separation of core meaning (semantics) from noncore actual meaning (pragmatics). The encyclopedic view, however, claims that encyclopedic knowledge is included in semantics, and meaning is determined by context. According to this approach, there is no definable, preexisting word meaning because the meaning of a word in context is selected and shaped by encyclopedic knowledge.

There are several theories in cognitive linguistics that adopt the encyclopedic view, such as frame semantics (Fillmore 1982; Fillmore and Atkins 1992), the approach to domains in cognitive grammar (Langacker 1987; 1991), the approach to dynamic construal (Croft and Cruse 2004), and the theory of lexical concepts and cognitive models—LCCM theory (Evans 2006). The core assumptions of cognitive linguistics about encyclopedic knowledge are not always maintainable in the socio-cognitive approach, as we will see in the following sections.

CULTURAL MODELS AND THE INTERSECTION OF THE SOCIOCULTURAL AND INDIVIDUAL

The Nature of Cultural Models

Cultural models are cognitive frames or templates of assumed or implicit knowledge that assist individuals in interpreting and understanding information and events. Encyclopedic knowledge includes cultural models that are usually defined as “a cognitive schema that is intersubjectively shared by a social group” (D’Andrade et al. 1992, 99). There exist certain mental schemas that are activated when an individual experiences similar new situations or linguistic tasks. The notion of schema was first introduced by Immanuel Kant to account for the mediation between logical concepts and sensory information, which gives significance to our mental representations. Research exploring the intersection of culture and the individual claims that cognition consists of subsets of shared cultural models that organize much of how people make sense of the world (e.g., D’Andrade 1992; DiMaggio 1997; Shore 1996). D’Andrade (1992, 29) argued that a cultural model can be understood as “an interpretation which is frequent, well organized, memorable, which can be made from minimal cues, contains one or more prototypic instantiations, and is resistant to change.” In cognitive linguistics the cultural models underlying reasoning and argumentation are considered to some extent idealized entities (see, for instance, the notion of Idealized Cognitive Models as introduced in Lakoff 1987). Geeraerts argued that actually occurring phenomena and actual situations usually differ to a smaller or greater extent from the models that act as cognitive reference points. The models themselves appear to be somewhat abstract, general, or even simplistic, because we use them to make sense of phenomena that are oftentimes more complicated (Geeraerts 2006, 274).
the socio-cognitive approach cultural models are core abstractions based on prior experience. They are “privatized” by the individual according to the actual situation context, as we will see later.

Cultural models become internalized by individuals through everyday shared experiential processes (e.g., DiMaggio 1997). These experiential processes are cognitive patterns that develop from different types of inputs, such as instruction, activities, communication, observation, practices, etc. Each human being is exposed to various aspects of the sociocultural life, which leads to membership of a subset of sociocultural speech communities (Shore 1996). Each speech community is identified by a variety of dominant cultural models that provide certain assumptions and a certain outlook on the world. Because cultural models are a part of a person’s cognitive resources, they influence his/her worldview and behavior, as well as how s/he interprets and reacts to other people’s behavior, information, and situations.

But we must be careful because although cultural models usually create a harmonizing effect, people are not cognitive clones of culture. Collective cultural models are internalized and privatized by individuals through their own experience and developed into private mental models. However, any sharp distinction between private and collective cultural models is purely analytical. In real life, such distinction is gradual and depends as much on an individual’s cognitive dispositions as it does on life experience. Consider the following example:

(1) Car rental

Clerk: What can I do for you, sir?
Customer: I have a reservation.
Clerk: May I see your driver’s license?
Customer: Sure. Here you are.

Most people are familiar with the cultural frame of renting a car. Certain situation-bound utterances (see Kecskes 2000, 2002, 2010b) such as “What can I do for you?” “I have a reservation,” “May I see your driver’s license?” and the like are expected to be used in this frame. However, how exactly this frame is played off depends on the prior experience of the individuals who participate in its activation.

When language is used, its unique property is activated in two ways. When people speak or write, they craft what they need to express to fit the situation or context in which they are communicating. But, at the same time, the way people speak or write the words, expressions, and utterances they use creates that very situation, context, and sociocultural frame in which the given communication occurs. Consequently, two things seem to happen simultaneously: people attempt to fit their language to a situation or context that their language, in turn, helped to create in the first
place (Gee 1999). This dynamic behavior of human speech and reciprocal process between language and context basically eliminates the need to ask the ever-returning question: Which comes first? The situation the speakers are in (e.g., faculty meeting, car renting, dinner ordering, etc.) or the particular language that is used in the given situation (expressions and utterances representing ways of talking and interacting)? Is this a “car rental” because participants are acting and speaking that way, or are they acting and speaking that way because this is a “car rental”? Acting and speaking in a particular way constitutes social situations, sociocultural frames, and these frames require the use of a particular language. “Which comes first?” does not seem to be a relevant question synchronically. Social and cultural routines result in recurring activities and institutions. However, these institutions and routinized activities have to be rebuilt continuously in the here and now. The question is whether these cultural models, institutions, and frames exist outside language or not. The social constructivists insist that models and frames have to be rebuilt again and again so it is just our impression that they exist outside language. However, the socio-cognitive approach argues that these cultural mental models have psychological reality in the individual mind, and when a concrete situation occurs the appropriate model is recalled, which supports the appropriate verbalization of triggered thoughts and activities. Of course, building and rebuilding our world does not occur merely through language, but also through the interaction of language with other real-life phenomena such as nonlinguistic symbol systems, objects, tools, technologies, etc.

The individual is not only constrained to some extent by collective cultural models, but also participates in creating them. Private models may originate from a person’s creative (and even unintended) combination of existing cultural models as well as unique cognitive dispositions (self-reflection, critical thinking, etc.). Some private models always remain idiosyncratic (i.e., private), while others may enter into the sociocultural framework and establish new cultural trends (cf., e.g., Berger and Luckmann 1967). Both private and cultural models help people organize events, make actions easier, and, as such, free up cognitive resources that can be applied to less familiar issues and experiences.

The “Reality” of Cultural Models

Language and culture are usually considered “collective representations,” i.e., socially constituted systems (e.g., Saussure 2002; Durkheim 1947; Kronenfeld 2008). There are two main approaches to the debate about the actual existence of these systems. According to one of them, these systems have been considered to be merely epiphenomenal, which means that they have no actual direct existence (cf. Kronenfeld 2008). However, they have the appearance of direct existence insofar as they are the by-products of a group of individuals with similar minds confronting similar situations in
similar contexts. The problem with this approach is that human beings usually talk about and rely upon language and culture as if they actually exist, as if they exist externally to them as individuals. Our individual understandings of language and culture are quite consistent across individuals. Generally it is more so than our sense of our own individual patterns. We have highly shared senses of the collective patterns, and each of us is capable of describing where we ourselves deviate or are somewhat idiosyncratic.

The opposed view to nonexistence has been that these systems have some sort of objective existence outside the individual (e.g., Simmel 1972; Triandis 2002; Kecskes 2010a). Culture is “real,” and it deals with the problem of the relationship between the individual and the given community. This approach sees a child’s socialization or enculturation as a process by which basic cultural structures and schemata are “internalized” deeply into the individual psyche. However, these cultural models and schemata keep changing both diachronically and synchronically. Definitely there is a great difference between the cultural models that existed a hundred years ago and the ones that we have in our time. Besides, the internalization process is not mechanical; i.e., enculturation occurs as a bidirectional interaction between the individual and the social environment.

When we talk about culture we usually mean “subjective culture” (cf. Triandis 2002), which is a community’s characteristic way of perceiving its social environment. However, there are generally two basic aspects of culture distinguished. When this distinction is not clarified, confusion may occur about whether culture exists “out there” or not. One aspect of culture is subjective culture—the psychological feature of culture, including assumptions, values, beliefs, and patterns of thinking. The other is objective culture, which includes the institutions and artifacts of culture, such as its economic system, social customs, political structures, processes, arts, crafts, and literature. Objective culture can be treated as an externalization of subjective culture, which usually becomes reified. This means that those institutions that are properly seen as extensions of human activity attain an independent status as external entities. They seem to exist “out there,” and their ongoing human origins are usually forgotten. The study of objective culture is well established because institutions and external artifacts of behavior are more accessible to observation and examination. Subjective culture is usually treated as an unconscious process influencing perception, thinking, and memory, or as personal knowledge that is inaccessible to trainers or educators.

Simmel (1972) also makes a difference between subjective culture and objective culture, with the latter referring to the cultural level of social reality. In his view, people produce culture, but because of their ability to reify social reality, the cultural world and the social world come to have lives of their own and increasingly dominate the actors who created them. We may also think about language like this. It has been created and is being created by people, but it appears to have a life of its own as an institution
“out there.” Simmel identified a number of components of objective culture, including tools, transportation, technology, the arts, language, the intellectual sphere, conventional wisdom, religious dogma, philosophical systems, legal systems, moral codes, and ideals. The size of objective culture increases with modernization. The number of different components of the cultural realm also grows.

Simmel was concerned about the effect of objective culture on the individual’s subjective existence. Postmodernists have taken that concern to another level. In the past, most of the culture was produced by people situated in real social groups that interacted over real issues. This grounded culture created real meanings and morally infused norms, values, and beliefs. In the postmodern era, much of the culture is produced or colonized by businesses using advertising and mass media. This important historic shift implies that culture has changed from a representation of social reality to representations of commodified images. In our time, culture is produced rather than created, and people have changed from culture creators to culture consumers.

CULTURAL MODELS AT WORK

Development of Cultural Models

Each of us has rich individual experiences, and the cognitive structuring that pertains to them may differ, whether coded linguistically or not. When we communicate with other people, through language or otherwise, we need to interrelate our separate experience and cognitive structures. When we routinely, repeatedly do things with other people, we usually develop some standardized way of doing. These shared action plans may emerge as cultural models. Kronenfeld (2008) argued that language gets involved when we need to verbally communicate, and then only with regard to those aspects of the action plan that need to be discussed and talked about or coded in memory. He emphasized that language is a socially constructed tool that can be exceedingly helpful to thought, but in no sense does it form the basis for individual thought, and it need not provide the basis for (much of) the shared or coordinated thought that makes up culture. I think language plays a more important role than the one Kronenfeld assigns to it in culture. In fact, language supports both the development and reinforcement of cultural models, mainly through formulaic language, which is the heart and soul of nativelike language use. Formulaic language generally serves as a core for language use in a speech community because prefabricated linguistic expressions usually mean the same for each member of the community. Languages and their speakers have preferred ways of saying things (cf. Wray 2002; Kecskes 2007). English native speakers shoot a film, dust the furniture, make love, or ask you to help yourself at the table. The use of
these expressions creates scenarios and gives a certain kind of idiomaticity to language use. For instance:

(2)

Jim: Let me tell you something.
Bob: Is something wrong?

The expression let me tell you something usually has a negative connotation; it creates a scenario that anticipates trouble.

Our everyday communication is full of prefabricated expressions and utterances because we like to stick to preferred ways of saying things. Why is this so? Kecskes (2007) argued that there are three important reasons:

(a) Formulas decrease the processing load.

There is psycholinguistic evidence that fixed expressions and formulas have an important economizing role in speech production (cf. Miller and Weinert 1998; Wray 2002). Sinclair’s idiom principle says that the use of prefabricated chunks “may . . . illustrate a natural tendency to economy of effort” (1991, 110). This means that in communication we want to achieve more cognitive effects with less processing effort. Formulaic expressions ease the processing overload not only because they are “ready-made” and do not require any “putting together” from the speaker/hearer, but also because their salient meanings are easily accessible in online production and processing.

(b) Phrasal utterances have a strong framing power.

Frames and cultural models are basic cognitive structures that guide the perception and representation of reality (Goffman 1974). Frames help determine which parts of reality become noticed. They are not consciously manufactured but are unconsciously adopted in the course of communicative processes. Formulaic expressions usually come with framing. Most fixed expressions are defined relative to a conceptual framework. If a policeman stops my car and says, “Step out of the car, please,” this expression will create a particular frame in which the roles and expressions to be used are quite predictable.

(c) Formulaic units create shared bases for common ground in coordinating joint communicative actions.

The use of formulaic language requires shared experience and conceptual fluency. Tannen and Öztek (1981, 54) argued that “cultures that have set formulas afford their members the tranquility of knowing that what they
say will be interpreted by the addressee in the same way that it is intended, and that, after all, is the ultimate purpose of communication.”

Cultural models provide a kind of reference library for possible plans of action for oneself or possible interpretations of actions of others. These models are not learned directly as models but are inferred anew by each of us from what we see and experience with those other people around us. But what we see and experience are never the models themselves. What we infer from experience are pieces of information, images, and features that keep a scenario together. What we infer depends directly on what parts of the given scenario are saliently and repetitively present in the messages we experience for us to pull out the regularities on which we will base our construction of the scenario behind them. Thus, systematic and repeated changes in speech or cultural behavior in one generation will be learned by the next generation as part of the givens of language or culture.

The cultural models that we actually experience (that is, cultural models, in the form in which we actually experience them) acquire specificity through the process of their instantiation in the concrete situations in which the models were realized. Much of our application of cultural models (instantiation and then realization) is in situations that represent some kind of extension from the prototypical, unmarked default situation. The core of cultural models shared by people in the same speech community changes diachronically through systematic and repeated shifts that can come from sociopolitical changes, technological changes, environmental changes, and the like. The application of the core, however, changes synchronically. No situation occurs exactly the same way as we have experienced it in any previous time.

In the socio-cognitive paradigm, action is always by individuals, and individuals are always adapting cultural forms to fit their needs. People use cultural models as devices to facilitate effective interaction with others in the various communities to which they belong.

In this way individuals not only shape cultural models, but also are constrained by them. Most of these cultural models come from people’s past experience, but they are constantly recreated in use. This is how the societal and individual intertwine. It is important to note that people are not required to follow cultural conventions (whether in the use of cultural models or in other ways). At any given time they can ignore or modify cultural models that kick in their mind when they get into a typical situation. Given cultural models can (and often do) show slight variations across groups to which we all belong—groups that can be formal or informal, long-lived or evanescent, imposed or voluntary, and so forth.

**Instantiating Cultural Models**

Cultural models are abstract plans at varying degrees of specificity. They relate knowledge, goals, values, perceptions, emotional states, etc., to actions
in different contexts. Kronenfeld (2008) argued that these conceptual models do not directly or automatically apply to any specific situation. First they have to be “instantiated” by having their general generic details replaced with the specific details of the situation at issue. The instantiated cultural model is still only a conceptual structure, and several different (even mutually contradictory) ones may be taken into consideration for any given situation. Finally one particular instantiated model is “realized” in the actual concrete situation. This can be an action plan for one’s own behavior or a device for interpreting the behavior of some other people. It is important to note that at any given moment only one instantiated model can be realized. But we can quickly jump back and forth between different realizations.

The relationship between the abstract collective cultural model and the private realization of the model by interlocutors in a concrete situation is the same as in linguistics between “phonemes” and “phones” or between “morphemes” and “morphs.” We consider “phones” as the actual phonetic realization of “phonemes” and “morphs” as the actual forms used to realize “morphemes.” In his pragmatic acts theory, Mey (2001) also spoke about “pragmemes” that are instantiated in pragmatic acts in speech situations. A particular pragmeme can be substantiated and realized through individual pragmatic acts. In other words, a pragmatic act is an instance of adapting oneself to a context, as well as adapting the context to oneself. Consider, for instance:

(3)

She is after my money.
Like I care.

“Like I care” is a pragmatic act that expresses the pragmeme “I do not care,” which can be also substantiated by several other concrete pragmatic acts such as “I do not care,” “I do not mind,” “It’s none of my business,” etc. According to Mey, pragmatic acts are situation-derived and situation-constrained. There is no one-to-one relationship between speech acts and pragmatic acts because the latter does not necessarily include specific acts of speech. Consider, for instance:

(4)

Mother: Joshua, what are you doing?
Joshua: Nothing.
Mother: Will you stop it immediately. (Mey 2001, 216)

The pragmeme represented by the pragmatic act “Nothing” can be described as “trying to get out (opt out) of a conversation” that may lead too far.

But pragmemes in the sense as Mey uses the term are not cultural models. They are more like scenarios within cultural models. However, the
process of instantiation happens similarly both in the case of pragmemes and cultural models.

Practices

Culture includes many practices or routines. Feldman and Pentland (2003) argued that routines (i.e., practices) consist of two elements: the ostensive and the performative. The ostensive element comprises individuals’ cognitive understanding of the processes, while the performative element consists of actual behavior in the actual situational context. From a socio-cognitive perspective both of these processes should be of interest for us. Cognitive understanding relies on both cultural and private models, and on how these models are applied by cognitive processing, spanning from excessive automatic (as in categorical) thinking to self-reflective (as in reflective) thinking (see Ringberg and Reihlen 2008). When categorical thinking is applied, people establish meaning by automatically integrating incoming stimuli based on existing cultural and private models. Kecskes (2008) argued that in the process of communication, a speaker’s private context generated by intention gets encoded in lexical units and formulated in an utterance (actual linguistic context) that is uttered (or written) “out there” in the world by a speaker in a situation (actual situational context) and is matched (“internalized”) to the private cognitive contexts “inside” the head of the hearer (prior knowledge). Meaning is the result of interplay between the speaker’s private context and the hearer’s private context in the actual situational context as understood by the interlocutors.

Research in social cognition indicates that several epistemic factors can affect the applicability of categorical thinking (Ringberg and Reihlen 2008). For instance, people usually apply categorical thinking in everyday routines, when they have a high cognitive load, are under pressure to make quick decisions, have limited cognitive capacity, and/or are distracted. Categorical thinking generally leads to efficient processing of regular sociocultural interactions and stimuli. As a consequence of relying on categorical thinking, environmental stimuli are “pushed” into existing mental models. This may prevent the person from adjusting to divergent inputs and unusual circumstances. In communication this phenomenon is observable in the use of prefabricated linguistic units and situation-bound utterances. Consider, for instance:

(5)

Assistant: Can I help you, Madame?
Customer: Thank you. I’m just looking.

In this conversation “Can I help you?” and “I’m just looking” function as plain situation-bound utterances (Kecskes 2000, 2002). The customer is
distracted because she is busy looking at clothes and wants to get rid of the assistant.

Reflective processing works in a different way. It requires the ability of people to sustain a high level of cognitive responsiveness and combine, or broaden, internalized cultural and private models in thoughtful and creative ways to improve their sense making. The degree of application of categorical versus reflective thinking varies across situational contexts, and life experience and general acumen are also important variables. In reflective thinking, cultural and private models are applied in nonautomatic fashions. Ringberg and Reihlen (2008, 923) argued that reflective thinking is a proactive process that occurs when a person has the cognitive capacity and need for deliberate cognition to engage with stimuli that are not easily or usefully made sense of by a categorical application of private and/or cultural models. Category-inconsistent information may activate reflective thought processes among some people through which they recombine cultural and private models in deliberate ways to improve the relevance of their sense making of a particular situation (e.g., Bodenhausen, Macrae, and Garst 1998; Wilson and Sperber 2004). This can be demonstrated in the following conversation:

(6)

Jill: I met someone today.
Jane: Good for you.
Jill: He is a police officer.
Jane: Are you in trouble?
Jill: Oh, no, I liked the man. We met in a cafe. He was nice and polite.
Jane: Not all of them are . . .

In this conversation there is a clear difference between the two women's private context tied to the words “police officer.” The collective cultural model attached to “police officer” has been changed in Jill's privatized model as a result of the positive experience while this is not the case with Jane. She appears to have a private model that is close to the collective cultural model.

The socio-cognitive approach incorporates cultural and private models into categorical and reflective processing. This means that most of the time a cognitive system is neither fully closed nor fully open, it is neither fully determined nor independent of external sensory inputs, and people are neither autonomous processors nor cultural dopes. Consequently, meaning creation and knowledge transfer are located somewhere on a continuum between fully automatic and fully idiosyncratic. This depends on several variables that include the nature of people’s private and cultural models, level of categorical and reflective thinking, and environmental feedback mechanisms. The socio-cognitive approach broadens traditional
positivist and social-constructionist positions by situating sense making within the mind (and body), which may be influenced but rarely determined by environmental feedback mechanisms (Bandura 1986; Bunge 1996; 1998). The socio-cognitive model provides a more comprehensive and systemic understanding of the roles of cognitive factors and environmental feedback mechanisms.

ROLE OF ENCYCLOPEDIC KNOWLEDGE IN CREATING INTERCULTURES

Interculturality has both an a priori side and an emergent side that occurs and acts simultaneously in the communicative process. Consequently, intercultures are not fixed phenomena, but they are created in the course of communication in which participants belong to different L1 speech communities, speak a common language, and represent different cultural norms and models that are defined by their respective L1 speech communities. The following conversation (source Albany English Lingua Franca Dataset collected by PhD students) between a Brazilian girl and a Polish woman illustrates this point well.

(7)

Brazilian: And what do you do?
Pole: I work at the university as a cleaner.
B: As a janitor?
P: No, not yet. Janitor is after the cleaner.
B: You want to be a janitor?
P: Of course.

In this conversation interlocutors represent two different languages and cultures (Brazilian and Polish) and use English as a lingua franca. This is the prior knowledge that participants bring to the interaction. They create an interculture, which belongs to none of them but emerges in the course of conversation. Within this interculture the two speakers have a smooth conversation about the job of the Polish woman. Neither of them is sure what the right term is for the job the Polish woman has. There are no misunderstandings in the interaction because each participant is careful to use semantically transparent language in order to be as clear as possible. The Polish woman sets up a “hierarchy” that is nonexistent in the target language culture (“cleaner  janitor”). However, this is an emergent element of the interculture the speakers have been constructing. This is where the L1-based encyclopedic knowledge of the speakers becomes very important. Speakers propose certain ways to create common ground. These particular ways rely on their prior experience governed by their first language culture.
Intercultures come and go; so they are neither stable nor permanent. They just occur. They are both synergetic and blended. Interculturality is constituted on the spot by interlocutors who participate in the conversation. But isn’t this a phenomenon that also occurs in intracultural communication? Why and how should we distinguish intercultural communication from intracultural communication? Basically the currently dominant approach to this issue is that there is no principled difference between intracultural and intercultural communication (e.g., Winch 1997; Wittgenstein 1953). This is true as far as the mechanism of the communicative process is concerned. However, there is a qualitative difference in the nature and content of an intracultural interaction and an intercultural interaction. Speakers in intracultural communication rely on prior knowledge and the culture of a relatively definable speech community, which is privatized by individuals belonging to that speech community. No language boundaries are crossed; however, subcultures are relied upon and representations are individualized. What is created on the spot enriches the given culture, contributes to it, and remains within the fuzzy but still recognizable confines of that language and culture. In the case of intercultural communication, however, prior knowledge that is brought into and privatized in the communicative process belongs to different cultures and languages, and what participants create on the spot will disappear and not become an enrichment and/or addition to any particular culture or language. Intercultures are ad hoc creations that may enhance the individual and the globalization process but can hardly be said to contribute to any particular culture. This is exactly what we see in example (9). Speakers created a hierarchy between “cleaner” and “janitor” just to create common ground and assure their own mutual private understanding of a given situation. This interculture disappears when they stop talking. However, this is not always the case. Intercultures can also be reoccurring for a while in certain cases such as international negotiating teams, international classrooms, international tourist groups, etc. Blum-Kulka and Kasper (1993) talked about “intercultural style,” which means that speakers fully competent in two languages may create an intercultural style of speaking that is both related to and distinct from the styles prevalent in the two substrata, a style on which they rely regardless of the language being used. Blum-Kulka and Kasper (1993) claimed that the hypothesis is supported by many studies of cross-cultural communication, especially those focusing on interactional sociolinguistics (e.g., Gumperz 1982; Tannen 1985) and research into the pragmatic behavior of immigrant populations across generations (e.g., Clyne, Ball, and Neil 1991).

CONCLUSION

In this chapter the focus has been on the nature and role of encyclopedic knowledge in relation to intercultures. A socio-cognitive approach was
used to interpret and discuss the issues raised in connection with the subject matter. This theory helps us understand how encyclopedic knowledge through its cultural models can function as both a repository of knowledge that changes diachronically and a synchronically changing emergent knowledge created in the process of communication. A significant part of encyclopedic knowledge is instantiated in cultural models that provide scenarios, scripts, or action plans for individuals to interpret and behave in a particular situation, or process and interpret the behavior of others in various life situations.

The socio-cognitive approach (Kecskes 2008, 2010a, 2011) defines “interculturality” as a phenomenon that is not only interactionally and socially constructed in the course of communication, but also relies on relatively definable cultural models and norms that represent the speech communities to which the interlocutors belong. Consequently, interculturality has both relatively normative and emergent components. In order for us to understand the dynamism and ever-changing nature of intercultural encounters, we need to approach interculturality dialectically. Cultural constructs and models change diachronically, while cultural representation and speech production by individuals changes synchronically. Intercultures are ad hoc creations. They are created in a communicative process in which cultural norms and models as representatives of encyclopedic knowledge are brought into the interaction from prior experience of interlocutors and blend with features created ad hoc in the interaction in a synergetic way. The result is intercultural discourse in which there is mutual transformation of knowledge and communicative behavior rather than transmission. The emphasis is on transformation rather than on transmission.

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4 Cultural Linguistics and Intercultural Communication

Farzad Sharifian

INTRODUCTION

Recent years have witnessed the emergence of several new yet complementary approaches to the study of intercultural communication. The field of intercultural communication had been suffering from a dearth of theoretical frameworks and theory building. However, the rapid increase in intercultural communication that has accompanied globalization has inevitably called for conceptual frameworks for exploring the agents, processes, and structures involved in intercultural communication, due to its increased complexity in today’s world (e.g., Holliday, Kullman, and Hyde 2004; Kramsch, this volume; Kecskes, this volume). This chapter provides an account of the development of the emerging field of Cultural Linguistics and its application to the study of intercultural communication beginning with a firsthand description of Cultural Linguistics and its development. This will be followed by a discussion of examples of research in Cultural Linguistics focusing on studies of embodied conceptual metaphor together with studies of varieties of English. Finally, the chapter will examine how Cultural Linguistics can be applied to studies of problems in intercultural communication.

WHAT IS CULTURAL LINGUISTICS?

Cultural Linguistics is a discipline with multidisciplinary origins that explores the relationship between language, culture, and conceptualization (Palmer 1996; Sharifian 2011). The term “cultural linguistics” was perhaps first used by a pioneer of cognitive linguistics, Ronald Langacker, in an argument emphasizing the relationship between cultural knowledge and grammar. He maintained that “the advent of cognitive linguistics can be heralded as a return to cultural linguistics. Cognitive linguistic theories recognize cultural knowledge as the foundation not just of lexicon, but central facets of grammar as well” (1994, 31; original emphasis). However, in practice, so-called “mainstream” cognitive linguists were united by their main focus on exploring the relationship between language and
conceptualization. The role of culture in shaping language and the influence of culture on all levels of language was not adequately dealt with until the publication of *Toward a Theory of Cultural Linguistics* (1996), by Gary B. Palmer, a linguistic anthropologist from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. In this book, Palmer argued that cognitive linguistics can be directly applied to the study of language and culture. Central to Palmer’s proposal is the idea that “language is the play of verbal symbols that are based in imagery” (3; emphasis added), and this imagery is culturally constructed. Palmer argued that culturally defined imagery governs narrative, figurative language, semantics, grammar, discourse, and even phonology. His proposal called for close links between three traditions in anthropological linguistics and cognitive linguistics, as follows:

Cognitive linguistics can be tied in to three traditional approaches that are central to anthropological linguistics: Boasian linguistics, ethnosemantics (ethno science), and the ethnography of speaking. To the synthesis that results I have given the name *cultural linguistics*. (Palmer 1996, 5, original emphasis)

Palmer’s proposal can be diagrammatically represented as follows:

Boasian linguistics, named after the German-American anthropologist Franz Boas, saw language as closely linked with, and in fact reflecting, people’s mental life and culture. Boas observed that languages classify experiences differently, and that these linguistic categories tend to influence the thought patterns of their speakers (Lucy 1992). The latter theme formed the basis of later work by Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf, known as “linguistic determinism”: the idea that linguistic structure has a

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*Figure 4.1* A diagrammatic representation of Palmer’s (1996) proposal for Cultural Linguistics. Figure by author.
direct influence on human thought. This version is known as the “strong version.” A weaker version simply posits that language, thought, and perception are interrelated.

Ethnosemantics “is the study of the ways in which different cultures organize and categorize domains of knowledge, such as those of plants, animals, and kin” (Palmer 1996, 19). For example, several ethnosemanticians have extensively studied kinship classifications in Aboriginal languages of Australia and noted their complexity, in contrast to the kinship system classifications in varieties of English such as American English or Australian English (e.g., Tonkinson 1998).

The ethnography of speaking, or the ethnography of communication, largely associated with the work of Dell Hymes (e.g., 1974), explores culturally distinctive means and modes of speaking or communication in general. Hymes emphasized the role of sociocultural context in the ways in which speakers perform communicatively. He argued that the competence that is required for the conduct of social life includes more than just linguistic competence, of the type Chomskyan linguists studied. He proposed the notion of communicative competence, which includes competence about “appropriate” norms of language use in various sociocultural contexts.

The three linguistic anthropological traditions referred to in the preceding section “share an interest in the native’s point of view” (Palmer 1996, 26), or an interest in the sociocultural grounding of language. Palmer maintains that although all of these three traditions also, either implicitly or explicitly, reveal an interest in cognition, none of them engages closely with the cognitive aspects of language and culture. For Palmer, here lies the gap that could be filled by cognitive linguistics, with its emphasis on the relationship between language and cognition, as conceptualization.

Cognitive linguistics utilizes several analytical tools from within the broad field of cognitive science, notably the notion of “schema.” The concept of “schema” has been very widely used in several disciplines and under different rubrics, and this has led to different understandings and definitions of the term. For cognitive linguists such as Langacker, schemas are abstract representations in the sense that a noun, for example, instantiates the schema of \([\text{THING}]/[x]\), whereas a verb instantiates the schema of \([\text{PROCESS}]/[x]\). In classical paradigms of cognitive psychology, however, schemas are considered more broadly as building blocks of cognition used for storing, organizing, and interpreting information (e.g., Bartlett 1932; Bobrow and Norman 1975; Minsky 1975; Rumelhart 1980). Image schemas, on the other hand, are regarded as recurring cognitive structures that establish patterns of understanding and reasoning and are often elaborated from our knowledge of our bodies as well as social interactions (e.g., Johnson 1987). An example of this would be to understand the body or parts of the body as containers. Such an understanding is reflected in expressions like: “with a heart full of happiness.” Another analytical tool used in cognitive linguistics is “conceptual metaphor,” which is closely associated
with the work of Lakoff and, to a lesser extent, Johnson (e.g., Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Conceptual metaphors are defined as cognitive structures that allow us to conceptualize and understand one conceptual domain in terms of another. For instance, the English metaphorical expression “You broke my heart” reflects the conceptual metaphor of HEART AS THE SEAT OF EMOTION. In proposing a theory of Cultural Linguistics, Palmer persuasively argued that all these conceptual structures are very likely to have a cultural basis. Palmer’s own work was based on the analysis of cases from languages such as Tagalog and Coeur d’Alene (e.g., Palmer 1996, 2003).

As mentioned above, Palmer believed that the link with cognitive linguistics could provide Cultural Linguistics with a solid cognitive perspective. However, despite drawing on cognitive science for its analytical tools, cognitive linguistics started to receive criticism for not having a strong cognitive base, in the sense of cognitive representations, structure, and processes (e.g., Peeters 2001). At this juncture, Cultural Linguistics took a new direction in terms of developing a theoretical framework that would offer an integrated understanding of the notions of cognition and culture, as suited to Cultural Linguistics. I (Sharifian 2008, 2009, 2011) presented a proposal that captured a view of cognition that has life at the level of culture, under the concept of cultural cognition.

Cultural cognition draws on a multidisciplinary understanding of the collective cognition that characterizes a cultural group. Several cognitive scientists have worked on cognition as a collective entity that moves beyond the level of the individual (e.g., Clark and Chalmers 1998; Sutton 2005, 2006; Wilson 2005). Also, scholars working in the area of complex science, often under the rubric of Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) have been seeking to explain how relationships between parts, or agents, give rise to the collective behaviors of a system or group (e.g., Holland 1995; Waldrop 1992). A number of scholars, notably Hutchins (1994), explored the notion of “distributed cognition,” which includes factors external to the human mind, such as technology and environment, in its definition of cognition. Drawing on these approaches to cognition, I (Sharifian 2008, 2009, 2011) offer a model of cultural cognition that serves as the basis for understanding what can be called cognitive (and in what sense) and what can be called cultural and the relationship between the two in Cultural Linguistics.

Cultural cognition embraces the cultural knowledge that emerges from the interactions between members of a cultural group across time and space. I have used the term “heterogeneously distributed” (e.g., Sharifian 2008, 2011) to refer to the ways in which this collective knowledge is represented at the level of individual members of a cultural group. In other words, cultural cognition is heterogeneously represented within the minds of members of a cultural group, and these members show variations and differences in their understanding of their cultural knowledge. Also, cultural cognition is dynamic in that it is constantly being negotiated and
renegotiated across generations and, as well as through contact with other
cultures, by members of any cultural group.

Language is a central aspect of cultural cognition as it serves as a “col-
lective memory bank” (wa Thiong’o 1986) of the cultural cognition of
a group. Many aspects of language are shaped by the cultural cognition
that has prevailed at different stages in the history of a speech commu-
nity, and these aspects can leave traces in current linguistic practice. In
this sense language can be viewed as a primary mechanism for storing
and communicating cultural cognition. In other words, language acts
both as a memory bank and a fluid vehicle for the (re-)transmission of
cultural cognition.

The analytical tools that have so far appeared to be useful in examin-
ning aspects of cultural cognition are “cultural schema,” “cultural cat-
egory” (including “cultural prototype”), and “cultural metaphor.” I refer
to these collectively as “cultural conceptualizations.” Consistent with
the view of cultural cognition referred to in this chapter, these analytical
tools are seen as existing at the level of the individual as well as that of
the collective cultural cognition. The notion of schema and conceptual
metaphor was discussed earlier in this chapter. Cultural schemas are a
culturally constructed subclass of schemas; that is, they are abstracted
from people’s cultural experiences. The last three decades have witnessed
pioneering work on cultural schema in the area of cognitive anthropology
(e.g., D’Andrade 1995; Shore 1996; Strauss and Quinn 1997).

A term that closely overlaps with cultural schema, and has again
received major attention in cognitive anthropology, is that of the “cul-
tural model” (e.g., D’Andrade 1995; D’Andrade and Strauss 1992; Hol-
lund and Quinn 1987; see also Kecskes, this volume). This term, which
was initially intended to displace “folk models” (Keesing 1987), has also
been employed in the sense of “a cognitive schema that is intersubjectively
shared by a social group” (D’Andrade 1987, 112). D’Andrade constantly
refers to the notion of “schema” in his explication of the term “cultural
model” (ibid.) and he regards models as complex cognitive schemas.
Strauss and Quinn (1997, 49) also maintain that “another term for cul-
tural schemas (especially of the more complex sort) is ‘cultural model.’”
Polzenhagen and Wolf (2007), however, have used the notion of “cultural
model” as representing more general, overarching conceptualizations
encompassing metaphors and schemas that are minimally complex.

An important class of cultural conceptualizations is that of cultural
“categories.” We tend to categorize every single entity around us, for
example, as “food,” “furniture,” “stationery,” and “groceries,” and
we tend to associate certain prototypes with such categories. However,
these categories and their associated prototypes may differ across different
cultures. What is categorized as “food” and what is prototypically
evoked in our minds when we hear the word “food” is, to a large extent,
culturally constructed.
CULTURAL LINGUISTICS AND RESEARCH ON EMBODIED CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR

As mentioned before, one of the major topics of cognitive linguistic research is investigating conceptual metaphor. Cultural Linguistics is interested in conceptual metaphors that have a cultural basis, or what I term cultural metaphors. Take, for example, the class of conceptual metaphors that reflect human body parts as their source domain. Such metaphorical expressions reflect conceptualizations of body parts as the seat/center of thoughts, feelings, courage, etc. As mentioned earlier, English expressions such as “you broke my heart” suggest a conceptualization of the heart as the seat of emotion. Cultural Linguistics research has revealed that such conceptualizations often have their roots in particular cultural traditions such as ethnomedical belief systems (e.g., Sharifi an et al. 2008; Yu 2009a, 2009b).

An example from Chinese comes from Yu (2009b), who explores the Chinese cultural conceptualizations of the heart. These give rise to metaphors that profile this internal bodily organ as a physical entity (e.g., THE HEART AS A CONTAINER), as a part of the body (e.g., THE HEART AS THE RULER OF THE BODY), and the locus of affective and cognitive activities (e.g., THE HEART AS THE HOUSE OF ALL EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL PROCESSES). Yu observes that the Chinese word xin refers to faculties that are covered by the “heart” and the “mind” in English. He attributes this to ancient Chinese philosophy in which the heart was conceptualized as the organ for thinking, feeling, will, reason, and intuition (Yu 2008). He further attributes the conceptualization of the heart as the monarch of the body to traditional Chinese medicine, which is based on the categorization of five elements. In traditional Chinese medicine the heart is the master of the body and governs various emotional and intellectual activities. As examples of the encoding of this conceptualization of the heart in the Chinese language, Yu (2007, 67) provides the following:

(1) 怡悦荡心房。

Yiyue dang xin-fang
joy wave (in) heart-house/room
“Joy rippled in the heart”

(2) 进城几年了,乡亲们的嘱托他一直记在心间。

Jin cheng ji nian le, xiangqin-men de
enter city several years PER fellow-villagers MOD
zhutuo ta yizhi ji zai xin-jian
advice he always remember in heart-
room/inside
“Having lived in the city for several years, he always bears in mind (lit. in the heart room or inside his heart) the fellow villagers’ advice.”

These examples clearly reflect conceptualization of xin as the seat of both memory and feelings.

CULTURAL LINGUISTICS AND RESEARCH INTO VARIETIES OF ENGLISH

Cultural Linguistics has offered a very fruitful approach to the exploration of varieties of English. This research trend revolves around the premise that varieties of English that have developed among different cultural groups may be distinct from each other at the level of cultural conceptualizations. That is, a lexical item, for example, “family,” as used by different varieties of English may be associated with different cultural schemas or cultural categories (e.g., Sharifi 2005).

Wolf and Polzenhagen (e.g., Polzenhagen and Wolf 2007; Wolf 2008; Wolf and Polzenhagen 2009) have explored conceptualizations of the African cultural model of community in African varieties of English from the perspective of Cultural Linguistics. Wolf (2008, 368) maintains that this “cultural model involves a cosmology and relates to such notions as the continuation of the community, the members of the community, witchcraft, the acquisition of wealth, and corruption, which find expression in African English.” For example, by examining a number of expressions in Cameroon English (e.g., “they took bribes from their less fortunate brothers”), Wolf observes that the central conceptual metaphors in that variety of English are kinship is community and community is kinship (2008, 370).

Cultural Linguistics has also been adopted in exploring various features of Australian Aboriginal English. In Aboriginal English, for example, even everyday words such as “family” and “home” evoke cultural schemas and categories among Aboriginal English speakers that characterize Aboriginal cultural experiences, and they are very distinct from the conceptualizations associated with these words in Australian English (e.g., Sharifi 2005, 2006, 2007). The word “family,” for instance, is associated with categories in Aboriginal English that move far beyond the usual referent to the “nuclear” family in Anglo-Australian culture. A person who comes into frequent contact with an Aboriginal person may be referred to by using a kin term such as “brother” or “cousin” or “cousin brother” (Malcolm and Sharifi 2007, 381). The word “mum” may be used to refer to people who are referred to as “aunt” in Anglo-Australian culture, or even to one’s biological mother’s brother in some cases. Such usage of kinship terms does not stop at the level of categorization but usually evokes schemas associated with certain rights and obligations operative between those involved, for example, who can speak to whom about what and how. The word “home” in Aboriginal English usually evokes categories that are based on family
relationships more than the building occupied by a nuclear family. For instance, an Aboriginal English speaker may refer to their grandparents’ or auntie’s place as “home.”

Cultural Linguistics has also been recently used in compiling a dictionary of Hong Kong English. In a very innovative attempt, Cummings and Wolf (2011) have identified and included underlying conceptualizations for many of the words included in the dictionary. The following is an example of an entry in the dictionary:

**Spirit money** (also **paper money, hell money, hell bank notes**)

*Fixes expressions, n.*

Definition. Fake money burned in a ritual offering to the dead

Text example: “An offering of oranges may be peeled and placed on the grave, together with paper money. Finally, crackers are let off.”

**Underlying conceptualisations:** A supernatural being is a human being, a paper model is a real object in the supernatural world

[**Target domain > supernatural being, paper model**]  [**Source domain > human being object in the supernatural world**]

( ibid., 163–164)

This groundbreaking step in the tradition of dictionary compilation allows readers to become familiar with the cultural conceptualizations that underlie certain expressions in the given language or the language variety. But, of course, in many cases the underlying conceptualizations themselves have their roots in certain cultural traditions, including religion and spirituality. It should be mentioned here that what is identified as conceptual metaphor in cognitive linguistics is revisited in Cultural Linguistics, in the sense that some cases of conceptual metaphor do not involve any conscious mapping from one source to another on the part of the speaker, but are rather entrenched in firm belief systems, such as those of worldview and religion. That is, in these cases, the underlying conceptualization provides a frame of thought and is based on what the speakers of the language or language variety consider to be real, rather than simply a figure of speech or conscious creative mapping from one domain to another. For example, in the aforementioned case, the speakers do not necessarily view the underlying conceptualizations as metaphorical; rather, many view them as real beliefs rooted in Buddhism. In such cases, the conceptual metaphor would rather serve as a cultural schema that a speaker draws on to make sense of and communicate relevant experiences.

**Cultural Linguistics and Intercultural Communication**

Although the process of globalization has led to a crossing of cultural borders in many cases and contexts, leading to complex notions of interculturality, multiculturality, and transculturality (Welsch 1999), there are still
many contexts around the world where individuals draw on the cultural conceptualizations that characterize particular speech communities. From the perspective of Cultural Linguistics, during intercultural communication, interlocutors draw on cultural conceptualizations in constructing, interpreting, and negotiating intercultural meanings. These conceptualizations may be the ones that are associated with their L1, or those they have access to as result of living in a particular cultural environment, or those developed from interacting with speakers from other cultures.

Several studies in recent years have shown that in certain contexts intercultural communication, and in particular miscommunication, reflect differences in the ways in which different groups of speakers conceptualize their experiences, as they draw on their different cultural schemas, categories, and metaphors. Wolf and Polzenhagen (2009, 183) observe that “cross-cultural variation at the conceptual level calls for a strongly meaning-oriented and interpretive approach to the study of intercultural communication,” and that is what Cultural Linguistics has to offer. This section of the chapter offers an example to support this view.

Consider the following intercultural case from Sharifi an and Jamarani (2011, 237):

Mr. Anderson (Australian) and Roya (Iranian) are neighbours. Each month when mowing his lawn, Mr. Anderson mows Roya’s front lawn as well. She is very pleased, and one day says to him:

Roya: “You always make me ashamed by mowing my lawn.” (Mr. Anderson stopped mowing her lawn from that date.)

When asked to elaborate on the situation, Roya maintained that Mr. Anderson was very strange, since he stopped mowing her lawn after she “thanked” him.

From the perspective of the Anglo-Australian cultural conceptualizations, Mr. Anderson had been told he made Roya “ashamed” by mowing her lawn, implying that he made her feel bad and guilty for not having fulfilled her duties as the occupant of the house. However, Roya has in this incident drawn on the Persian cultural schema of sharmandegi, “being ashamed,” which is often associated with the speech act of expressing gratitude (Sharifi an and Jamarani 2011). The concept of “shame” associated with gratitude is meant to convey the interlocutor’s awareness that the other person has spent some time/energy in providing the speaker with goods and services they were under no obligation to supply. The speaker acknowledges this by uttering “shame” statements, as if guilty because of this awareness. Thus, the English expression of shame used in this context by Roya is in fact a heightened expression of gratitude. The other interlocutor in such cases is expected to respond with statements that would functionally be equivalent of the English expression “You’re welcome” or say doshmanetun sharmandeh baasheh (meaning: “May your enemy be ashamed!”). As it can be seen,
intercultural miscommunication in this context is a result of a mismatch of cultural schemas at work.

CULTURAL LINGUISTICS AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION BETWEEN ABORIGINAL AND NON-ABORIGINAL AUSTRALIANS

In recent years, communication between Aboriginal English speakers and non-Aboriginal speakers of English has been studied fruitfully from the perspective of Cultural Linguistics (e.g., Sharifian 2010). From the beginning of contact between the new settlers and Aboriginal people in Australia, communication between the two groups entailed difficulties for two main reasons: they did not speak each other’s language, and when eventually they communicated through contact varieties such as pidgin, Creole, and Aboriginal English, the differences between the cultural conceptualizations underlying these contact varieties/languages hampered the process of communication. In fact, the contact varieties mainly facilitated communication between Aboriginal speakers. These speakers had to use English as a lingua franca among themselves, when they were moved into areas with speakers of many other mutually unintelligible Aboriginal languages (Malcolm 2000).

Differences between Aboriginal English and Australian English have considerably disadvantaged Aboriginal English speakers in various contexts, from the courtroom to the classroom (e.g., Christie and Harris 1985; Eades 1996, 2000; Malcolm 1982; Sharifian, Rochecouste, and Malcolm 2004). One domain that has created a significant conceptual divide between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people from the beginning of contact, is the issue of understanding the relationship Aboriginal people have with the land. The following excerpt from an Aboriginal English speaker explains this divide:

You see my people see landownerships as being totally different to the English way of ownership because we, ours used to be really the land owns us and it still is that to us. You know the land ah, grows all of us up and it really does, no human is older than the land itself it just isn’t and no living marsupial is as old as the land itself. Everything that’s been and gone with life in the flesh has died but the land is still here.

(Rob Randall, Yankunytjatjara Elder, 2012)

As reflected above, the Aboriginal conceptualization of the relationship between people and the land is that of “the land owns us” and “the land grows us up.” The general underlying conceptualization here is that of LAND AS KIN, whereas the common understanding from the perspective of the Anglo-Australian is rather “land is a possession that can be bought and sold.”
In the Aboriginal worldview, land enjoys a sacred position and is strongly associated with Aboriginal spirituality, a topic that has long been a matter of significant debate and conflict between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal speakers. This is best reflected in the following excerpt from an Aboriginal Elder:

Um if we said that that place was sacred over there you know across Uluru. If I sat down I was tellin’ a lot of politicians or someone you can’t develop over there because that place is sacred over there and the first thing that they would do, then they would go and they would look to see what was sacred about it or they would try and bring the sacredness down, and you know they’d say “well what’s sacred about it?” You know but they can’t understand the energy or the ceremonies that went into the land and the singing that went into the land, into the rocks ah into the trees ah they cannot understand that and ah and so they’ve got to look to find some to identify something there. They’re trying to look for that sacredness thing, you can’t see sacredness. (Max “Duramummun” Harrison, 2009)

The sacredness that is referred to in the excerpt is associated with many aspects of the environment, such as rocks, hills, lakes, trees, and the like, for Aboriginal people. This spirituality is rooted in the worldview of Aboriginal people, according to which Ancestor Beings during the Dreamtime created the land, the people, and the animals, and at the end of their journey themselves turned into the features of the land, such as rocks, rivers, etc. (Charlesworth, Kimber, and Wallace 1990). Thus the underlying cultural conceptualization here is ANCESTOR SPIRITS ARE PART OF THE LAND, which is why the land is so sacred to Aboriginal people.

The spirituality that characterizes Aboriginal English is not limited to the domain of land, but influences many other aspects of the speaker’s language. Words such as “sing,” “smoke,” “medicine,” “rain,” etc., may be used to refer to Aboriginal spiritual experiences that are part of Aboriginal cultural conceptualizations that are largely unfamiliar to non-Aboriginal speakers (Sharifian 2010). As mentioned earlier, unfamiliarity with such cultural conceptualizations has disadvantaged Aboriginal English speakers in many settings. For example, Aboriginal English is not recognized by many educators as a legitimate variety of English; it is merely treated as an incorrect form of the language. Lack of recognition of Aboriginal English by the educational system often lets intercultural miscommunication between Aboriginal students and non-Aboriginal educators and students go unnoticed, leading to a sizable dropout rate of Aboriginal students from school.

In many urban areas, Aboriginal English spoken by Aboriginal students does not sound very different from Australian English at the surface levels of phonology and syntax. However, Aboriginal cultural conceptualizations...
are embedded at the conceptual level of the English used by Aboriginal students (Sharifian 2002, 2005). This leads many educators to the belief that in those contexts Aboriginal students are speaking Australian English. In such areas the possibility of miscommunication between students and their non-Aboriginal teachers is higher than in areas where Aboriginal students clearly speak a basilectal form of the variety. This hypothesis has been explored in two projects.

One of these projects aimed at exploring possible misunderstandings by non-Aboriginal teachers of stories told by Aboriginal students (Sharifian, Rochecouste, and Malcolm 2004). A number of teachers were invited to listen to five stories and then recall them. They listened to each story twice and produced their recalls immediately.

The recall of the stories revealed cases of significant misunderstanding on the part of non-Aboriginal teachers. The following is an example of how the recalled utterance differed from the original:

(1) Original: An an den my uncle grabbed it [kangaroo] and said “you stupid kangaroo” blew his head off.

(2) Recalled: The uncle was sort of yelling and telling off the person who was driving saying, “What did you do?” (Text 2, SC.)

In the original story (see Appendix 4.1), the Aboriginal child is telling the story of their kangaroo hunting experience as a funny recount (reflected in the fact that he is laughing while telling the story). However, the teacher maintained that she found the story to be a sad one, and as can be seen in the example, she has somehow changed the content of the story. In the original story, it is the uncle who grabs and shoots the kangaroo, whereas in the recall, the role of the uncle changes as he yells and tells off the person who drove over the kangaroo. This teacher seems to have relied on her own schema (likely to be a cultural schema), according to which the act of shooting or running over a kangaroo would be cruel, and in doing so has comprehended the story in a way that is significantly different from that of the teller. In contrast, an Aboriginal education officer who was invited to listen and recall this story produced the following:

Talking about one time hunting, in the car chasing down the fence line, like most of us do, most of the kangaroos head toward the fence line anyways to jump it and to get away yeah so, must’ve hit a fence cos he ran over the barbed wire, popped the tyre, yeah so pretty much it from that story, what I caught onto anyway.

In this recall, the Aboriginal participant acknowledges his familiarity with the cultural schema reflected in the passage by saying, “like most of us do.” The cultural schema is partly indexed in the excerpt “most of the kangaroos
head toward the fence line anyways to jump it and get away yeah.” The fol-
lowing is another example of recall by a non-Aboriginal teacher:

Original: One of my Nannas could feel these little fingers that choking 'er.

Recalled: It was the smoke choking her. (Text 5, MT.)

This original utterance was part of a story told by an Aboriginal child in
which a female spirit was cooking in the kitchen of a relative, and when
her Nanna came to pray so that the spirit would go out of the window, the
spirit tried to choke her with its “little fingers.” In the recalled utterance,
however, the teacher did not realize the presence of the spirit and thought
the smoke was choking the Nanna. A significant number of teachers mis-
comprehended this story, mainly due to the cultural spiritual schema that
informed the original narrative. The project overall revealed significant mis-
understanding of Aboriginal stories on the part of non-Aboriginal teachers,
mainly due to their unfamiliarity with the cultural schemas associated with
these stories.

In a follow-up project, the role of the participants was reversed (Sharifi an
et al. 2012). That is, a number of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students
were invited to listen to a number of stories from children’s storybooks that
were commonly used in schools in Australia (e.g., Puss in Boots). They
were then asked to recall those stories. The aim was to explore any possible
mismatch between the schemas that students would draw on to understand
the stories and those that actually underlay them.

As in the previous project, there were a significant number of cases
where the recalls by Aboriginal students were different from the original
stories, suggesting that these students relied on their own cultural schemas
in understanding the texts. This was only marginally the case with non-
Aboriginal children. For example, take the case of the following summary
of one of the stories, titled John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat (Wag-
nner and Brooks 1978):

Rose, a widow, and her dog, John Brown, happily live together. They
rely on each other for company, but when a cat appears in the garden,
John Brown refuses to acknowledge it. Rose, however, is quite taken
by the cat. Eventually Rose falls ill, and this distresses John Brown. He
reluctantly chooses to welcome the cat into the home to help Rose get
better. (Sharifian et al. 2012, 37)

The recall by several Aboriginal students revealed that the words “mid-
night” and “cat” triggered some spiritual schemas, according to which a
dog can be a protector from spirits, while a cat whose eyes shine in the
night would be a hostile messenger from the spirit world. The cat would
be an omen of some “bad thing” to come. Also, according to this schema,
fire can provide protection against pursuing spirits. In general, the results of the second project revealed a significant degree of miscomprehension of stories by Aboriginal students due to the fact that they understood these stories that are intended to be unproblematic vehicles for developing English comprehension skills in the classroom setting in the light of their own cultural schemas.

Overall, the second project supported the observation that there is significant potential miscommunication between Aboriginal students and their teachers whether or not the initiator of the communication was the student recounting a personal experience or the teacher deploying school literacy materials. This miscommunication was shown to be due to a mismatch between cultural schemas that Aboriginal students relied on and those that teachers drew upon, which were also reflected in the schemas that informed school literacy materials. This kind of miscommunication is not limited to the classroom, and it characterizes the everyday life of Aboriginal people, disadvantaging them in all contexts where they come into contact with non-Aboriginal people. All in all, the results of the research briefly referred to here show the potential of Cultural Linguistics for exploring intercultural communication, in particular where there are significant differences between the cultural conceptualizations that interlocutors rely on.

CULTURAL LINGUISTICS, INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION, AND METACULTURAL COMPETENCE

The advent of globalization and the dynamics of increased contact between people from different cultural backgrounds call for new notions of the “competence,” required for successful intercultural communication. In this new era, communication has become more and more complex, as it is increasingly operating an interface where languages and cultures meet and interact with each other. In many contexts, interlocutors in intercultural communication are bilingual and multilingual, and they use their linguistic repertoire as a resource in intricate ways. Kramsch (2006) observes that in such contexts speakers reveal what she calls “symbolic competence,” which she describes as follows:

Social actors in multilingual settings, even if they are non-native speakers of the languages they use, seem to activate more than a communicative competence that would enable them to communicate accurately, effectively and appropriately with one another. They seem to display a particularly acute ability to play with various linguistic codes and with the various spatial and temporal resonances of these codes. (2008, 400)

Intercultural communication in the new era is also a meeting point for different systems of cultural conceptualization. Although, as I have argued in
this chapter, unfamiliarity with the different cultural conceptualizations that interlocutors bring to the task of intercultural communication can lead to significant miscommunication, awareness of such differences in cultural conceptualizations can also provide a springboard for the development of what I have termed metacultural competence. Such a competence enables interlocutors participating in intercultural communication to communicate through negotiating their way through their differing cultural conceptualizations. It develops from the awareness that one language can be used by different speech communities to express differing cultural conceptualizations and is further consolidated as a result of growing familiarity with the different systems of cultural conceptualizations used by interlocutors. I refer to this aspect of metacultural competence as conceptual variation awareness.

Metacultural competence enables speakers to make use of strategies such as conceptual explication, or making an effort to explicate the cultural conceptualizations drawn upon that he/she thinks other interlocutors may not be familiar with. For example, a Chinese speaker may attempt to elaborate on his/her use of the word “relationship” in English, as he/she would be aware that this word is used to express the Chinese cultural schema of Guanxi, which captures a complex personalized network of influence in Chinese society (e.g., Lin and Si 2010). Another good example of conceptual explication is the quotation from Rob Randall, presented earlier in this chapter, where he explicates Aboriginal cultural conceptualizations of “the land” and “land ownership.”

Metacultural competence also involves an awareness of the need for conceptual negotiation strategies to make communication of cultural conceptualizations smooth and effective. These include strategies for seeking conceptual clarification, such as asking: “How does the notion of ‘face’ work in Chinese?” In general, as mentioned earlier, metacultural competence enables interlocutors to communicate and negotiate cultural meanings during the process of intercultural communication. The following exchange between a speaker of Australian English (speaker A) and a Persian speaker of English (speaker B) reveals how metacultural competence can facilitate intercultural communication.

*Speaker A:* I’m hungry. I’m going to have some potato salad, would you like some?
*Speaker B:* No, thanks very much. I’m OK.

(Here speaker A brings a plate of potato salad and starts eating)

*Speaker B:* Did you make the salad yourself?
*Speaker A:* Yep, I did.
*Speaker B:* What is in it?
*Speaker A:* Mayonnaise, sour cream, potatoes, eggs, hmm . . . pickles, vinegar, hmm . . . ooh and mustard.
*Speaker B:* Sounds very yum!
*Speaker A:* Are you sure you wouldn’t like to have some?
Here speaker B recalled later that at first she gave an automatic refusal to the offer of the salad based on tārof although she was hungry too. Tārof is a Persian cultural schema that among other things encourages recipients of offers, for example, of food, to reject the offer out of politeness several times (e.g., Assadi 1980; Sharifian 2010). Several authors have noted the absence of the Persian concept of tārof in English and have used various labels to describe it, including “ritual courtesy” (Beeman 1986, 56), “communicative routine” (Koutlaki 2002, 1741), “ritual politeness” (ibid., 1740), and “polite verbal wrestling” (Rafiee 1992, 96, cited in Koutlaki 2002, 1741). According to the cultural schema of tārof, the person making the offer is supposed to keep pressing the offer to assess whether or not the initial rejection was genuine or made merely out of politeness. Speaker B adds that she quickly realized that she had acted out of tārof and that since the other interlocutor did not seem to be familiar with this cultural norm she therefore tried to somehow “bring the offer back on the table” by asking questions and making comments about the salad. And as we see in the exchange, she succeeded in negotiating an intercultural pragmatic meaning that draws on two different cultural schemas. This clearly reflects metacultural competence, which results from speaker B’s familiarity with the cultural schema that speaker A is using, as well as a conscious awareness of the cultural norm that she herself drew upon in the first instance.

As a final note, it should be mentioned here that although metacultural competence tends to naturally develop in speakers that constantly engage in intercultural communication, it can also be the target of systematic training, for example, through exposure to documented accounts of a variety of cultural conceptualizations associated with different speech communities.

**CONCLUDING REMARKS**

This chapter provides an account of Cultural Linguistics and its analytical tools and explores the potential of this approach for studying intercultural communication. Thus far, the results of the application of Cultural Linguistics in the area of intercultural communication present significant promise, in terms of exploring the conceptual level of language, which is less tangible than levels of phonology and grammar, and therefore more likely to be subject to misconception. Cultural Linguistics also shows promise in terms of unpacking the type of competence that is required for the successful communication of cultural conceptualizations during intercultural communication. I hope this chapter paves the way for more extensive developments and research arising from this perspective, in particular further exploration of how intercultural meanings can be constructed, co-constructed, and negotiated during the process of intercultural communication.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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NOTES

1. See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w0sWIVR1hXw&feature=relmfu (accessed March 21, 2012).

REFERENCES


APPENDIX 4.1 TEXT 2 (CORPUS OF ABORIGINAL ENGLISH TEXTS)

M: an’ we—an’ we like this kangaroo like cause we couldn’t—couldn’t—’cause we they was all at dis water pond there was big mob of ’em an’ um we ran over dis liddle one an’ we came back to look for it but it wasn’t there an’ um we went right along this water pond lookin’ for this one little one an’ then went under the car each time we tried to run it over so they—as they ran over the next hump they ran over one of the fences with them clipper things in it sharp things and the tyre went flat

J: oh no

M: An’ an’ den my uncle grabbed it an’ said you stupid Kangaroo! blew his head off

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Part II

New Technologies and Intercultural Communication
5 International Sociodigital Interaction
What Politics of Interculturality?

Fred Dervin

INTRODUCTION

This chapter proposes to question the use of the “intercultural” in research in our new era, which is often referred to as being “postmodern” or “hypermodern” (Bauman 2004; Dervin 2011). One central aspect of this era is a shift in the way human interaction is conceptualized, especially in relation to the concept of identity in its liquid and dynamic understanding (Bauman 2004). The approach in this chapter thus takes seriously a renewed understanding of interculturality, which represents a reaction against an “analytic stereotyping” that Sarangi (1994), among others, has criticized in research on the “intercultural” (cf. also Kumaravadivelu 2007; Dervin 2011), which puts forward solid and static identities.

Recent global events such as repeated economic crises have shown that the other often suffers from many and various woes in our societies (social injustice and discrimination but also racism and xenophobia, to mention just a few). According to Martine Abdallah-Pretceille (2003, 1), “Intellectual asceticism is de rigueur, especially when Otherness is the object of discourse.” In the new era, this should be the motto of research on the “intercultural.” My first goal in this chapter is to provide some answers to the question: What is the “intercultural” today in research terms?

The context of sociodigital interaction in education is the main emphasis of this chapter. Data from the widely used e-learning software platform Moodle (Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment; cf. Chapter 6 in this volume) and the increasingly popular Web-based seminars or webinars (Elluminate and Adobe Connect) are analyzed. The term “sociodigital” was proposed by Coutant and Stenger (2011) to label such technologies.

The chapter is interested in the influence of sociodigital technology on the way interculturality is “done,” and thus on what is referred to as “politics of interculturality” here. It also asks the wider question of how to do research on the “intercultural” today.
FROM INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION TO POLITICS
OF INTERCULTURALITY: A NEW RESEARCH ERA?

For some readers, the phrase “a new research era” will probably sound pretentious as there have been quite a few attempts at reconceptualizing interculturality critically over the last thirty years (cf., e.g., “humanism of the diverse” in Abdallah-Pretceille 2003; “critical intercultural communication” in Piller 2011). Intercultural communication has a long history in global research worlds (cf. Dervin, Anahy, and Lavanchy 2011), which have often been criticized for remaining too “structuralist,” even “culturalist” and “essentialist” (Holliday 2010). It is also important to note that it is researched in a complicated array of fields and subfields, which makes it difficult to map fully the ways it is conceptualized and researched. In what follows, when I talk about “renewed interculturality,” I’ll limit the scope to the fields of applied linguistics and “intercultural” education (but I am well aware that in fields such as comparative religion or sociology of cosmopolitanism similar ideas are developed).

The renewed ways of dealing with interculturality are in line with what the field of anthropology, among others, has argued over the last twenty to thirty years, especially in relation to the concept of culture. As such from the beginning of anthropology in the eighteenth century until about the 1960s, anthropologists used a solid and objectivizing understanding of “culture,” which has now been deconstructed and put into question (cf. Abu-Lughod 1991; Wikan 2002; etc.). This understanding has had a large impact on science but also everyday life. For Breidenbach and Nyiri (2009, 19):

> It is safe to say that in the general public, cultural explanations are now much more readily involved to challenge the authority of the “hard” sciences than twenty years ago, while, surprising as it is, “culture experts,” are less likely to be challenged, say, on the customs of Iraq than physicists on the safety of nuclear reactors.

While anthropologists, as we shall see in the following, reject this “culturalism” (Hannerz 1999), other fields and the general public still refer to it often. A hierarchy in the way the concept of “culture” is used also seems to take place in most societies between, e.g., “Creole culture, hybrid forms, global universals such as MacDonald’s” and “tradition, associated with ‘roots’ and the past” (Eriksen 2001, 134), with the latter being often considered more profound.

The tired old notion of “culture” (Latour 2009, 2) is still very much at the center of understanding/explaining interculturality, especially by providing “cultures” with social agency (“cultures meet,” “cultures clash”). This type of discourse has been labeled “culturalism” across academic worlds and languages (cf., e.g., Abdallah-Pretceille 1986; Baubock 2008; Philipps 2010; Holliday 2010). For Bayart (2002, xii), “it defines cultures in
a substantialist manner and assumes between cultures and political action
a relationship of exteriority in the form of an unequivocal causality.”

Furthermore, “culture” lays too much of an emphasis on difference,
which establishes “cultural hierarchy” rather than “cultural variation”
(Philips 2010, 20). According to Philips (ibid.), this triggers the following
discourses: “There are said to be ‘better’ and ‘worse,’ ‘more advanced’ and
‘more backward’ cultures.” All in all, limiting the intercultural to culture
means believing in the “absurd idea” that people adhere fully to their “cul-
tural” world without questioning it (Bensa 2010, 36–37).

The “deceptively cozy blanket of culture” (Eriksen 2001, 131), even
though it is used on a daily basis when “doing” interculturality, should thus
be looked at from a different perspective by researchers on intercultural
communication themselves.

Applied linguist Sarangi gave a very telling and simple example of “ana-
lytic stereotyping” in relation to “cultures” in his groundbreaking article of
1994. He presents the following interview situation between a young Asian
migrant (R) and a British interviewer (I):

01 I: right mhm hm what kind of driving have you been doing in
England
02 R:  uhm (LONG PAUSE) it's very good
03: I: what kind of what kind of driving though big truck or small
truck in factories
04: R:  eh no no I have licence only car
05: I: you have a car licence
06: R:  Licence right

Sarangi asserts that a first approach, which I would characterize as cultural-
ist, would see the long pause in the second turn as a sign of the candidate’s
“Asianness”: his “ethnic” and “cultural” origins make him submit to the
interviewer and avoid conflicts. But Sarangi wonders if there is anything con-
fl icting in the interviewer’s fi rst question (“right mhm hm what kind of driving
have you been doing in England”). On the other hand, the researcher sees the
situation as face-threatening, not for “cultural” reasons, but because, obvi-
ously, the interviewee’s English doesn’t seem to be good enough to answer
the question without the linguistic cooperation of the interviewer (cf. “what
kind of what kind of driving though big truck or small truck in factories”)
and also because of the “symbolic power” that the interviewer possesses—as
in any interview. Of course, it is easy to see how some of these “clues” cannot
be fully grasped, explained, or understood, which means that we need to
alter the way we present research results and accept that many explanatory
factors cannot be taken into account and presented.

This is the path that I am taking in this chapter by implementing a social
construction approach to looking at the politics of interculturality. As
the anthropologist Alban Bensa suggests (2010, 21), I am examining the

ABOUT THE DATA

The corpora that I have chosen to analyze here have different foci. The Moodle chat session took place between two university students from two different countries (one exchange student from the Netherlands in Finland and a Latvian student in Riga) who had to discuss intercultural matters around the influence of Russia in the Baltic Sea Region in Northern Europe on two occasions. The other chats are taken from two webinars, with different participants, which took place within the framework of a European project on language learning and the use of social media. The webinars were open to anyone interested, and each gathered around fifty online participants. All the participants were from different countries and used English as lingua franca, with little input from other languages (French, Polish, Spanish). In total, four chat sessions—two in Moodle and two webinars—were examined.

Having very different foci, it is interesting to see, as Piller (2000) suggests supra, if moments of “doing” intercultural take place, who triggers them and for what purposes. It will also be of interest to propose some answers or hypotheses to the question: What is different in “doing” interculturality online and face-to-face?

REVEALING/REPRESSING THE “INTERCULTURAL” IN SOCIODIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

The first corpus described here was collected during the use of a sociodigital technology (a chat room in Moodle) in 2008. This was part of a larger experiment in which twenty-five students, who were not always nationals of the working contexts (Finland and Latvia), participated. Many of the participants were international students from Turku (Finland) and “ethnic” Russian students (born in Latvia)—they were asked to meet online and discuss “intercultural” discourses they had collected on Russia, Latvia, Finland, and their own countries.

The students in Finland had just finished an introductory course on critical approaches to intercultural communication. The choice of Russia as a
main focus was strategic as this country represents a strong historical force
in the Baltic area and thus often triggers interesting imaginaries. I have
chosen to focus on two chat sessions between a Dutch student (exchange
student in Finland, born in England) and a Latvian student. The two chats
were done in a seven-day interval; the first chat lasted two hours and thirty
minutes and the second one two hours.

Places (e.g., countries), in such contexts of interaction in the two stu-
dents’ experience, seem to retain an important “social” role in the defi-
dition, construction, and enactment of interculturality. As the Dutch student
is “between” three diff erent spaces (Finland, Holland, and England), when
asked about the weather in “your country,” he (A) told his partner (B)
about the weather in two of his different “places”:

A: How is life in Riga today?
B: Today in Riga was warm, but not sunny! What about your
country?
A: Well Finland was cold, wet and grey, dark early but that’s to be
expected in October I suppose
B: And concerning the Netherlands I’m not sure but I doubt it was
much diff erent except the light was longer in the evening

After an hour into the fi rst chat, the Dutch student openly reveals that, on
top of his dual positions as a Dutch student in Finland, he identifi es with
another country (England, where he was born). However, the last sentence
of the following excerpt shows that, in this declared identity, he positions
as he asserts that he feels more Dutch than English:

A: I was born in England but moved to the Netherlands so the Neth-
erlands is my home. Interestingly this issue fi ts quite well with the
course we do as one can ask what is a home country and what does
it mean to be native to a diff erent country. Although I was born in
England I feel attached to the Netherlands and thus Dutch.

While the Dutch student seems to have no qualms about declaring his own
“diversity” (or duplicity), the Latvian student, who is part of the “Rus-
sian” minority in Latvia (but she doesn’t mention it during the fi rst chat),
seems to be very careful in disclosing her “roots.” Of course, we need to be
careful about asserting that a research participant is “part of a minority”
because this may not actually be what she feels about herself. If identity is
a construction, it should be refl ected in our research too (Bayart 2002; cf.
Chapter 2 in this volume).

During the chats, the Latvian student seems to be carefully observ-
ing the Dutch student’s reactions and responses and trying to fi gure out
his attitude toward Russians. Only when he repeatedly demonstrates that
actually he has nothing against Russians (and that he considers negative stereotypes and representations about them to be false), does she feel safe enough to reveal her roots (in the second chat). Several explanations for this “masking” of one of her (ethnic) identities can be proposed. It might be due to the negative image of Russia and Russians created by the media or simply the fact that, even though the Latvian student was “Russian,” she felt that this was not that important for the Dutch student to know, or this was not that important for herself. These are just hypotheses, and “real” explanations cannot be provided based on the transcripts. Follow-up interviews with the student or having had the student confront the data might have given some extra “clues,” though I feel uncomfortable with this as it gives the impression that we could then find out about the “truth.” However, when we talk about identity, it’s all about never-ending construction (Bauman 2004).

In the first chat, one hour and thirty-nine minutes into the conversation, the Latvian student starts a conversation about her Russian friends:

*B:* do you have friends from Russia?

*A:* ( . . . ) How about you?

*A:* of course, I have Russian friends. One of them is my best friend. ( . . . ) As I said before people are in my case I have met only kind, helpful people.

Her use of the modal phrase “of course” is interesting and could reveal or at least give a clue (if one knows that she is “Russian”) that she has strong links with the Russian community in Latvia and is therefore “Russian” herself. One might also get the wrong impression here that, through inserting “of course,” she projects the idea that it is normal for Latvians to have Russian (speaking?) friends. Her very positive attitude to Russians, and thus her “real community,” is also emphasized through her use of the “extreme case formulation” (Pomerantz 1986) contained in “I have met only kind, helpful (Russian) people.”

In some other parts of the discussion, she goes on to reveal that she is “Russian,” but the Dutch student does not notice the clues. Still in chat 1 (twenty minutes before the end), she avoids the topic when the Dutch student starts a conversation about the tensions between “Russians” and Latvians in Latvia and gives a perfect alibi: she doesn’t know anything about politics and economy:

*A:* I also noticed that after Latvians’ themselves Russians are the second largest population in Latvia proving that they will surely impact society and the way Latvia works as well as the other Baltic states

*B:* I am not a good specialist in such questions as politics, economics. Sorry!
A: Well if look at it from outside the economic or political perspective how do you feel on a personal opinion

B: my personal opinion is that not all Russians who live in Latvia want to it for their home town do not want to learn Latvian language. They say that Russia is the best place in the world. But the question is why do they stay there?

Yet, the Dutch student insists and asks for her own opinion. In her answer, she uses the pronoun “they” to distance herself from Russians. On the other hand, she tries to avoid generalizations and to make the point that actually not all Russians learn Latvian. Her statements are contradictory; on the one hand, she supports the Russians and, at the same time, asks herself and the Dutch student “Why do they stay here?” This clearly indicates her dual positioning and the problems of identification that her situation imposes on her. Besides, she may be provoking the Dutch student’s response, to see how he would respond to the burning issue that she introduces.

In what follows the Dutch student indirectly provokes the Latvian student to reveal even more about her roots. Talking about immigration, the Dutch student puts forward a clear “dissociative” act that he puts into Russians’ mouths:

A: they feel at home perhaps
A: maybe they feel part Latvian mentally but Russian at heart
B: perhaps I respect my country, Latvian language and everything what is connected with this country

This is where the Latvian student again “drops her mask.” Even though the Dutch student is talking about Russians (being unaware that her partner is one of them), her reply clearly positions her as a “Russian.” Indeed, why would she then suddenly declare her “faithfulness” to her country, to Latvian culture? It is interesting that Latvia, in this turn, becomes “this country,” as if she was distancing herself from it, thus avowing that she may be part of it but not entirely.

We have to wait until chat 2 (forty minutes before the end of it) before she fully confesses her double identity:

B: I liked that you don’t fully agree with some stereotypes. for example that there is no tension between Russians and Latvians. It is not true.
A: This is proving that stereotypes are merely a social construction used to differ people.
A: yet yourself being Latvian can say that it is untrue changes this perspective.
B: To tell the truth I am Russian.
At that very moment, which can be considered as dramatic, the Latvian student suddenly switches to the first person: “To tell the truth I am Russian” and reveals an important part of herself. Somehow from what she has said before, she had implied that she must be Russian. Yet, the Dutch student seemed to be so confident that she was Latvian until then. His reaction to this “piece of news” is very strong:

A: hmmm, this adds an interesting dimension
A: how come you said at first to be Latvian and that the Russians don’t want to work
A: when you were putting down your own people in this sense
B: I didn’t even mention that I am Russian or Latvian. Where did I mention this?

After the revelation, the Dutch student seems to feel shocked at her revealed identity and asks: “How come you said at first to be Latvian?” In fact, he does seem very convinced that she had identified herself as Latvian; he inferred this from her previous critical statements about Russians. In a way, if that was the case, one can understand his reaction, as he had probably trusted her to be honest with him, as he had himself disclosed his own “duplicity” (English/Dutch).

In her own turn, she is surprised: “I did not even mention that I am Russian or Latvian” (even though she had just told him “the truth”—that’s the word she used: “to tell you the truth” . . . as if she had been hiding something from him), as if she felt accused of cheating. A look at the transcripts actually confirms that she is right as she never said word for word that she was either Latvian or Russian. After this short moment of tension and the Latvian student checking if this episode had not “ruined their relation,” we can see how the Dutch student uses a strategy of sympathy (probably to help her to save face; cf. Chapter 9 in this volume), by demonstrating that he is similar to her through reminding her of his own duplicity and declared dissociation:

B: Now everything is clear. Right?
A: in some ways amusing as we speak of Netherlands and Latvia when I am English and you are Russian

This long process of identification (three hours and fifty minutes out of a total of four hours and twenty minutes) shows how complex and “discursive” questions of identity can be in situations of interculturality. For the Dutch student, his dual/multiple identities are declared nearly from the beginning of the chats, and his duality is problematized from the beginning. For the Latvian student, although she experiences the same complexity, her identities appear more restrained and contained. She doesn’t declare her duality, but she leaves a few clues here and there and waits until she has
gained full trust and the imposition of a clear “mask” from her partner’s side to reveal her duplicity (cf. Axelson 2007; Dervin 2011).

This took place in a specific educational sociodigital context, how different would it have been had it occurred in a face-to-face encounter? I can only speculate here, but it seems that the question is important. First of all, had the students met (they chatted so they couldn’t hear each other’s voices), they might have noticed (or not) a specific “foreign” accent in English—which could have potentially revealed (or not) a representation of a first language and/or nationality. Furthermore, by seeing the other, observing him/her, the clothes s/he is wearing, any symbols they might have on them (a flag, etc.), they might have “guessed” each other’s identity/ies. Also depending on where they might have met (Latvia, Finland, Russia, England, etc.) they may have picked up telltale clues about belonging. The main difference between using sociodigital media and face-to-face communication is that in the chat box, the students are together, no lurkers, no extra people. While in face-to-face interactions, e.g., on the street, in a bar, etc., they might meet other people or interact with other people who may help them (especially as in the case of the Latvian participant) to “drop the mask.” Obviously, these are only speculations and they should be taken as such. Yet it is interesting to ask these questions as it shows that sociodigital encounters do alter the nature of encounters and representations one can have of the other and also the representations one can project! Let us remember, too, that the specific context of their encounter was “imposed” on them as this was a compulsory component of a course they had taken, and this cannot be without impact on and implications for what happened in this encounter.

THE SOCIODIGITAL AGORA: “DOING” INTERCULTURALITY IN PUBLIC LIVE ONLINE WEBINARS?

This section explores the theme of “doing” interculturality in a very different sociodigital context. The data are based on two live webinars that took place online in 2010 and are not limited to two interlocutors but to around one hundred in total. The themes of the webinars differed, but they were related to the use of social media in language learning (webinar 1 = social inclusion and social media; webinar 2 = language-learning resources and social media).

A webinar is a dynamic sociodigital platform for presenting that can combine various applications, such as navigating through PowerPoint presentations, online presentations with video and sound, interaction with an online audience through a chat box, and so on. In this sense I want to call this a “sociodigital agora”: having registered beforehand in the particular webinars under scrutiny here, the participants can interact among themselves during a presentation and/or a discussion and even ask questions to
the presenters while they are talking. Interaction in a webinar appears thus
to be more group oriented than interindividual, unlike the previous set of
exchanges. In webinars people can either address a specific person in the
chat box (by using, e.g., @ plus the name of the person) or the whole group
and the speakers as is the case in most instances. The fact that interaction
between the chatters takes place simultaneously with the presentations
gives a very interesting dimension to the situation. One participant com-
mented: “I feel like I am back at school chatting with my friends during
class just waiting for the teacher to scold us! ;-).” But what do the par-
ticipants do in the chats? Most of the time, they either comment (for each
other?) and discuss some of the points made by the presenters; “talk” to the
presenters; share ideas, references, experiences; share some jokes; answer
questions asked by the presenters; and so on. As they share an interest
(language learning and social media), there are many signs of intertextual-
ity among them (names, “theories,” applications, etc.). In what follows,
and because all the participants are from different places and speak differ-
ent languages, I want to review the intercultural aspects that appear in the
discussions in the chat rooms. In other words, is interculturality “done,”
and if so, how and for what purposes? In order to do so, I read through the
transcriptions of the two chats and collected discourses from them that are
related to interculturality.

In most cases, the participants have an idea of where the others come
from, starting with the names they use, which can, of course, be nick-
names. Nevertheless, they don’t seem to use them to “categorize” the oth-
ers in the analyzed webinars. The webinars usually start by either the chat
moderators or the webinar organizers asking where the people are from. So
the need for geographical positioning of interlocutors appears as something
to be put on the table from the beginning. Actually in the second chat,
the moderator writes: “Where are you located?” which is not the same as
asking “Where are you from?” because the question doesn’t ask for “ori-
gins” as such but locations. Participants usually mention the city/town and/
or country where they are stationed during the webinar (Poland, France,
London, Hungary, etc.). Asked at the end of this chat by the moderator,
“In which country are you located please?” a participant replies, “I am
in France right now.” In the first chat, two participants explain that they
are immigrants in the country where they work/study (“I am a foreigner
living in Italy”; “as a person from abroad in Finland . . . ”). Finally, a few
people mention their institution. For example, one participant says that
he works at a college in Sweden. But the mentioning of these places does
not always seem to match the “local identity” that one would attribute.
The person working in Sweden mentioned earlier has a “Hispanic”-looking
name, which of course doesn’t mean that s/he is Spanish by birth or nation-
ality. What is interesting thus is the fact that “intercultural” signs become
confusing and most importantly they are not used for categorizing others
during the two webinars.
In terms of language, it is important to note that the main language is English in both chats (it is the “official” language of the webinars). Very few people mention other languages (e.g., their first language or the languages they speak; one participant only mentions that she has learned Spanish). When one reads the transcriptions, the conversation seems to flow, and very few instances of nonunderstanding or misunderstanding were noted. The only good example of this I could identify was when the participants negotiated the following during a poll:

A: Ah! We have to use tick and cross!
   ( . . . )
B: is the cross a yes?
   ( . . . )
C: a tick is a yes

Of course, the fact that many of the turns in the chat are either comments or questions to the speakers or single reactions to what they say is important to note. As far as language and identification are concerned, some participants use greetings in French twice: *bonsoir à tout le monde* at the beginning of the first webinar and *bonne continuation* upon leaving the webinar. Both speakers have usernames (their real names?) that are not “French speaking” (which of course doesn’t mean that they can’t be French, Swiss, Belgian, etc.).

There is an attempt in the second webinar to use German. One participant (C) asks the following question: “Darf man hier auf Deutsch schreiben,” which he translates in the following turn into English: “I meant can we write in german.” The following discussion ensues:

A: Warum nicht?
B: The conference is in English
C: Um so besser
   ( . . . )
C: ich glaube ja
   ( . . . )
C: but for respect to those learning another language I’ll be resuming in English having two languages going on might make it easier to follow the various threads
   ( . . . )
D: but if you can’t speak german you get left out
   ( . . . )
D: And I can’t speak German

So it becomes clear that foreign languages can be an issue in this form of interaction; English prevails and using another language might be perceived as boundary making and prevent people from following, as one participant says, “the discussion threads.”
“Doing” interculturality doesn’t appear to be one of the preoccupations of the participants. During both chats, I have noted only three cases that result in categorizing. The first example is about “Chinese students”:

my Chinese M.Ed TESOL students initially assume that ‘using technology’ means using ppts

The Chinese student is often the archetype figure of the “other,” the different one in pedagogical and research discourses (cf. Dervin 2011). Another example is a discussion around the idea that “technology is decreasing face-to-face contact, making islands out of people” (i.e., people create small communities). The following reactions to this were noted:

B: in many ways, yes
C: It isn’t in Italy, for Italians meeting F2F is too important—may be a cultural issue

D: it might depend on where you live. I live in a very crowded place in constant F2f situations.

The culture alibi, or the use of a national cultural element to justify behavior (Abdallah-Pretceille 1986, 2003), appears in the second turn. This is the only time during both webinars that this occurs. The final instance of “doing interculturality” is related to the classical dichotomy between the East and West. The participants are talking about the e-platform Moodle:

A: Moodle is free
B: Is it?
C: but Moodle was/is developed in a Western ‘Anglo-Saxon’ context

D: American I believe
E: Moodle is not free

C: Australian

This segment is related to one type of sociodigital technology, and what the participants are negotiating is the origin of the technology. Again this is not something that they have attempted to establish about each other during the webinars.

In reaction to the presentation he heard about social inclusion in the webinar (no. 1), one chatter wrote: “I have noticed that differences can be exagreetaed in CMC::: people can get into nasty arguments without the f2f
means of communication.” It is quite interesting to see that within the framework of the analyzed chats here, this does not seem to apply as very little is said or asserted in terms of interculturality, cultural differences, and cultural identity. While reading the transcript, it really seems that these people do not see each other as different beings, but that they are talking and constructing discourses just with other people, even if they are all from different places and languages. The participant who was the only one who actually held a culturalist discourse about herself and the Italians actually finishes the chat by commenting on what happened during the webinar. All the speakers were women, all from different countries. Here is how she summarizes the situation: “It is nice to see a group of women discussing important issues.” This could be an indication that she does not consider the webinar to have been an intercultural episode in the “doing” interculturality sense, even though people from different countries and languages were interacting.

How would this have differed in a face-to-face interaction? Once again these are hypotheses. Let us imagine for a moment that the people who took part in the webinars had met at a conference. Just like the previous case of sociodigital encounters, seeing the other, listening to her/his accent, seeing his/her face, etc., might have influenced their discourses. Of course, the main emphasis during the conference would most certainly have been the topic to be discussed. I assume that small interest groups could have formed (if there are, e.g., fifty people) to which people might have “pegged” an origin (Bauman 2004) in terms of their language, country, geographical position, at random. Having to spend time physically together might trigger more “doing” interculturality discourses, especially if one has the time to discuss in-depth, argue, etc. It is in these situations that the example of the “culture-alibi” (Abdallah-Pretceille 1986) emerges—“in my culture/country we do” (cf. Baumann 1998).

CONCLUSION

There was ample divergence in terms of social interaction, objectives, duration, etc., in the two sociodigital contexts of encounters under scrutiny in this chapter.

The first type can be labeled a “sociodigital cocoon,” where two individuals from difference places are asked to work together, negotiate, and co-construct discourses. No other people shared the virtual space that they used to interact. The cocooning meant that they could concentrate on what they both had to say and construct discourses, which led to the recognition of each other’s plural identities, though limited to “ethnic”/national identities. The process took time, especially for the Latvian student, but it ended on a vision of interculturality, which I consider to be “renewed.” That is, both students seem to notice that what happened between them in this sociodigital environment is the construction, together, of various images of the self.
The second sociodigital context corresponds to what I called a “sociodigital agora.” In this type of environment, people were gathered not really to “meet,” but to attend a seminar online on a topic that they were, most certainly, all interested. The fact that these people started to use the chat application to “talk,” share ideas, comment, ask questions, etc., is a by-product of the situation. “Doing” interculturality was limited in this second sociodigital context.

Even though the participants came from different spaces and had different languages, interaction was smooth and very little “doing” of being intercultural occurred. Trying to analyze these situations from a differentialist/culturalist point of view is impossible: as there were no signs of “culture” or “cultural differences” (Barbot and Dervin 2011), but only a few hints at “culturalist discourses.” This is an important result as it tells us that we need to look somewhere else to analyze such situations and thus act within “intellectual asceticism” (cf. Abdallah-Pretceille 2003). This represents, I believe, an important blow to “canonical” research on intercultural communication. On the other hand, it puts into question the constructivist approach that I have supported at the beginning of this chapter (cf. also Chapter 3 in this volume). This approach only looks at the use of “cultures” in the construction of the self and the other. It is therefore important to follow the path already taken by critical intercultural educationalists (Banks and McGee Banks 2009; Sleeter 1996), inspired by feminist theories, which consider relationships among constructed categories such as class, gender, language, generation, etc., in the construction of identity rather than concentrating on the “cultural” in the “intercultural.” This might suggest that we might consider putting an end to the “intercultural” in research terms.

Finally, I have also discussed the potential differences between sociodigital interaction and face-to-face interaction. It has become clear that people who interacted only through the written form (chat) could have been influenced as to how interculturality was “done” or not “done.” Again, had the participants had the opportunity of a face-to-face means of categorizing the other, “doing” interculturality could have been expanded and this might have led to more intercultural discourses. But we need to be careful with this somewhat deterministic argument: even though “doing” interculturality is very common, it doesn’t mean that it is systematic. It is also a problematic argument as it seems to contribute to the dichotomizing of “online encounters” and “face-to-face encounters,” which is being more and more questioned (cf., e.g., Turkle 2011).

NOTES

1. No punctuation in the original.
2. It is important to note here that some members of the “ethnic” Russian community in Latvia have Latvian nationality and/or Russian nationality or no
nationality at all. It is impossible for me to confirm the “nationality” of my research participants. Hence my use of quotes when the words “Russia” or “Russian” appear.

3. No punctuation in the original.

REFERENCES


6  Shaping Intercultural Competence?
Creating a Virtual Space for the Development of Intercultural Communicative Competence

Wendy Anderson and John Corbett

INTRODUCTION

The use of computer-mediated communication (CMC) in language education is almost two decades old; however, such is the pace of technological changes and their rapid assimilation into everyday life that relatively early articles on the use of CMC by language educators, like those collected in an important early volume on network-based language teaching edited by Warschauer and Kern (2000), now seem both shrewdly prescient and somewhat quaint. In their introduction, Warschauer and Kern (2000, 1–19) sketch out the then still largely unrealized potential for the use of CMC in language education and contrast the use of the computer as a mediating tool with earlier uses of computers to promote structural accuracy and interlingual development through grammatical and communicative exercises, respectively. They observe that the use of CMC represents a paradigm shift in language education, in that now, often for the first time, learners in many corners of the world enjoy the opportunity to engage directly in asynchronous or synchronous interaction with other users of the target language, whether these other users are native or second-language speakers. Of course, this opportunity changes everything: the computer has been transformed from a glorified interactive textbook into a portal to the rest of the globe. Warschauer and Kern (2000, 13) neatly characterize the role of CMC in this new era as being “to provide alternative contexts for social interaction; to facilitate access to existing discourse communities and the creation of new ones.”

This formulation captures the range of opportunities created by the electronic communications revolution, from the linking of existing interest groups to the then imminent rise of social networking. Significantly, for our present purposes, at the very start of their introduction, Warschauer and Kern (2000, 1) also remark that, at the turn of the millennium, “Culture has received renewed interest and emphasis, even if many teachers remain unsure how best to teach it.” Over a decade later, it seems obvious that the direct engagement of learners with members of different cultures, however those cultures are conceptualized—as social groupings based on national,
ethnic, religious, class, or other criteria—intensifies “culture” as a problem-
atic issue in language education, since it raises cultural dissonance as an immediate factor in CMC. An area that has been less fully developed in studies so far is the use of CMC and telecollaboration in initial teacher education, with a cohort largely composed of native speakers of a language. The concluding section of this chapter focuses on such a course, Culture and English Language Teaching, which has been running since 2004, based at the University of Glasgow, but involving different partners at different times, mainly in Argentina, Brazil, and Taiwan.

COMPUTER-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Early adopters of CMC in language education (e.g., Belz 2001; O’Dowd 2003) testify to the challenges as well as the opportunities afforded by CMC in language education, particularly the possibility of learners being frustrated and disappointed in their cross-cultural interactions. In their reflections, Belz and O’Dowd attribute these “failures” in CMC-based language education, at least in part, to their learners’ unspoken expectations about their correspondents being unfulfilled, and participants being mistaken about their shared and unshared values and beliefs.

The “renewed interest and emphasis” given to culture in language education still takes lively and diverse forms over a decade after the publication of Warschauer and Kern (2000); however, it is fair to say that a systematic approach to intercultural language education is increasingly available to those teachers and learners who wish to integrate language and culture in their courses. Various theorists and practitioners have set out the kinds of knowledge and skill that language learners need to draw upon to develop what Byram and others have described as “intercultural communicative competence” (e.g., Byram 1997, 2008; Corbett 2003; Risager 2007). Intercultural communicative competence has been institutionalized, at least in Europe, in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching and Assessment, which sets out its aims as follows (Council of Europe 2001, 1):

In an intercultural approach, it is a central objective of language learning to promote the favourable development of the learner’s whole personality and sense of identity in response to the enriching experience of otherness in language and culture.

Computer-mediated communication affords the opportunity for language learners to engage with “otherness” immediately, and activities can be devised to involve participants in online intercultural exchanges that involve the expression, interrogation, and negotiation of their “whole
personality and sense of identity” (e.g., the contributors to O’Dowd 2007; Corbett 2010). More specifically, the types of skill and knowledge that the intercultural communicative classroom focuses on, Byram’s *savoirs*, can be categorized as follows (cf. Byram 1997, 2008; Risager 2007):

- Knowing the self and the other.
- Knowing how to relate and interpret meaning.
- Knowing how to discover cultural information.
- Knowing how to relativize oneself and value the attitudes and beliefs of others.
- Critical cultural awareness.

In this view, the teaching and learning of culture does not consist of the teacher imparting an inventory of facts about the target speech community, for instance, telling the learners about the “folk dances, festivals, fairs, and food” (cf. Galloway 1985) associated with the speakers of the target language. Instead, teaching and learning culture involves learning the skills of discovery, characterized, for example, by Corbett (2003), as developing a set of ethnographic and semiotic skills that enable the learners to interpret and evaluate the practices and beliefs of other groups while reflecting on the practices and beliefs of the groups to which they are affiliated. Ethnographic skills contribute to the systematic observation of one’s own and the target culture, and semiotic skills contribute to the interpretation of meaning whether that meaning is conveyed textually or through behavioral practices such as body language and fashion choices. Reflective space is given to the encounter with divergent values and beliefs, and the challenges they pose to one’s own worldview. The general aim is to arrive at what Kramsch (1993, 257) describes as a “third place,” that is, a new perspective that draws constructively upon the culture of the self as it has been extended or transformed by the encounter with the other.

Intercultural language educationalists have long advocated the development of ethnographic skills (e.g., Damen 1987; Byram 1997; Roberts et al. 2001), although, in earlier discussions, ethnographic engagement involved the act of “sojourning” in the target culture. Online interactions open the possibility of adapting ethnographic and semiotic skills to “virtual sojourning,” which is a different experience from physical immersion in the target culture. Nevertheless, it provides a rich potential for cultural learning and has the additional benefit that many of the interactions can be tracked by learners and teachers. Moreover, rather than learning about the language through which they can develop skills of cultural discovery, and rehearsing that language for use on some unspecified future occasion, learners are plunged into CMC online, and so they shape their developing intercultural communicative competence by actively using the target language in interactions in which the self is at stake, a process described as “languaging” by Phipps and Gonzalez (2004).
Over the past decade, there has been a rising flood of articles and books
on the potential and challenges of CMC in the language classroom, some
of them, most notably O’Dowd (2007), addressing CMC from an explicitly
intercultural perspective. The case studies that O’Dowd gathers together,
and many similar articles published elsewhere, have generally focused on
learner-to-learner online interactions and their success or otherwise in
using CMC to enhance intercultural communicative competence. More
recently, for instance, Hauck and Youngs (2008) describe the impact of
telecollaboration in multimodal environments on learners of French; Cole-
man et al. (2010) set out the principles governing the Open University’s
use of distance language learning, which includes engagement with social
issues and “universal values”; Elola and Oskoz (2010) describe the estab-
ishment of an intercultural “e-classroom” to facilitate collaborative writ-
ing by learners of Spanish; and Guth and Helm (2012) describe a project
that links German and Italian learners who use English as a lingua franca
and discuss the ways in which this project develops learners’ “multilitera-
cies,” including the handling of digital content, as well as intercultural
awareness. Belz (2007) offers still perhaps the most complete discussion of
the possibilities that different forms of “telecollaboration,” from e-mail to
Web-based videoconferencing, present to learners and teachers who wish
to use CMC to shape intercultural communicative competence. She typi-
cally uses CMC as a means of conducting partnerships between German
learners of English and American learners of German; as part of these
telecollaborations, the learners produce final projects on aspects of their
own and the others’ culture. Belz (2007, 152) offers an idea of the range of
topics her learners have covered:

In partnerships that I have conducted over the years, final projects have
dealt with the following topics: German and American perspectives on
censorship; filmic and TV portrayals of middle class family life; reality
and appearance in particular texts; cross-cultural perspectives on rac-
ism; images of success in German and American films; a comparison of
German and American mothers; family relationships in contemporary
films; patriotism and national identity; cross-cultural perspectives on
sexuality; and cross-cultural explorations of friendship and beauty.

As we show in the discussion that follows, these topics and many more like
them recur frequently in online intercultural exchanges; they are clearly
motivating for learners in part because they are fertile ground for exploring
what Belz (2007), following Agar (1994), calls “rich points,” which
are points where the usually unarticulated assumptions governing the
beliefs and attitudes of one group clash with the assumptions governing the
beliefs and attitudes of another. Belz (2007) also reflects on how teachers
can assess whether learners’ intercultural communicative competence has
indeed been shaped by these activities, observing shrewdly that just because
a learner sympathizes or agrees with a member of the other culture does not guarantee that he or she has achieved the knowledge and skills necessary to “decenter” in an empathic yet critical fashion.

INTERCULTURAL CONNECTIONS

The Glasgow-based Culture and English Language Teaching course was created in 2004 around a telecollaborative project, Intercultural Connections, using Moodle as the platform for CMC (see the following). It was devised initially to afford the Glasgow-based students, who were largely final-year British undergraduates studying English Language, with the addition of several European and Asian exchange students, an opportunity to engage directly with learners and teachers of EFL in different countries. To date our partners have been in Argentina, Brazil, Taiwan, and Macau. Over the seven years of the project thus far, Moodle has gone through various upgrades and seen off competition in the educational arena from popular social networking sites such as Facebook. During this period, participants have come to the project with increasing levels of Web literacy, and the facilitators have also seen their telecollaborative skills grow. Our principal idea for the non-Glasgow-based participants, the overseas learners and teachers of English, was simply that, through Moodle, they would be given the opportunity to interact with the Glasgow-based cohort, they could practice their English and possibly they could also develop their intercultural communicative competence. However, particularly in South America, the telecollaboration also influenced the development of a published set of intercultural learning materials (de Matos et al. 2006). Our early experience of directing this project was described in Corbett and Phipps (2006), an article that questioned whether the intercultural skills and knowledge set out in the course’s intended learning outcomes, which were effectively a version of the savoirs described in Byram (1997) (see the preceding), were actually being taught, or whether a virtual space was being created for the unpredictable performance, and therefore shaping, of “intercultural being” (cf. Phipps and Gonzalez 2004). The present discussion revisits, updates, and extends the earlier study.

Moodle is now one of the older virtual learning environments; a relatively new resource when we started using it in 2004, it was then adopted by the Open University, and is now one of the most widely used platforms for CMC in education, with its own extensive pedagogical literature (e.g., Rice 2007; Cole and Foster 2008). Overseas participants were admitted as guest users to the University of Glasgow Moodle site, and thus had access to news, Web links to resources, discussion forums, and quizzes. They also were able to post their own material. Each academic year a new Glasgow-based cohort would interact with overseas partners over two semesters (though most activity tends to happen in the first semester). The procedures
varied somewhat from year to year; however, the basic format was that the
Glasgow-based participants, usually a class of around twenty, were given
tasks to do in groups, which were first discussed in weekly class meetings
and then posted online to share and discuss with “e-partners.” Tasks varied
in depth and complexity from a simple “ice-breaking” activity (Figure 6.1)
to a more complex preparation for a “home ethnography” (Figure 6.2). The
icebreaker was intended to encourage participants to get into the routine
of interacting with each other; the preparation for home ethnography was
intended largely for the Glasgow-based participants, to introduce them to
the principles and practice of systematic cultural observation and descrip-
tion and their educational applications.

Having completed the preparatory readings and presentations, partici-
pants in Glasgow, UK, La Plata, Argentina, and Kaohsiung, Taiwan, were
encouraged to undertake “home ethnographies” on different sites, present
them to the class, and then share and discuss them online. The kinds of
site observed included public spaces such as cafés and supermarkets, as
well as private spaces such as the layout of one’s home. Other intercultural
activities undertaken over the course of 2010–2011 included reading and
discussing a Taiwanese short story, “His Son’s Big Doll” by Huang Chun-
meng, in an online reading group; the analysis of images from around the
world, drawing on techniques associated with “visual literacy”; and simply
recording and sharing the events of an ordinary week in one’s life. These
activities were combined with more traditional introductions to language-
learning pedagogy, such as the teaching of reading, writing, listening, and
speaking skills, and input on current issues in language education, such
as perspectives on linguistic imperialism and the politics of English as a
global lingua franca. While it is not a training course in English Language
Teaching as such, but rather offers an academic perspective on associated
issues, the Glasgow undergraduate course often appeals to students who

This task is to familiarize yourselves with this Moodle website, and to
get all the international participants talking to each other.

i. Go to Edit Profile and ensure that your personal details are up-
to-date. If possible, add a photograph of yourself. Since this is an
international virtual community, it’s helpful to know what people
look like.
ii. Go to the Intercultural Café and start a new strand by introducing
yourself. Say who you are and where you are from.
iii. Give four words that you think best describe you.
iv. Go to someone else’s posting and respond to it.

Figure 6.1 Ice-breaking activity.
In this week’s class, Groups A–C will make a short presentation (c.15 minutes per group). You may use PowerPoint, if you wish.

**Group A:**
Please present an overview of the role of ethnography in language education. You will find the following chapter and article useful (but feel free to find other material too):


**Group B:**
Please present an overview of the ways in which a student of languages can act as an ethnographer. You will find the following articles useful (but feel free to track down your own sources too):


**Group C:**
Please give a short presentation on the nature of ethnographic field notes and how to make them. You will find the following book and article useful (however, feel free to carry out your own research, in the library or online, too):


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are considering ELT as a career or as a first step after graduation. More than half of the students interviewed after the most recent course stated that they either had immediate plans to go on and teach English either as a short-term job or a longer-term career, or were actively considering this as
one of their career options. All of the others planned in the first instance to
go on to employment or further training in another field, including other
types of teaching, but stated that they may consider ELT in the future.

METHODS

In their early study of network-based language learning, Warschauer
and Kern (2000, 14) indicate appropriate ways of researching the use of
CMC in the globalized classroom: they advocate qualitative approaches
that embrace discourse analysis and the analysis of sociocultural contexts
through ethnographic observation and interviews with participants. These
are means that we follow in the remainder of this chapter.

Interviews were carried out in June 2011 with fifteen volunteers from
the Glasgow-based class who had recently completed their final examina-
tions. The class as a whole in session 2010–2011 comprised twenty-three
students: fifteen were native English speakers (including bilingual speak-
ers for whom English was one of their native languages) and eight were
nonnative speakers of English, whose first languages were Dutch, Finnish,
French, German, Greek, Polish, Spanish, and Taiwanese. The interviews,
which lasted roughly half an hour with each participant, were conducted
with ten native and five nonnative speakers and were semi-structured to
allow participants to reflect on aspects of their experience having com-
pleted the course. Questions centered around a number of themes relating
to the use of the Intercultural Connections Moodle site for online intercul-
tural exchange and the undergraduate course more broadly. These were
transcribed and the resulting sixty-six-thousand-word corpus was used for
content analysis. Here we discuss some recurring themes.

Given Belz’s reservations about the reliability of such data, specifically
that “one must be careful to avoid equating positive comments about the
other as unequivocal signs of intercultural competence” (2007, 152), we
counterpoint the interview data with examples from the participants’ pre-
sentations and discussions drawn from the seven years of material on the
Moodle site that were archived and provide a substantial basis for analysis
of participants’ discourses over the years, although these data too must be
interpreted cautiously (ibid., 152). Further, we draw on our experience as
facilitators, and, effectively, participant-observers, for several years on the
course. The main issue that we pursue here is the extent to which CMC is
an effective means of shaping intercultural communicative competence.

TOPICS AND THEMES IN INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGE

As mentioned earlier, the Glasgow-based class was introduced early on to
ethnography, beginning with theoretically driven presentations stemming
from the task illustrated in Figure 6.2 and putting these into practice with “home ethnographies,” or small-scale studies of aspects of British or Scottish culture. These encouraged the participants to develop skills of observation and discovery and to appreciate how such skills can be applied by language learners to other cultures. Those participants interviewed tended to agree that the exercise made them think in unexpected ways:

I think it did make you think, yeah it definitely made us think actually, because that was what we were there for, we were looking at it [queuing behavior in supermarkets] in a totally different way. It wasn’t just conversation, it was like the conversation was the sort of façade and underneath we were sort of looking at, we were trying to sort of go for it. (Interview excerpt)

The ice-breaking task (Figure 6.1) and the initial ethnographic discussions and presentations in class fed naturally into online discussions with Moodle participants, picking out culturally pertinent topics such as mealtimes, traditional foods, Christmas festivities, and birthday celebrations. Some of these highlighted “rich points” (Agar 1994), such as when the Glasgow-based cohort was surprised to learn that Christmas in Argentina typically involves Santa Claus with a sleigh and reindeer, despite the warm temperatures at that time of year in Argentina. Less predictable topics included a detailed discussion of the type and place of sofas in each of the cultures represented on the Moodle site. Generally, however, just as Corbett and Phipps (2006, 164–167) found previously, it continues to be the case that the topics that most engage students are everyday in nature and tend to be those initiated by students themselves. This has not changed over the seven years that the course has run, despite the increasing familiarity of the student cohort with online communication and social networking, which suggests that it is participants’ lack of familiarity with each other that leads them to avoid potentially controversial topics. In the present session, these topics included participants’ choice of music on their iPods, what they eat for breakfast, pets, and common interests. Interviewees wholeheartedly agreed that genuine enthusiasm for the topic and “safe” topics with no right or wrong answer worked best:

I think the really simple things worked well.

( . . . ) little things that would probably show quite big gaps in culture.

(Interview excerpts)

Despite the predominant focus on culture, especially early in the course, the interviews showed that for many students it was linguistic issues that had most impact (see also Liddicoat and Tudini, this volume), perhaps suggesting that they were making connections with the other, predominantly
linguistic, courses that were part of their degree in English language, or that they were thinking ahead to the future application of their learning in a role teaching English.

The cultural perspective for me was . . . it was so alien that it was for me, I was looking at why they used particular phrases or constructs.

I noticed the Argentinean people made a lot of mistakes with their prepositions and things like that and there were regular mistakes there as well.

I think it made me realize that learning a language is far, far more complex than just teaching someone a list of words and getting them to organize them in a sort of syntactically correct way.

I think one of the most useful things for me was just seeing the way that they were speaking or writing English. You can get a dry analysis of it from books, but you don’t really see it or appreciate what they’re really talking about in the books. (Interview excerpts)

Linguistic topics also arose in the asynchronous forums, and in a synchronous online chat during the final session of the first semester, when the pragmatics of the English expression of disapproval “tut-tut” were queried, explained, and debated. For several Glasgow-based participants, it was the use of emoticons or “smileys,” particularly by the Taiwanese participants, that was most striking, as evidenced by class discussions at the time and the interview data in which they reflected on the value of the online exchange (for more on emoticons, see also Hwang and Matsumoto, this volume; Pasfield-Neofitou, this volume). Though their iconic nature might seem to make them a more “universal” way of communicating than natural language, emoticons still proved to be highly culture-specific ways of expressing attitude (see also Belz 2003, 69), much to the Glasgow participants’ surprise. Yet despite these unexpected superficial differences, several participants still found that the synchronous chat was a very effective means of coming to a good understanding of another culture:

I think for the first time, you were hearing voices [in the synchronous chat] that sounded a lot more like ours.

[The synchronous chat] broke down some barriers.

People are kids at heart and we like going online and talking to other people. (Interview excerpts)

A theme that emerged very strongly from the interviews, and can also be readily identified in forum postings, is that of the opportunities the
intercultural exchange afforded for reflection, whether on past, present, or future experience. A number of subthemes were evident, with participants, for example, describing their reflection on prior language-learning experiences, prior teaching experiences, and other types of personal encounter with cultures other than their own.

Although not all of the Glasgow-based participants were native English speakers, all the nonnative speakers had very advanced levels of English. Language learning was therefore not their principal concern, as it was for the Taiwanese group. Rather, the main aim of the Glasgow group was to engage in learning-by-doing (see also Guth and Helm 2012, whose group of trainee English teachers were similarly able to reflect on the use of telecollaboration in their future classrooms). Some described being able to look at their own language-learning experiences in a new light and reassess the methods they encountered. One British participant recounted a disappointing experience learning Spanish, where the teacher had tried to separate language from culture and explicitly rejected the learners’ questions about the latter. A participant from Luxembourg similarly contrasted online exchanges favorably with translation exercises, which had been a staple of this learner’s previous learning experience. For both, the online exchanges confirmed the importance of teaching language and culture in parallel.

Other participants reflected on previous experience, not of learning but of teaching, for example, as language assistants on a year abroad, and had begun to reassess that experience:

> Coming to the end of the course I was thinking, “I wish I’d done this before my year abroad,” cos it would have helped me a lot [. . .]. Put it this way, the cart was pulling the horse when I was going abroad.

> It’s made me kind of maybe more than anything else re-evaluate stuff I did in lessons before, kind of either realize why it didn’t work or why it did and how I can make it better, maybe giving me a bit more of an overall sort of framework. (Interview excerpts)

For some, reassessment went beyond lesson planning and teaching techniques. One participant talked of the difficulties he had encountered in teaching sensitive cultural issues concerning religion in a previous summer job, and he had found that he was now more able to consider ways in which he might handle the topic differently when he comes to repeat the class in future years.

Whether reassessing experiences of learning or of teaching, these participants can all be described as reflective practitioners in the sense of Schön (1983). That is, they give evidence of their ability to carry out “reflection-on-action” and may also potentially be able to extend this to “reflection-in-action,” to allow their intercultural skills to help them think on their feet in a future post teaching English.
While only a few students each year have had experience of teaching prior to taking the undergraduate course at the University of Glasgow, all are able to draw on experience of encountering other cultures, whether as part of a long-term move to another country or a briefer sojourn or holiday. Here again, interviewees commented that the online intercultural encounters, in the context of the course as a whole, had prompted them to reassess their past experience and even in some cases reconstruct their identity, using the course as a resource. For example, one nonnative English speaker from Poland had thought back during the course to her experience several years earlier of emigrating to the UK:

Maybe that’s the first time I noticed: “Oh actually this is what I’m doing. I’m an ethnographer in this country.” (Interview excerpt)

For some, the detailed ethnographies of everyday behavior, such as queuing conventions, helped stimulate more general insights, a process that at least one participant likened to organic growth. Several nonnative speakers commented in interviews on the insights these activities gave them into behavior and attitudes in Scotland and their home countries. Similarly, a Scottish student who had previously spent a year in Germany commented on her newfound clarity of understanding of cultural issues she had encountered during that year abroad:

Some of the things that I’d already begun to realize about the differences in culture between my own and Germany when I was there, a lot of that just kind of came together through thinking about it for the essays and the exams in this course, and I found myself just sort of realizing little things about it like from my experience that I hadn’t really thought about properly before. [ . . . ] I think there were some seeds sown then that just kind of came into bloom when I did this course. (Interview excerpt)

In particular, she talked in detail of her reassessment of what she had at the time realized was a cultural clash with regard to attitudes to food that she had not been able to reconcile fully at the time. Her reflections suggest a “readiness to examine one’s own affective reactions to the experience of otherness and to cope with these reactions,” one of the intercultural curricular objectives identified by Belz (2007, 132).

The activities did not only help the participants to reassess their experience of “otherness” as something belonging to distinct social contexts. One Scottish student found that the experience of telecollaboration had helped her to reflect on her relationship with nonnative English-speaking members of her own family and to develop a broader perspective and greater interest in cultural differences within the family group. Another Scottish
participant testified to being prompted to reconsider the behavior of some
Scottish football fans he had encountered in the Netherlands, whose behav-
ior had made him uncomfortable. Furthermore, some participants were
able to extend their intercultural skills to reflect on microlevel “cultural”
differences within their own national culture, such as workplace habits
and conventions. Crucially, the following post suggests that the course has
indeed taught participants to adopt the role of cultural explorers, whatever
the context, rather than equipping them with an inventory of “facts” about
one culture or another:

And actually I think [ethnographic work] helps even within your own
culture, because even now I find myself, like I’ve started doing primary
experience, and I don’t know what the etiquette is in the staff room or
things like that [. . . ] And it just means that you can laugh at it a little
bit, and just kind of put your observer’s hat on rather than worrying
about doing the wrong thing. (Interview excerpt)

In sum, on the basis of the interviews at least, there is ample evidence of
participants drawing on the kinds of intercultural communicative compe-
tence that the course seeks to teach. However, Corbett and Phipps (2006,
171) asked “whether tolerance and openness can actually be taught in the
language classroom, or whether qualities that are the result of personality
disposition and years of socialisation, can simply be demonstrated via
intercultural tasks.” Several interview participants corroborated the eff ect
of personality disposition, noting that they considered themselves to be
accepting and open to begin with:

I guess people who are interested in doing the course are pretty open
to stuff anyway.

( . . . ) just being aware of cultural issues in general, which I think, to
be fair, I was before, but even more so now.

I think I’d already had a sort of semi-interest in [Taiwanese culture]
anyway, and I think I saw this as an opportunity.

I would say that I was open to all societies and all that, but you can
sometimes get stuck in your own way when you’re surrounded by peo-
ple like you [. . . ] this course sort of constantly nagged at you and con-
stantly reminded you that you have to consider that the world’s bigger
than just your little locale.

I don’t know if it necessarily changed your views on anything but
it brought them to the front of your mind again and it made you
acutely aware of them. I don’t think it changed any of my views, but
I think it reinforced them and made me consider them and made me think about why I held them, and sort of made me glad that I did hold them.

I think I've always been quite open to other cultures, because well I had to be [. . .] but on the other hand [. . .] I could say that it has certainly given me a broader view of how things work all across the world, instead of just Europe, which is what most people get to see over here, if at all. (Interview excerpts)

It is not a surprise that the group as a whole, and the interview volunteers in particular, should be self-selecting in this respect. It therefore remains difficult to determine whether attitudes of openness can be taught. Nonetheless, many students perceive an increased awareness of their attitudes:

( . . . ) a heightened awareness of the differences and to not expect anything, when you go to a new place you have to just kind of wait and see what it’s gonna be like, try and do a bit of research before you go. (Interview excerpt)

Certainly the research carried out here would support the claim that it is difficult to establish intercultural communicative competence on the basis of online intercultural exchange alone. The discussion forum data show little explicit marking of awareness of cultural relativity, though this does occur, as in these examples from the Moodle site:

I have noticed that the way in which foreign languages are taught in schools differs greatly.

Hi, I'm from Glasgow and growing up we went “guising” which just meant that we dressed up in various costumes and roamed the neighbourhood knocking on doors. I don’t think it’s the same as the American “trick or treating” as there was never a retaliation for not being given sweets.

Sorry, just realised I made reference to someone who may not be universally known!! (Excerpts from Moodle forum)

The framing of a topic with reference to the writer’s own observations, as in the first example, glosses for culture-specific terms and explicit contrasts with better known cultural analogues, as in the second example, and retrospective apologies for potentially obscure postings (accompanied by further explanations), as in the third example, all mark the writers’ appreciation of their own culturally relative standpoints.
CONCLUSION

While forum discourse alone may not provide firm evidence of intercultural competencies, the triangulation of data and insights from forum postings, class discussions, and post-course interviews perhaps makes possible a fuller understanding. Comments made in the interviews support the suggestion that the participants are readily able to see the intercultural exchange from the perspective of others:

I started thinking how people would think if they’re going online [. . .] And even when people ask questions about cultures, I’m starting like thinking, “Oh, that’s why he asks,” so it’s different. [. . .] So it helped me in a way understand why people are chatting like that, or why people are asking questions like that. (Interview excerpt)

When questioned here about possible changes in their own attitudes and perspectives as a result of the course, several of the students responded positively:

You do realize how different cultures are. I think I tend to assume that everybody sort of has the same worldview as you.

I think I have quite a liberal view, so I assumed that everyone else did, which made me, I mean I had a different view of linguistic imperialism, and then realizing that people, that not everybody felt that way changed my perspective, I think, quite a bit.

One of the biggest things I got is that I’m now really positive about language learning, not English but other languages, especially in Britain.

Learning about other people’s attitudes to language learning has changed mine.

You do become absorbed in your own culture, and I forgot that there were other ways to do it. (Interview excerpts)

While it may not actually yet be possible to establish firmly one way or the other whether attitudes of openness can be taught, it would seem that the skills of reflection developed through intercultural exchange, in the context of a CMC-based course, with both a theoretical and a practical focus on issues related to the teaching of culture and English language, can certainly heighten participants’ awareness of their own attitudes and help them to value the attitudes and beliefs of others. This is repeatedly evidenced through online interaction, class discussion, and post-course interviews.
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REFERENCES

Shaping Intercultural Competence?


7 Nonverbal Behaviors and Cross-Cultural Communication in the New Era

Hyisung C. Hwang and David Matsumoto

Over the past fifty years, nonverbal behaviors (NVB) have been studied extensively because of their meaning and importance in social interaction. Much of that literature has examined cross-cultural similarities and differences in actual NVB across diverse channels—facial expressions, postures, gestures, voice, and approaches—and the findings have important implications for face-to-face (FTF) interactions. Today, however, social interactions are more frequently occurring in computer-mediated communication (CMC) (e.g., e-mails, text messages, online chatting), which anyone across cultures can access almost anytime. Although much of this type of online communication involves text, over the years, innovative uses of both text and graphics have emerged as a way to overcome limitations in depicting NVB in CMC, and thus CMC has received more attention in the recent research literature.

Considering the existence of cultural diversity among users in CMC, understanding the characteristics of NVB in CMC is important for better interactions. In this chapter we review current knowledge about NVB in order to understand why we need those behaviors even in a different form of communication. Then we will approach the world of NVB within CMC, tying the role and function of NVB between FTF communication and CMC formats. One of the main channels of nonverbal behaviors in FTF interactions—facial expressions—has been compared with emoticons in CMC, and through that process emoticons have become a main method for delivering emotions or symbolic meanings in CMC, and have consequently received attention in the recent research literature. Within this newly burgeoning field of research, cross-cultural studies involving emoticons provide enough of a nexus to form a basis of knowledge that can be summarized; thus much of the latter part of this chapter will focus on emoticons. We hope that this attempt will ultimately contribute to a deeper understanding of nonverbal cues in CMC.
OVERVIEW OF NONVERBAL BEHAVIORS IN FACE-TO-FACE INTERACTION

Why Nonverbal Behaviors?

Humans are social animals and need communicative interaction for social well-being and survival. To this end, verbal language is an extremely important form of communication and is unique to humans. It allows humans to create social networks and culture that is shared in information and meaning systems across generations (Matsumoto 2007; Matsumoto and Juang 2007). Thus, assuming that human cultures exist because of the ability to have language is not an overspeculation. However, verbal language is not the only element of communication; nonverbal behaviors are also important.

Nonverbal behaviors (NVB) can be defined as all the behaviors that occur during communication that do not involve verbal language. They also have been referred to as the ways communication occurs between persons when in each other’s presence, by means other than words (Kendon 1982). NVB are conveyed through various channels—facial expressions, voice, gestures, body postures, interpersonal distance, touch, gaze, and visual attention. NVB function as signals of emotions, attitudes, and physiological and mental states (Matsumoto and Hwang 2011, 2012).

Because of the diverse channels and functions of NVB, studies comparing the relative contribution of verbal and nonverbal behaviors to message transfer in interactions have often found that more messages are transmitted nonverbally than verbally (e.g., Friedman 1978). This is ironic, because most people often miss the nonverbal messages conveyed when interacting with others, as they mostly focus on the words and not on the NVB (Ekman et al. 1980). Thus, it is important to increase attention to NVB for better, more accurate communication (Matsumoto and Hwang, in press-b). Noticing and understanding NVB can be practically useful, especially in interactions with people of different cultural backgrounds and languages. Moreover, recent studies (described more fully in the following) have provided evidence for both the cultural specificity and the universality of NVB, which make NVB an efficient way to communicate across cultures. In the next section we discuss the three main NVB channels that have been the most widely studied to date and are arguably the most prominent in daily life: face, gesture, and voice.

BRIEF HISTORY OF RESEARCH ON FACE, GESTURE, AND VOICE

Face

The most representative channel of NVB is the face. Studies on face and facial expressions have their roots in Darwin’s (1872) work, which suggested that emotions and emotional expressions were evolutionarily
adaptive, biologically innate, and universal across humans and even non-human primates. Regardless of race or culture, humans are born with the ability to express emotions using the same mechanisms through their faces. Unfortunately, since Darwin’s writing, there were only a few studies testing the universality of facial expressions (see review in Ekman, Friesen, and Ellsworth 1972) until research conducted in the mid-1960s known today as the “universality studies.”

In the first set of the initial studies (Izard 1971; Ekman 1972) the researchers obtained judgments of facial expressions of emotions considered to be expressed and identified panculturally, and demonstrated the universal recognition of six facial expressions: anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, surprise. These findings provided the first source of initial evidence for universality, indicating the existence of six universally recognized expressions as judges from around the world agreed on what emotion was portrayed in the faces.

These early studies were open to the criticism that the results were flawed because the cultures studied were relatively industrialized, and people in those cultures may have learned how to interpret the faces shown because of shared visual input through mass media such as movies or magazines. To address this criticism Ekman and colleagues (Ekman and Friesen 1971; Ekman, Sorenson, and Friesen 1969) conducted two studies with two pre-literate tribes—the Fore and the Dani—in the highlands of New Guinea. The people of these cultures were living in essentially Stone Age ways, and of course there was no writing. Thus the researchers had to modify their methods to conduct the studies. In the first study the researchers asked the tribespeople to match photos with emotion-eliciting stories. The tribespeople reliably recognized the faces of emotions posed by Westerners. In the second study films of the tribespeople expressing emotions depicted in the stories were shown to Americans who had never seen New Guineans before, and the Americans were able to recognize the expressions of the New Guineans. Thus the ability to recognize facial expressions of emotion did not occur because of learning through mass media or other shared visual input because the New Guineans had no exposure to the outside world. These findings constituted the second and third sources of the initial evidence for universality.

Another of the original universality studies was Friesen’s (1972) cross-cultural study in which American and Japanese participants viewed neutral and highly stressful films while their facial behaviors were recorded. Coding of the facial behaviors identified the same expressions associated with the six emotions mentioned previously and corresponded to the facial expressions portrayed in the stimuli used in the previous judgment studies. Both cultures showed the same expressive patterns, providing evidence that facial expressions of emotion were universally produced. These findings constituted the fourth source of the initial evidence for universality.
Since the universality studies, many studies have documented the universal recognition and production of facial expressions of emotion (see reviews in Elfenbein and Ambady 2002; Matsumoto 2001; Matsumoto et al. 2008). Most recently, Matsumoto and Willingham (2006, 2009) provided further evidence for the existence of universal emotions on the face. They compared spontaneous facial expressions between sighted and congenitally blind judo athletes from more than twenty countries at the 2004 Athens Olympic and Paralympic Games, immediately after they had either won or lost a match for a medal. There were no cultural differences in the immediate emotional reactions of the athletes to winning or losing their matches; moreover, congenitally blind players produced exactly the same expressions as did the sighted players. Because it was impossible for the congenitally blind individuals to learn how to produce those detailed, spontaneous expressions of emotions, at least from visual learning, these findings were strong evidence of the innate capacity to produce those emotions on the face; see review by Matsumoto and Hwang (in press-b) for other sources of evidence for universality and biological innateness.

Despite strong findings concerning the existence of universal expressions, people are easily misled in terms of the relationship between emotional expression and culture. The universality of spontaneous facial expressions of emotions does not mean that all people express these emotions in the same ways in all situations, because cultures have their own way of managing and modifying the universal facial expressions of emotions according to rules known as cultural display rules (Ekman and Friesen 1969; Matsumoto 1993). Cultural display rules are norms learned early in life that govern the management and modification of emotional displays depending on social circumstances. They are important because they explain how cultures can influence a biologically based, innate ability like universal facial expressions of emotion. After spontaneous facial expressions are fired, depending on cultural display rules, emotional expressions can be modified if necessary or required socially (Matsumoto et al. 1998; Matsumoto et al. 2005). In other words, immediate reactions of facial expressions of basic emotions are universal, but after that how people manage their emotions may differ based on their learned cultural norms.

Matsumoto and his colleagues (1998) created a tool to assess display rules called the Display Rules Assessment Inventory (DRAI). Using the DRAI a number of cultural differences have been documented. For instance, in one study (Matsumoto et al. 1998) Russians reported the highest control over their expressions, followed by South Koreans and Japanese, whereas Americans had the lowest scores. These cultural differences in display rules were found across all rating domains, emotions, and social situations. This means that people from different cultures have different rules and tendencies when they have to control their emotional expressions. In another study examining the connection between the cultural dimension
known as individualism-collectivism and cultural variation in display rules (Matsumoto, Yoo, et al. 2008), collectivistic cultures were associated with a display rule norm of less expressivity overall than individualistic cultures, suggesting that culture shapes how to express emotions when in social interaction.

**Gestures**

Along with the face, gestures have been considered one of the main channels for delivering messages in humans. Gestures are primarily hand movements that function mainly in two ways—to illustrate speech and to convey verbal meaning. Some gestures co-occur with speech and are known as **speech illustrators**. Speech illustrators are movements that are directly akin to speech and highlight what is being said. Other gestures can occur independently of speech, and are known as **emblematic gestures** or **emblems**. They convey verbal meaning without words (Matsumoto and Hwang 2012; Matsumoto and Hwang, in press-a). Every culture creates its own emblem vocabulary in gestures, which are tied to words or phrases, such as the American A-OK sign (forming a circle with the index finger and thumb, all other fingers pointed up), the peace sign (two fingers up, palm facing outward), or OK (thumb up, hand in fist). Efron and his colleagues (Boas and Efron 1936; Efron 1941) found that there were distinctive gestures among traditional Jewish and Italian immigrants to the United States but that the gestures disappeared as people were more assimilated into the larger American culture.

The meaning and function of gestures appear to be universal across cultures (Morris et al. 1980), but cultures differ in their form, frequency, expansiveness, and duration (Matsumoto and Hwang, in press-a). And although the form of many emblems are culture specific, our latest research suggests that a number of them are becoming universally recognized, such as come, go, hello, good-bye, yes, and no (Hwang et al. 2010). These results are likely being driven by the strong influence of mass media around the world, particularly television and the Internet, where people can view the behaviors of others of different cultures and begin learning how to decode behaviors. We believe that some emblematic gestures will also eventually be panculturally produced.

**Voice**

The voice is another important channel of NVB because it delivers many different messages and contains characteristics that go well beyond speech in communicating messages. These characteristics are called paralinguistic cues and include the tone of voice, intonation, pitch, speech rate, use of silence, and volume. Paralinguistic cues express some specific emotional states through the voice across cultures (Beier and Zautra 1972; Matsumoto and Kishimoto 1983; McCluskey and Albas 1981; Scherer 1986). For
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example, anger often produces a harsh edge to the voice, the voice becomes louder, and speech rates increase (Sauter and Eimer 2010; Sauter et al. 2010; Simon-Thomas et al. 2009). Disgust often produces yuck sounds, while fear usually produces higher pitch and sudden inhalations. Sadness produces softer voices and decreased speech rates.

The voice and verbal style are also used to illustrate and amplify speech, and culture moderates the use of these vocal characteristics in social interaction. Members of expressive cultures may use louder voices with higher speech rates, whereas those of less expressive cultures use softer voices with lower speech rates. Additionally, pronunciations of some languages require the production of different sounds and rhythms to the voice that may be associated with different emotions (e.g., the guttural quality of some Germanic languages, the up-and-down rhythms of Mandarin). While in the cultures in which these vocal cues originate they sound normal, in other cultures it’s easy to have aversive reactions to them because they sound different and are associated with negative emotions.

SUMMARY

As discussed earlier, NVB uniquely function to aid social communication through various channels. NVB can provide information that can qualify, enhance, or even contradict verbal statements. NVB can also occur independently of speech, thereby producing messages independent of verbal language. NVB have also been found in other animal species that do not have verbal language like humans. This suggests that NVB are essential for animals, including humans, and are a core skill for communication in FTF interactions (Matsu- moto and Hwang, in press-a, in press-b, in press-c). In social interaction, NVB not only deliver verbal messages in lieu of words, but they also play a role in sharing emotions and initiating or developing social rituals.

However, NVB have limitations in long distance or non-FTF communication, such as when communicating with people outside of one’s immediate environment, where our NVB cannot be seen. Globalized communication today involves the Internet, where people communicate through channels other than those used in FTF interactions. This is CMC. Communication in this new era involves much less FTF interaction, and much of it involves CMC, such as e-mail, online chatting, and texting, that do not allow NVB to be as easily displayed as in FTF interactions. Because NVB have played such an important role in FTF communication, and because CMC has become so common in the daily lives of so many people in the industrialized world, there are questions concerning whether CMC can smoothly occur without NVB. And it is worthwhile to examine the similarities or differences in the roles and functions of NVB cues in FTF interactions and CMC. Thus, it is important to explore whether and how NVB in CMC, such as emoticons, can take the place of NVB in FTF interactions.
EMERGENCE OF ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES: CMC

Nowadays many people around the world use the Internet. The growth of Internet users between 2000 and 2010 was almost 444.8 percent (i.e., 77.4 percent of North America is using the Internet; 61.3 percent of Oceania/Australia; 58.4 percent of Europe; 34.5 percent of Latin America/Caribbean; 20–29 percent of Middle East and Central Asia; and 10.9 percent of Africa; Internet World Statistics 2010). The population of online users is likely to increase even more in the future because more people use the Internet to communicate (i.e., e-mail, online chatting, or instant messaging). Therefore, communication through computer-mediated systems is inevitable in many fields, and CMC has become a significant world medium with rapid technological advancements.

BACKGROUND OF CMC

Communication via e-mail, chat, instant messaging, or online discussions commonly requires the use of a keyboard to enter text. This text-based type of communication was facilitated via the development and use of computer networks or conferencing systems (Jettmar and Rapp 1996). CMC started in 1980 when personal computer networks appeared and companies like Microsoft began offering e-mail for business purposes (Lewis 1994; Adriansson 2001). Today, not only e-mail, but also texts on cell phones or iPads have become popular and sometimes even mandatory ways of social interaction.

Consequently researchers have studied CMC for years. For instance, Smith, Alvarez-Torres, and Zhao (2003) proposed an interesting model to characterize CMC according to four dimensions: temporality, anonymity, modality, and spatiality. Temporality measures whether conversations are synchronous or asynchronous (i.e., instant messaging and online chatting are synchronous communications as these are sorts of person-to-person conversations that involve the exchange of messages between interactants in real time; online chatting makes it possible for groups of people to communicate at the same time). Anonymity refers to the fact that CMC sometimes allows one’s identity to be hidden. Modality takes an important role as CMC can include audio, video, and graphics, while some technologies provide only written text. This multimedia information may aid communicating via online. Spatiality refers to interaction distance; unlike FTF contexts, CMC (e-mail, chat, etc.) allows relatively little control over spatial distances.

These four dimensions can be used to understand the advantages and disadvantages of interacting via online spaces in comparison with FTF interactions. For example, cultural differences between individualistic and collectivistic cultures emerged only in CMC, but not FTF (Cinnirella and Green 2007), which suggests that CMC must have different characteristics.
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from FTF to some degree. With regard to spatiality, Canary and Spitzberg (1987) demonstrated that the conversational appropriateness of another in a virtual environment is used to decide expectancy violations in CMC. This finding can be interpreted that users in CMC try to use different cues from the ones in FTF communication to ensure whether their respondents' communications are trustworthy, and this phenomenon seems natural as the environment of CMC is different from that in FTF interactions. As users are more anonymous, issues concerning the morality of behaviors have emerged, and relationships are easily considered more distant relative to FTF interaction. Certainly, depending on the individual characteristics, the findings might differ; however, Smith, Alvarez-Torres, and Zhao (2003) showed that CMC can initiate changes in online behaviors such as social, linguistic, and psychological expressions, suggesting that CMC has unique aspects when compared with other types of communications, such as FTF, along with some similarities as well.

As discussed earlier, CMC includes message and electronic conference systems and can be synchronous or asynchronous, which are both primarily typewritten (Adrianson 2001). CMC is also preferred for business usage; for example, e-mail is usually used during office hours more than FTF communication. Rice and Love (1987) described CMC as less social and less friendly. For these reasons, CMC often has been considered a cold, impersonal, or a task-oriented way of communicating where emotions are not as easy to express, as compared to FTF interactions (Danet 2001; Rice and Love 1987). This suggests that the use of NVB in CMC should differ from the use of NVB in FTF communication because the nature and the main characteristics of communications using CMC and FTF interactions are different.

More recently, however, Derks, Fisher, and Bos (2008) suggested that there is no indication that CMC is a less emotional or a less personally involved medium than FTF interaction and emotional communication. This idea was consistent with a study by Walther (1994), who tested the influence of relationships with others in three communication conditions (asynchronous CMC, synchronous CMC, and FTF) and different lengths of relationship (short- vs. long-term). Long-term (vs. short-term) partnerships using CMC had a larger impact on anticipated future interactions than did FTF interactions. That is, CMC was beneficial for people who pursued a long-term relationship once their relationship had been established. Although other moderating factors could have been investigated, this finding ruled out the idea that CMC is not functional for social interaction; in contrast, CMC can aid in developing or retaining social relationships.

Still, the limitations that CMC has as a communication method cannot be ignored. In the case of e-mail, for instance, more misunderstandings may occur than in FTF interactions because there is no immediate facial feedback or exchange of any other nonverbal cues (i.e., voice, gesture). Also the message sender is uncertain whether the receiver will interpret the message exactly as he or she intended. For example, when senders try to make
a joke via e-mail or text message, receivers can misinterpret the meaning of messages more easily than when communicating FTF. Thus, NVB are more necessary in CMC so that delivered messages can imply the original, intended meanings to the receiver.

In actuality people have long acknowledged the importance of NVB even in text-only communication. Seeing an exclamation point (!) at the end of a sentence tells us that the statement is stronger and bolder, as if a voice were louder and more excited. Seeing a question mark (?) at the end of a sentence helps us to visualize the raising of the voice in question at the end of the sentence. Certainly exclamation points and question marks have been around forever, and it is difficult to think of text-only writing to convey messages with the author’s intent accurately without them. Nowadays, another standard that has developed is that text written in an uppercase denotes a shouting message, AS IF TO MAKE A POINT. These are text-based ways of incorporating NVB in text-only communication media.

NVB can rapidly assist in avoiding offending the receiver by covering content that text messages solely may not describe. NVB can make a crucial contribution in CMC for accurate, smooth social interactions and communication as they do in FTF interactions, and, in fact, many researchers have agreed with the need for NVB in CMC (Derks, Bos, and von Grumbkow 2008a; Derks, Fischer, and Bos 2007; Dresner and Herring 2010; Kruger et al. 2005; Rovai and Baker 2005; Shao-Kang 2008; Spears and Lea 1992). Thus emoticons emerged in order to overcome the absence of NVB, especially facial expressions, during CMC, becoming one of the representative NVB in expressing emotions in CMC.

EMOTICONS AS ONE OF MOST WELL-USED NVB IN CMC

Expressive communication via nonverbal signals is limited in CMC because, at this stage of technological development, audio and visual channels are limited in CMC, curtailing the contribution of nonverbal cues that are available in FTF interaction. It is possible to speculate that CMC was unfit for social, relational, and emotional communication as CMC has different settings from FTF communication and it is still new to most people. CMC users tried to find alternative ways to substitute for the lack of FTF interaction and to express emotions through CMC. They created ways to overcome limitations due to a lack of nonverbal cues or information about social interactions and have developed new cues such as online paralanguages. Today, electronic paralanguages (i.e., acronyms and emoticons) are being widely used in e-mail, bulletin boards, and instant chats, and emoticons are considered a substitute for facial expressions of emotion in CMC.

The history of emoticons marks the start of their use in 1982 by Scott Fahlman of Carnegie Mellon University, who devised a scheme for encoding and conveying feelings in small text “glyphs” in order to overcome the
frustration of expressing emotion in written form. These textual elements are commonly referred to as “emoticons” today. Emoticons are generally defined as “icons for the expression of emotion” (Danet, Ruedenberg-Wright, and Rosenbaum-Tamari 1997) or a combination of the terms “emotions” and “icon” that refer to graphic signs, such as the smiley face (Dresner and Herring 2010). The origin of emoticons is based on the function of NVB in FTF interactions, and emoticons function to clarify text messages; thus emoticons are often compared with nonverbal displays in the face (Derks, Bos, and von Grumbkow 2008a, 2008b; Walther and D’Addario 2001).

As in CMC, emoticons can be analyzed in two categories; emoticons in synchronous (more graphic-based) and asynchronous (more text-based) communication. Text-based emoticons are mostly used in e-mails or text messages, whereas graphic emoticons, identified as graphic accents that look like faces, are used in online chatting (such as in Microsoft Instant Messenger and Yahoo Messenger). Because online communication has dramatically increased, especially among the younger generations, emoticons have attracted researchers’ attention, and discussions concerning the function and contribution of emoticons have become an important topic in CMC.

FUNCTION OF EMOTICONS

As mentioned earlier, the lack of emotional communication in CMC can easily misguide the original intent of the messages between senders and receivers (Riva 2002), and nonverbal channels are necessary in CMC to overcome limitations in sharing emotional states (Kruger et al. 2005; Walther 1994; Shao-Kang 2008). Thus, emoticons have been considered an alternative solution to delivering those emotional expressions in CMC. Emoticons have become an important tool of communication in CMC, and various approaches to explain their scope and functions have emerged. For example, one of the early studies of emoticons (Rivera, Cooke, and Bauks 1996) tested six (frustrated, surprising, sarcastic, happy, confused, and angry) and found that 75 percent of the subjects preferred having emoticons versus not having them, indicating that people have a preference for using emoticons and have a tendency of believing that emoticons will aid in delivering emotions and messages when they are available.

In a similar line, Utz (2000) investigated whether emoticons could be used in social relationships, examining the uses of emoticons and their relationship with friendship among computer users. Participants used emoticons to express feelings and establish their relationships, demonstrating that emoticons could be useful in social interaction and relationships and suggesting that emoticons could be used as a convenient way to express feelings, stimulate social interactions, and deliver information in CMC as NVB do in FTF interactions.
Sixl-Daniell and Williams (2005) took a slightly more ambitious approach toward understanding the communicative function of emoticons. They conducted a study during an online organizational behavior class from the beginning to the end of the class, and they found that emoticons could represent nonverbal communication in both depth and range of feeling when students communicated with teachers or other students. A similar result was reported by Derks, Bos, and von Grumbkow (2008b), who suggested that emoticons helped express the intensity of messages from senders and to strengthen messages. Their finding was consistent with another study of theirs (Derks, Bos, and von Grumbkow 2008a) in which they tested six emoticons (big smile, smile, sad, wink, confused, cry). In this study they reported that subjects felt the need to add those emoticons, and they contributed positively to communication.

The results of various studies suggest that the functions of NVB in FTF interactions and CMC are similar or nearly equivalent. In addition, a more recent study (Dresner and Herring 2010) proposed more systematic functions of emoticons as a cue of NVB by highlighting three main functions of emoticons: (1) emotion indicators, mapped directly onto facial expressions; (2) indicators of nonemotional meanings, mapped conventionally onto facial expressions; (3) illocutionary force indicators that do not map conventionally onto facial expressions. The studies described in the preceding suggested that emoticons are regularly used by many people and function as referents for people's feelings in a similar way as NVB do in FTF interactions (Dresner and Herring 2010).

Unlike the findings addressed in the preceding, however, Walther (2001) compared the usage of three emoticons: smiling face, :) a frowning face, : (, and a winking face, ;-), and concluded that the emoticons did not lead to a better emotional understanding of the message. He also insisted that emoticons and CMC promoted uninhibited behaviors such as flaming (Spears and Lea 1992), as the CMC setting is presumably not covered by norms or values. This idea may explain the reason why negative emotional expressions appear more often in CMC than in FTF interactions (Orenga et al. 2000).

These latter findings suggest that emoticons are not effective for (especially positive) emotional communication. But (or because of that) it is conversely expected that emoticons can aid to soften one’s negative tone and to regulate interactions just as smiles and frowns do in daily life. Accordingly, emoticons make it possible for CMC to minimize negative social appraisals and reduce the ambiguity or intensity of one's emotional expressions, as do NVB in FTF interactions (Manstead and Fischer 2001). CMC is often used as a task-oriented communication method, and emoticons are used for quick questions and clarifications. In that sense, emoticons may not take the role of facial expression or NVB in CMC. This means that emoticons may not be considered an exact replacement of NVB in FTF interactions that aid social connections and interactions through shared emotional messages.
In sum, CMC has a limitation in expressing emotions, and this limitation should be overcome for better communication. Emoticons have been used to address this limitation. However, emoticons are used more consciously in CMC than in FTF interactions, where NVB often occur more spontaneously, automatically, and unconsciously. Although the degree of similarities shared between emoticons and spontaneous facial expressions is still questionable, it is plausible that emoticons are used for particular purposes based on social motives.

UNIVERSALITY VS. CULTURAL SPECIFICITY IN EMOTICONS

Despite various studies concerning the functions of emoticons, only a few cross-cultural studies concerning nonverbal cues in CMC exist, and they mostly highlight the potential differences in meaning of emoticons across countries (review studies of Wang 2004; Yuki, Maddux, and Masuda 2007 in the next section). Therefore, questions regarding whether people from different cultures share the same or similar meaning of emoticons in CMC remain. Some previous research presumed that the meanings of emoticons were common knowledge among emoticon users and that the users had certain levels of agreement about their interpretation (Walther and Tidwell 1995). However, to our knowledge there is no existing research directly comparing FTF signals and CMC signs. In the following section we investigate similarities and differences between emoticons and facial expressions of basic emotions based on our observations.

SIMILARITIES OF EMOTICONS WITH FACIAL EXPRESSIONS

As discussed earlier, emoticons are used to deliver emotion messages through icons displaying facial features similar to natural facial expressions. Because of that, the origin of the shapes of emoticons resembles actual facial expressions. For instance, the smiley emoticon depicts the main features of happy facial expressions that have been universally identified (Table 7.1). According to the Facial Action Coding System (FACS; Ekman and Friesen 1978) and other research (Ekman and Friesen 1975; Matsumoto and Hwang, in press-b), the Action Units (AUs) for the full-face prototypes of happy facial expressions are lip corners pulled up in a smile and the muscles around the eyes tightened, reducing the area in the eye cover fold. Examining the happy emoticons shown in Table 7.1, the mouth shape is similar to the description of the facial muscle movement in the mouth area that is required for happy facial expressions. Regarding the muscle change in the eye area in emoticons, we assume that the eye area in emoticons overall is less controllable than in the mouth or lip corners because the former may be associated with technical limitations in being
able to depict subtle changes in the eye area or the efficiency in highlighting the area that people can easily see in the mouth.

For sadness, the traditional FACS coding requires the inner corners of the eyebrows raised, upper eyelid drooping, and lip corners pulled down. Those muscle actions match the appearance changes associated with the emoticons of sadness (Table 7.1). For anger, the brows are pulled down, the upper eyelid is raised, the lower eyelid is tensed, and the lips are tightened or pursed. The expression of surprise involves the raising of the brows and upper eyelid and dropping of the jaw with mouth open. Although the subtle changes in the eye area are not (or cannot be) depicted in emoticons, there is a clear distinctive shape change in the mouth in the surprise emoticon, compared to emoticons of other emotions.

The examples in Table 7.1 and the comparisons between actual facial expressions of emotion and their corresponding emoticons seem to provide clear evidence of the similarities between facial figures in emoticons

### Table 7.1 Comparison Table of Facial Expressions and Emoticons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facial Expression</th>
<th>Emoticon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Facial Expression" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Emoticon" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Facial Expression" /></td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Emoticon" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image5" alt="Facial Expression" /></td>
<td><img src="image6" alt="Emoticon" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image7" alt="Facial Expression" /></td>
<td><img src="image8" alt="Emoticon" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

and actual facial expressions in humans. Because of those similarities we believe that those emoticons should be universally identified as the emotions intended. The similarities in the appearance between emoticons (the emoticons in Table 7.1 are from one of the most popular chatting programs in the world) and universal facial expressions of emotion explain why those emoticons can be used commonly without confusion across cultures.

There are limitations, however, in generalizing the similarities between actual facial expressions and emoticons for all emotions universally expressed in the face. For example, the muscle movements and wrinkle patterns in the universal disgust expression require more subtle, delicate configurations, which are difficult or impossible to portray in emoticons. This is because certain areas of the face are not included in the character of emoticons. Emoticons are graphic accents that look like faces in order to quickly and simply deliver information about emotional states, as addressed in the previous section.

Differences in portraying some emotions might not only be a function of technical limitations or the characteristics of the chatting cultures preferring to simplify words or expressions; they may also occur because of cultural differences in understanding important features of emotional expressions. That is, people may be able to universally identify emotions but may differ in how to represent those emotions in certain, limited spaces.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN EMOTICONS

A recent development in software programs has made it possible to convert ASCII text to graphic features. For instance, Microsoft Instant Messenger (MSN Messenger) is able to produce many widely used emoticons and the program converts specific ASCII text key combinations into colorful graphic images. Online users can also insert emoticons in conversation by clicking symbols in the emoticon menu. Some emoticons of the recent versions of MSN Messenger have been developed and animated and they can vividly illustrate a brief, repeated movement of emotional behaviors, such as crying or rolling eyes.

Considering the dramatic growth of using the Internet around the world, more countries have created their own emoticons. For instance, Japanese users have created emoticons reflecting their culture and mannerisms, such as “m(_ _)m,” representing “bow thanks politely” (Hiroe 2002; Katsuno and Yano 2002). Different from most emoticons made of ASCII characters, which have to be read at perpendicular angles to the words with the reader’s head tilted to the left such as :-), Japanese emoticons such as (A_A) are always read in line with words, and there is no need to for the reader’s head to change direction.

Emoticons may have some parts that are culturally shaped in terms of use and interpretation. For instance, in Japan the use of horizontal emoticons is
much more common than in the United States (Weininger and Shield 2003).

Researchers have been paying attention to this kind of cultural difference. Tu (2001) and Pennington (2004) pointed out the varieties of emoticons cross-culturally, despite the fact that English is currently the predominant language of Internet communication. As we discussed earlier, NVB in FTF interactions have culturally specific characteristics as well as similarly shared parts. Likewise, cultural differences in emoticons should reflect how people use emoticons and how the meanings of emoticons are interpreted.

Researchers (Katsuno and Yano 2002; Pollack 1996) have reported that emoticons vary according to cultural backgrounds. Katsuno and Yano (2002) insisted that the development of kaomoji (emoticon in Japanese) online has important connections with Japanese popular culture. Taking the example of the smiley face: what has been used mostly in CMC, Western-style “smileys” is this :-), but among Japanese, one of the most widely used smiling faces is this (°¬ ▼ °). This Japanese face mark represents the mouth wide open, laughing loudly and cheerfully, with asterisks used to indicate rosy cheeks, whereas the American smiley emoticon is figured with tilted face highlighted in the mouth area. However, within-culture differences also exist; for happiness there are various expressions in Japan: “ ＼ (⊙¬ ▼ ○),” “(●¬ ▼ ●)” “(=^_^=),” “(〈 △)/,” “(*・▽・)/.”

Wang (2004) conducted a cross-cultural study on emoticons involving American and Chinese users and tested the perception of meaning and usage motivations of emoticons in the two cultures. Wang (2004) found that both American and Chinese participants used emoticons for entertaining, informational, and social interaction motivations, but the Americans were more likely to use emoticons for information motivations than the Chinese, while the Chinese were more likely to use emoticons for social interactions than the Americans. These findings suggest that Americans and Chinese have different tendencies in using the ASCII text emoticons in terms of settings and relationships.

Kato, Kato, and Scott (2009) examined the relationships between emotional states and emoticons in mobile phone e-mail communications in Japan by focusing on emoticon use in e-mail among Japanese college students. They found that the selection and use of emoticons (anger, joy, sadness, and guilt) in cell phone e-mail communication were related to the emotional states experienced at the time the message was composed. Thus, given the limited characters on a keyboard, each individual or group may create a slightly different style of emotion communication, which is related to the relationship between the interactants and their emotional states.

As stated earlier, MSN and Yahoo are the main software programs including emoticons across cultures, and among those programs, the most frequently used emoticons are those in Table 7.1. Those emoticons, however, are used mostly when chatting or in online communication programs. Because e-mail uses mostly the keys on a keyboard, the technical limitations are larger when compared to being able to choose graphic emoticons.
in a preset program. Those limitations in e-mail-based or text message-based communication methods seem to create more cultural variations of expressions of several emotions in order to deliver the messages closest to FTF interactions.

Table 7.2 includes some representative examples extracted from different countries that are used to showing happy, sad, or surprised feelings. These indicate that there are differences in expressions of facial emotions in e-mail or texting communication. For example, in the United States, the face is laid down horizontally, unlike in Japan and Korea, and the mouth area is used as a key element to differentiate emotions (i.e., happiness, sadness, or surprise). In contrast, the emoticons in Japan and Korea use the eye area as a core component to differentiate emotions. According to Yuki, Maddux, and Masuda (2007), the United States and Japan differ in what parts of the face they attend to when they judge facial expressions, which may contribute to their differential use of the eye and mouth areas in their emoticons. Interestingly their study was based on an examination of actual faces, but their findings may be applicable to emoticons.

We believe that those different approaches in picturing emotional expressions in the online domain may be associated with cultural display rules (Matsumoto 1993). As previous studies have found (Matsumoto 1993; Matsumoto et al. 2005, 2008), East Asian cultures tend to suppress or mask their emotional expressions and believe that expressions close to neutral are socially desirable. Thus, it is assumed that in Japanese or Korean culture, big smiles with widely open mouths may be less appropriate than in the United States. In that sense, we presume that the mouth area, which makes emotional expressions very noticeable, must not be attended to very much, or attractive to graphitize, while the eye areas seem more mild and too indirect deliver emotion without any risk of miscommunication or offense. This might explain some of the differential portrayals of different parts of the face in different cultures, according to what is more socially desirable in actual emotional displays.

### Table 7.2 Country Comparison Table of Text-Based Emoticons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>Korea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>:-)</td>
<td>^_^</td>
<td>(^_^)</td>
<td>(^_^)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadness</td>
<td>:(</td>
<td>-(-)</td>
<td>(&gt;<em>&lt;) (</em>&lt;;)</td>
<td><em>_.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surprise</td>
<td>:-O</td>
<td>O_O</td>
<td>(O_O) (o.O)</td>
<td>(o.O)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger (Annoyed)</td>
<td>&gt;:-(</td>
<td><em>_.</em></td>
<td>(=”=&quot;)</td>
<td>(’-‘)’(’-‘)’o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Sources for the emoticons were as follows: MaestroSync (2011); Wikipedia (2011a, 2011b); The Loft (2011); MullerGodsChalk (2011); Street Smart Language Learning (2011); Café Naver (2011); Blog Naver (2011); Pat 168 (2011); Osaki 2011.*
As Matsumoto and Juang (2007) discussed, cultures have unique meaning systems, and people behave in the way their culture believes to be meaningful and communicative. Hence, when people communicate with others within their culture, they have to consider how their culture accepts and understands their communicative efforts. These efforts will be influenced by cultural display rules. Consequently, the area of the face to focus on (e.g., eyes vs. mouth) to deliver messages in the most efficient, easy way should depend on these display rules. This notion is consistent with cultural display rules in FTF interactions.

In summary, there must be reasons why emoticons for the same emotions differ across cultures in text-based communication, as seen in Table 7.2. One reason could be related to limitations in typing on the computer, because there are more similarities among graphic emoticons than text-based ASCII characters. When the environment allows for full description of the emotions on the face through emoticons, the resulting emoticons have more common characteristics with actual facial expressions. But when the environment is limited because of technical reasons, cultural differences in display rules play a role in how to describe the expressions because users have to choose characters that describe the expressions in socially understandable and appropriate ways based on their cultural norms. Thus, those expressions can be easily acceptable in their social interactions, which are more likely different from what they may express spontaneously or immediately when they react emotionally.

CONCLUSION

Emotions are difficult to recognize and convey in an online environment and through plain text, and the lack of emotional cues can easily misguide users interpreting the comments of others in a manner other than what the sender intended (Walther 1994). Thus, text-based messages are more likely to create misunderstandings if there are any ambiguous or (possibly) negative cues compared to FTF communication, and using ASCII characters that have more limitations in configuring facial expressions may more easily fail to deliver the sender’s intended emotional messages than using graphic emoticons. Because of the level of technical support afforded to graphic emoticons, they are similar to the expression characteristics for some of the universal facial expressions of emotion. Technological limitations, however, bring about ambiguities that are filled with cultural influences and biases. These give rise to cultural differences in the expressions of some emoticons.

Beyond cultural differences, other factors that should be examined in CMC have not been discussed in this chapter. For example, gender differences are one of the main issues that have been studied (Kato et al. 2008; Wolf 2000); females generally participate more and show less hostility in
CMC (Rovai and Baker 2005). Due to the character of the Internet, which allows people around the world access at any time, the area of CMC is obviously one of the most important communication routes, and research on NVB in CMC should be continued, especially across cultures.

REFERENCES


Hyisung C. Hwang and David Matsumoto


“Digital Natives” and “Native Speakers”
Competence in Computer-Mediated Communication

Sarah Pasfield-Neofitou

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will compare online communication in which “native speaker” (NS) is a contested (or perhaps irrelevant) category, and those spaces in which existing national, cultural, and linguistic boundaries are mapped onto the online environment and, in some cases, emphasized. As Stroińska and Cecchetto (this volume) demonstrate, despite computer-mediated communication (CMC) being considered by some as a “level playing field” for all interlocutors, cultural differences may result in negative stereotypes of “nonnative speakers” (NNS). In the present chapter, the relative importance of being a “native speaker” or “digital native” in online environments, and the extent to which such labels may be considered discrete categories, will be considered. Drawing on the analysis of over two thousand instances of intercultural communication online, including blogs, e-mails, social networking site (SNS) profiles, videos, chat comments, phone messages, videogames, and websites, this chapter will demonstrate the influence of typing speed, computer knowledge, understanding of “netspeak,” in-game prestige and character building, and language management on perceptions of one’s communicative abilities online. Finally, the chapter will draw on interviews with bi- and multilingual CMC users, who explain what makes a person “good at” CMC, irrespective of their native language and other language competencies.

The vast spread of the Internet and growth in its use has led to a wealth of opportunities for intercultural communication, and new research on this communication. Many claims have been made as to the benefits of Information Communications Technology (ICT), including efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and, most importantly, egalitarianism (Simon, Corrales, and Wolfensberger 2002). Importantly, it has been proposed that Internet communication represents a forum in which every participant’s voice is equally valued, with some scholars claiming that ICT renders “native/non-native” speaker distinctions almost irrelevant, as will be shown in the following. Instead, a new dichotomy, “digital natives” (those who have grown up using ICT) and “digital immigrants” (those who are less familiar with such tools), has been proposed (Prensky 2001).
“Digital Natives” and “Native Speakers” 139

It is often claimed, as will be discussed in detail in the following, that CMC tools such as chat have fewer or “fairer” rules governing turn taking, resulting in a more egalitarian mode of communication, which in turn is said to be the cause of increased linguistic output, particularly among shyer second language (L2) speakers. Kelm (1992) and Kern (1995) both found that computer-aided discussion offered more frequent opportunities for learners to utilize their L2 than did face-to-face interaction. Warschauer (1996) also supported the claim that CMC can result in more equal participation by NNSs. However, emerging research challenges the notion that CMC is inherently egalitarian. Although users may, in theory, have the same opportunities to participate, their actual participation is highly dependent upon numerous social and technical factors, including language level, relationship with their interlocutor(s), computer dexterity, typing speed, connection to the Internet, and the demands of other tasks they may be performing simultaneously. Being, or being perceived as, a “native speaker” or “digital native” can also affect users’ language use and level of participation.

NATIVE AND NONNATIVE SPEAKERS

The distinction between “native” and “nonnative” speakers, as if these were given, absolute categories, has long been problematized. Of course, the most famous call for consideration of these terms was made by Firth and Wagner (1997), who argued that mainstream theory skews our view of language learners/users by focusing on them as NNSs who strive to reach NS-like competence. In this view, other social identities of individuals are in danger of being overlooked. Furthermore, it is claimed that “NS” and “NNS” are blanket terms that imply a hierarchy between the two categories and a homogeneity within the two that is far from universal (Firth and Wagner 1997). In digital interactions, Dervin (this volume) has also criticized analytical stereotypes of identities in “intercultural” situations.

DIGITAL NATIVES AND DIGITAL IMMIGRANTS

The title of Marc Prensky’s (2001) important article, “Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants,” alludes to a rather different type of nativeness than that of the “native speaker” provided in the preceding, one that distinguishes between CMC users not on the basis of their language competency, but on their familiarity with ICT. “Digital natives” are those who have grown up using ICT. According to Palfrey and Gasser’s (2008) book, Born Digital, those born after 1980 (at least, in more technologically advanced countries) typically fall into the “digital natives” generation. “Digital immigrants,” on the other hand, are considered to be those born before 1980 who are supposedly less familiar with such tools as Facebook, Skype, and so on. Here
again is a distinction which in some interpretations may entail an implied hierarchy and homogeneity, aspects which will be examined further in the present chapter.

CMC FOR INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

Much research has claimed benefits of CMC for intercultural communication, particularly in terms of extending students’ language-learning opportunities outside of the classroom, as outlined earlier. According to Tudini (2007) and Stockwell and Stockwell (2003), CMC may provide opportunities for the development of intercultural communicative competence through negotiation sequences, triggered by pragmatic and culture-specific content. However, O’Dowd (2007) argues that it remains largely unclear how CMC contact contributes to intercultural learning, and as Anderson and Corbett (this volume) demonstrate, it appears difficult to establish intercultural communicative competence on the basis of Internet communication alone.

In sum, Internet communication has been proposed as a forum in which every participant’s voice is equally valued, with some claiming that CMC renders “native/nonnative” distinctions almost irrelevant. Instead, a new distinction, “digital natives” (those who have grown up using computers) and “digital immigrants” (those who are less familiar with such tools, as previously mentioned), has been proposed (Prensky 2001). Before examining these terms in more detail, it is necessary to briefly discuss the reasons that CMC has been considered a forum in which each participant’s voice is equally valued, in particular, the concept of turn taking online.

TURN TAKING ONLINE

As previously argued, the commonly cited benefit of the equal participation that written Internet communication supposedly affords is often based on the understanding that CMC has “fairer” or fewer rules that govern turn taking, and that the turns of all participants are treated as equal by the regulating software. It is also argued by many researchers that the “egalitarian” nature of CMC is the cause of increased language usage, particularly among shyer participants. Kelm (1992), for example, found that computer-aided class discussion increased the language use of learners of Portuguese. This finding was supported by Kern (1995), who discovered that chat offered more frequent opportunities for student expression than face-to-face interaction. Warschauer (1996) also tested the claim that CMC can result in more equal participation by NNSs than face-to-face discussion by studying the interaction of advanced ESL students in a Hawaiian
university. The four quietest members of the class in the face-to-face discussions, all Japanese, increased their production almost tenfold, from 1.8 percent of all utterances to 17.3 percent.

In a chat conversation, or in a series of e-mails, it is impossible for one person to literally talk over the other. When we speak, however, we can interject, interrupt, and butt in, effectively stealing the floor, simply by shouting louder than the current speaker. Overlap occurs commonly in spoken communication, in fact, point three of Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson's (1974, 70–71) "grossly apparent facts" regarding turn taking is that “occurrences of more than one speaker at a time are common, but brief.” That is, because when two people begin speaking at the same time it becomes difficult to understand what either is saying with all the competing sound, one usually stops. Online, there is no “louder voice” in text-based communication, at least, not in terms of “volume” as it is understood in spoken communication, so how can we know who is loudest?

In spoken conversation, overlap is so common that transcription conventions generally include symbols to indicate overlapping speech and latching. Online, in text-based communication, the computer automatically organizes conversations so that such overlaps do not occur. Even when two people are typing an e-mail or a chat message or a posting on a Facebook wall simultaneously, the time that they hit Send will be recorded, and their messages will be ordered by this time. If the times that two messages are sent are simultaneous or remarkably close together, both messages will be afforded equal and uninterrupted space on participants’ screens.

Reproduced in Figure 8.1 are the time stamps of a “conversation” between myself and a friend via e-mail. Google Mail (Gmail) has collapsed all of these turns into single lines, but the user can click on any message at any time and read the entire, uninterrupted turn—even when they were typed simultaneously and sent very close together, as you can see here (with two messages sent at 8:33 p.m., for example).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Message Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:17 PM</td>
<td>(1 hour ago)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:26 PM</td>
<td>(1 hour ago)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:28 PM</td>
<td>(1 hour ago)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:29 PM</td>
<td>(1 hour ago)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:33 PM</td>
<td>(1 hour ago)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:33 PM</td>
<td>(1 hour ago)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:35 PM</td>
<td>(1 hour ago)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8.1 Example of time stamps on a collapsed e-mail conversation.
These rules also apply to chat conversations carried out via Instant Messengers such as MSN Messenger. In Figure 8.2 is a portion of a conversation between two participants in the research project under discussion, Ruriko and Kaylene. Their turns here are separated by just three seconds, although we may surmise that it would likely have taken Kaylene considerably longer than these three seconds to compose the lengthy turn she sent at 8:24:17 p.m. in her L2, Japanese, meaning that she and Ruriko were typing their turns simultaneously. Had they been speaking, one probably would have stopped talking and allowed the other to continue. But in typed communication, stopping is unnecessary, as the entire message as typed is preserved uninterrupted on the screen.

Building on the kinds of early research from the 1990s mentioned earlier, as well as discussions relating to identity and anonymity online, in the 2000s, a number of claims began to surface that the Internet had an “inherent support of democracy” (Simon 2002, 101), and that online communication was more democratic, liberating, and egalitarian than face-to-face interaction (Sproull and Kiesler, 1986; McGuire, Kiesler, & Siegel, 1987; Dubrovsky, Kiesler, & Sethna, 1991; cited in Watt, Lea, & Spears, 2002, 63). These claims are obviously very relevant to the issue of NSs and NNSs in conversation, and will be taken up in the present chapter.

**METHODOLOGY**

In order to investigate the use of an L2 online, in an out-of-class setting, as opposed to the majority of studies, which have paired learners in a computer laboratory situation, I invited Australian students of Japanese who communicated with (or had communicated with in the past) Japanese speakers online to participate. The Australians were asked to invite any of their contacts whom they perceived as “native speakers” of Japanese to the study. In total, twelve Australians and eighteen Japanese volunteered. Some Australians had more than one Japanese contact who agreed to participate. To collect data, I employed background interviews, the collection of participants’ archived interaction over a period of up to four years, follow-up interviews after a recent interaction, and a period of fieldwork in which I conducted focus groups in Japan. In order to analyze the interviews I utilized descriptive, topic, and analytical coding in NVivo, including *in vivo* coding, or the categories that participants use.
themselves. Finally, the CMC data was analyzed using both a numerical analysis and using Herring’s (2004) Computer Mediated Discourse Analysis. I have employed three units of analysis—the conversation, the turn, and the e-turn. The smallest unit, the e-turn, is based on Thorne (1999), and is defined as a freestanding communicative unit that takes its form from the way the program receives and orders input, and the content of the message as typed by the user. The turn, based on Tudini (2003), is defined as ending each time the floor is transferred from one participant to another, regardless of length. One turn may be made up of several e-turns, and a number of turns may form a conversation. A more detailed discussion of the construction of conversations is outlined in Pasfield-Neofitou (2012).

In the present study, rather than the researcher imposing the categories of “learner” or “native speaker,” the research participants have identified themselves as “learners” or “native speakers,” as evidenced in their interview data and, frequently, in their online interactions. As Liddicoat and Tudini (this volume) demonstrate, “language learner” and “language user” appear as salient identities for NNSs, even in social communication online. However, as identity is fluid, as evidenced in the online environment by Turkle (1995), Firth and Wagner’s (1997) point that these identities may not always be the most relevant in a given interaction is also taken into consideration.

CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF POWER AND SOCIALIZATION ONLINE

The study focused upon in this chapter, which examines Australian and Japanese young people’s CMC use, utilizes a multistrategy research map adapted from Belz’s (2002) use of Layder (1993), within the context of a social realist view of computer-mediated communication. An adaptation of Layder’s (1993) research map, infixed with the details of the present study, is given in Table 8.1.

While in previous publications I have discussed aspects of patterns of socialization into language learning (Pasfield-Neofitou 2009a, 2007a), CMC use (Pasfield-Neofitou 2007b), contextual resources (Pasfield-Neofitou 2009b), and the social setting of CMC (Pasfield-Neofitou 2011), this
chapter will concentrate on power relations, in terms of expert–novice, and NS–NNS differentials in particular. These key concepts will be examined in detail in the following.

**PARTICIPANTS**

Of the twelve Australian participants, all claim English as their native language, although half say that Chinese represents a second “first language.” All participants speak Japanese as an additional or “second” language, and eight speak more than two languages. Japanese level is defined as the unit of enrollment at the university under investigation, level 1 (equivalent to pre-N5 on the Japanese Language Proficiency Test) being the lowest, and level 12 (equivalent to N2 or N1) being the highest.

All of the Japanese participants identified themselves as native speakers of Japanese and listed English as an L2. Three spoke additional languages, including Mandarin, Spanish, and Swedish. Their level of English as determined by standardized tests or self/partner assessments is provided below.

The Australian participants’ patterns of computer use are displayed in Table 8.4. The twelve Australians vary in age, between eighteen and twenty-eight years (an average age of twenty years at the time of the study). This means that all, with the exception of Kaylene (the twenty-eight-year-old,
Table 8.2  Australian Participants’ Linguistic Backgrounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant (n = 12)</th>
<th>1st Lang(s)</th>
<th>Additional Lang(s) and Level of Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alisha</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Japanese (level 9-10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cindy</td>
<td>English, Cantonese</td>
<td>Japanese (level 1-2), French, Mandarin, Korean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellise</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Japanese (level 5-6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genna</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Japanese (level 1-2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyacinth</td>
<td>English, Mandarin</td>
<td>Japanese (level 5-6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Japanese (level 9-10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaylene</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Japanese (level 11-12), French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucas</td>
<td>English, Cantonese</td>
<td>Japanese (level 3-4), Mandarin, Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noah</td>
<td>English, Cantonese</td>
<td>Japanese (level 5-6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oscar</td>
<td>English, Mandarin</td>
<td>Japanese (level 11-12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Japanese (level 1-2), Mandarin, Cantonese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zac</td>
<td>English, Mandarin</td>
<td>Japanese (level 9-10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.3  Japanese Participants’ Linguistic Backgrounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact (n = 12)</th>
<th>Name (n = 18)</th>
<th>Additional Lang(s) and Level/Test Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alisha</td>
<td>Noriko</td>
<td>English (TOEIC 970)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alisha and Ellise</td>
<td>Eri</td>
<td>English (TOEIC 910)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cindy</td>
<td>Mei</td>
<td>English (TOEFL 523)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellise</td>
<td>Atsuko</td>
<td>English (Everyday conversation level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sae</td>
<td>English (Living in Australia), Swedish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genna</td>
<td>Tokio</td>
<td>English (Living in Australia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob and Kaylene</td>
<td>Ko</td>
<td>English (Limited)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaylene</td>
<td>Chikae</td>
<td>English (Eiken level 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daishi</td>
<td>English (Limited)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ikuko</td>
<td>English (TOEIC 895)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Junko</td>
<td>English (Advanced)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ruriko</td>
<td>English (TOEIC 875)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ukiko</td>
<td>English (Everyday conversation level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Watako</td>
<td>English (TOEIC 590)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucas</td>
<td>Hisayo</td>
<td>English (Eiken level 2), Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oscar</td>
<td>Yoshio</td>
<td>English (Business level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott</td>
<td>Kieko</td>
<td>English (Advanced), Mandarin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zac</td>
<td>Fumie</td>
<td>English (Living in Australia)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
who missed out by a few months), were born after the cutoff date for digital natives (although definitions vary, this is generally accepted to be sometime after 1980; cf. Palfrey and Gasser 2008).

Table 8.4 Australian Participants’ Computer Backgrounds, According to Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant (n = 12)</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Reported Daily Computer Use</th>
<th># Computers Often Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cindy</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16 hours/day (approx.)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genna</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3–4 hours/day</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyacinth</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24 hours/day</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucas</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2–3 hours/day+</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oscar</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4–5 hours/day</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noah</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24 hours/day</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5 hours/day</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2–3 hours/day+</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zac</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5–6 hours/day</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aliasha</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5 hours/day+</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellise</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12 hours/day</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaylene</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4–5 hours/day</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.5 Japanese Participants’ Computer Backgrounds, According to Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant (n = 14)</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Reported Daily Computer Use</th>
<th># Computers Often Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hisayo</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1 hour/day</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mei</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2–3 hours/day</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoshio</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2 hours/day</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chikae</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8 hours/day</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruriko</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8 hours/day+</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kieko</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5 hours/day+</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eri</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3 hours/day</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukiko</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1.5 hours/day</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noriko</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2 hours/day+</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokio</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3 hours/day</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watako</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8 hours/day+</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atsuko</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>6 hours/day</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sae</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24 hours/day</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ikuko</td>
<td>40s</td>
<td>7 hours/day (approx.)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Japanese participants, on the other hand, varied more widely in terms of age. This is unsurprising given that while the Australian participants were recruited as tertiary learners of Japanese, the Japanese participants were volunteers from among their social contacts, and not restricted to university goers. Of the fourteen Japanese participants about whom such information was available, six were born before 1980 and hence are considered “digital immigrants” under Palfrey and Gasser’s (2008) definition.

Having introduced the participants’ backgrounds, the next section of this chapter will examine their communication from the two perspectives mentioned earlier—firstly, in terms of linguistic “nativeness” and, secondly, in terms of digital “nativeness.”

**LINGUISTIC “NATIVENESS” AND L2 DOMAINS ONLINE**

Mixi, the most popular SNS in Japan, was commonly used by both Australian and Japanese participants, and frequently referred to as a “Japanese domain.” In order to examine exactly who is considered “native,” it is firstly important to determine how linguistic domains are constructed and national boundaries drawn in online settings. This section will draw briefly on a case study presented in Pasfield-Neofitou (2011), based on the research described here, which compares Mixi and Facebook in order to examine the differences between Japanese and English “domains,” before discussing negotiated spaces.

**LINGUISTIC DOMAINS AND BOUNDARIES**

One theme to emerge early in the thematic coding of interviews in the study was that of domains relating to language and cultural boundaries. Ellise stated, “I tend to view Mixi as a Japanese forum . . . most of the people on there, in fact, 99 percent of people on there can’t actually read English” (cited in Pasfield-Neofitou 2011, 97). Kaylene said, “I think I always use Japanese on the actual (Mixi) blogs, because it feels like it’s a Japanese domain, and so I feel like I should,” (ibid) and, when describing hostile comments on a forum, WebKare, toward non-Japanese members, Hyacinth explained the behavior as a reaction to “the invasion of a domain (WebKare) that [is] mostly Japanese” (cited in Pasfield-Neofitou 2011, 101). But what makes these “areas” of the Internet, a supposedly “placeless space,” “Japanese”? One participant even termed Mixi “the Japanese version of Facebook” (cited in Pasfield-Neofitou 2011, 97). Both function as SNSs, and are visually quite similar. (See www.facebook.com/facebook and http://page.mixi.jp for examples).
INTERLOCUTORS ACCORDING TO DOMAIN

Participants’ perceptions of Mixi as a “Japanese version of Facebook” may in part be explained by the previous comment from Ellise. Indeed, the Australian participants’ social contacts on Facebook and Mixi appear to be almost mirror images. While not quite the 99 percent Ellise alluded to, 88 percent of participants’ contacts on Mixi were Japanese, with varying degrees of English proficiency, compared to only 9 percent on Facebook (Pasfield-Neofitou 2011).

“FOREIGNNESS” IN THE “PLACELESS SPACE”

In their investigation of learners of French on a French newspaper forum, de Nooy and Hanna (2009) identify two default positions that CMC users within intercultural contexts may take: the “champion of one’s culture” and the “language learner,” both of which emphasize one’s foreignness. Within the environment currently under investigation, Mixi, described by participants as the “Japanese version of Facebook” with a mostly Japanese audience, the Australian participants projected themselves as “foreigners.” Six of the twelve Australians were members of Mixi and all listed “Overseas: Australia” as their current residence (Pasfield-Neofitou 2011). This is a set option on Mixi, where all non-Japan regions are automatically prefixed with the word “Overseas.” In addition, participants utilized explicit statements of nationality in their profiles.

One student, Alisha, started her Mixi profile with the statement “I am Australian” written in Japanese, and Ellise too opened her profile by stating, “I am Australian and English, however I am living in Australia” (cited in Pasfield-Neofitou 2011, 102). Similarly, Zac, wrote “I’m Zac. I am Australian and 23 years old” (ibid) in the opening lines of his profile. Such explicit statements demonstrate that for some students, nationality took precedence over other aspects of their identity within this context. Lengthier explanations of participants’ language-learning history where students cast themselves as a “language learner” and/or “foreigner,” can also be seen in Pasfield-Neofitou (2011), with some students giving descriptions of their language learning history up to five or so sentences in length. Four of the six participants who used Mixi even listed “language study” as one of their hobbies—interestingly, this was an interest which was not foregrounded on their Facebook profiles (Pasfield-Neofitou 2011). Such identity construction may be unsurprising where learners are encouraged by a teacher to seek NS contacts to practice language with online (cf. Hanna and de Nooy 2003); however, none of these participants had been so instructed (Pasfield-Neofitou 2011, 2012). One participant, Kaylene, even apologized for her perceived lack of Japanese competence in her profile, stating (in Japanese) “I’m sorry, this blog will probably end up being very badly written and the
Japanese is that of a foreigner, or even ‘Kayleese’” (cited in Pasfield-Neofitou 2011, 102). In this way, these students foregrounded their interest in Japanese language and culture, their “foreignness” and NNS status on Mixi in ways which they did not on other sites such as Facebook, which, unlike Mixi, were not perceived as Japanese NS-“owned” domains.

A similar phenomenon was observed in Tudini’s (2003) analysis of Italian learners’ chat with NSs as a language-learning tool, in which many learners chose to reveal their NNS status in the early stages of their communication. Although the learners profiled by Tudini could have chosen to keep this information private, providing their language competence did not hint otherwise, it seems they rarely chose to do so. It appears that learners are also likely to make similar choices outside of the institutional setting (Pasfield-Neofitou 2012).

**LANGUAGE CHOICE ACCORDING TO DOMAIN**

While communication between the Japanese and Australian participants was conducted in English or a mostly English variety 84 percent of the time on Facebook, this dropped to just 25 percent in the case of Mixi, where Japanese dominated in 63 percent of communication (Pasfield-Neofitou 2011). This is despite the fact that participants were often conversing with the same interlocutors, and even on the same or very similar topics.

Kaylene described Mixi as a “Japanese forum,” and stated that this influenced her language choice, as previously stated. Accordingly, sixteen of Kaylene’s seventeen blogs on Mixi were written entirely in Japanese (Pasfield-Neofitou 2011). It appears that it was not simply the presence of NSs of Japanese, but also the fact that Mixi was an area of the Internet dominated by Japanese language use that influenced participants’ perceptions about Mixi as a virtual L2 community and their language choice.

Ellise also explained that her reason for choosing to write mostly in Japanese on Mixi was, as pointed out earlier, her perception that “99 percent of people on there can’t actually read English.” Nine of Ellise’s ten blogs were

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 8.6</th>
<th>Participants’ Language Choice According to Online Domain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Japanese or Mostly Japanese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixi</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ameba Blogs</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSN Chats</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-Mails</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
written entirely in Japanese. Even Sae, one of Ellise’s Japanese contacts, said
that she used Japanese with Ellise on Mixi precisely “because it’s Mixi,” even
though they utilized English in other domains (Pasfield-Neofitou 2011). Yet,
as Table 8.6, of the most frequently used CMC tools, demonstrates, the split
between English and Japanese usage was not always so clear-cut.

Language use on the Ameba blogs, also considered a Japanese domain,
was substantially similar to the language choices made by participants over-
all on Mixi; however, e-mails and MSN chats were not considered “Japa-
nese” or “English” domains by any participants. Instead, e-mail and chat
communication constituted “negotiated spaces,” where no claims to be a
“native” or “nonnative” speaker were explicitly made by participants.

NEGOTIATED SPACES

There may be several reasons behind participants’ view of some online
spaces as particularly “Japanese” or “English” domains, and others as
negotiated spaces. Firstly, e-mail and chat participation do not require a
full user profile. When a profile is unnecessary, participants need not take
a uniform, conscious stance in terms of their language competence, nor do
they need to construct an identity that is projected via a single means—the
profile that is visible to all contacts. On Facebook, for example, one cannot
maintain a single account with one profile to be shown to Japanese contacts
and one profile to be shown to Australian contacts.

In chat conversations, or via e-mail, however, participants are free to
negotiate their identities on a case-by-case basis. Most participants reported
chatting with multiple partners at a single time. In one chat window, they
may be using Japanese. In another, they may be using English. In yet another,
they may be carrying out a concurrent conversation in French. This is not to
mention the various other social identities one may be performing: asking a
tutor for homework help in one window, planning a party with friends in
another window, saying “hello” to an aunt in another, for example.

Secondly, e-mail and chat are usually private, as opposed to the “public-
yet-private” (boyd and Heer 2006) nature of social networking. This means
that while I may log in to Mixi or Facebook and post a favorable comment
on a friend’s profile photo, and intend that comment to be specifically for
them, I nevertheless need to be aware that it may also be read by any other
visitors to their page. For this reason, those who lack confidence in their
linguistic competence may label themselves as NNSs in order to escape
criticism or mitigate embarrassment.

Finally, e-mail and chat are normally available in a number of different
language versions. An Australian user may log in to MSN Messenger or to
Gmail with an English interface, while their Japanese interlocutor may be
using the Japanese-language version. In the case of Mixi, however, the site
is only available in Japanese, and is tagged with .jp, demonstrating clear
Japanese ownership.
“Digital Natives” and “Native Speakers” 151

As this section has demonstrated, online, one can be an NS in one domain, an NNS in another, concurrently an NS and an NNS through one mode of communication, when conversing in multiple conversations, and one also has the option of hiding one’s nationality, ethnicity, native language, and any other identifying features all together, although this option may not always be taken up.

ONLINE PARTICIPATION AND “DIGITAL NATIVENESS”

What factors affect CMC competence? We now turn to examine the issue of digital “nativeness.” Age, and in particular, being a part of the “digital native” generation, is commonly thought to be inextricably bound with CMC competence and online participation; however, this was not found to be an entirely accurate predictor of CMC use in the current study. The eldest participant, Ikuko, in her forties, reported using computers for approximately seven hours a day, and Sae, at thirty-six, kept hers switched on, ready to respond to incoming messages all day and night. The younger participants, Mei and Hisayo at nineteen and Yoshio at twenty, reported some of the lowest total hours of daily computer use. This may be related to their involvement in university classes, where they did not utilize computers during the day. There were no discernable patterns correlating age and computer use among the Australian participants either. All participants’ computer use is outlined in Tables 8.4 and 8.5.

In terms of participation in online communication, to again take thirty-six-year-old Sae as an example, her communication was by no means limited to more established modes such as e-mail. In addition to maintaining several e-mail accounts, she participated in chat via MSN and was a member of the SNS Mixi. Thus, it appears that engaged participation in online communities should not be viewed as strictly limited to those born after 1980. Obviously this data cannot be extrapolated beyond the age-groups involved in the present study; however, at the very least, this raises the question, how do we determine what it means to be “good at” CMC if relevant skills development is not solely generational?

HOW TO BE “GOOD AT” CMC

In one interview, Kaylene described her chat partner, Ruriko, as “good at chat.” An excerpt from this interview is reproduced here:

\[ K: \text{She was good. She’s good at using chat, so we don’t have too much lag between turn-taking, I suppose. Which is good, because then it keeps the conversation flowing.} \]

\[ I: \text{So how do you define someone who’s good at chat?} \]
K: She’s a reasonably fast typer, she knows how to follow the different conversations, you know how people have different conversations in the same chat, so she doesn’t have a problem with that, and I think that’s it really.

Excerpt 1. Kaylene

When asked how she defined someone as “good at chat,” Kaylene highlighted two key factors, namely, typing proficiency and the ability to manage multiple threads within the same chat conversation. These factors appeared important across a number of participants’ interactions and are salient examples of the technical factors at play.

FACTORS AFFECTING CMC COMPETENCE

In order to type effectively in Japanese, one must master a number of skills that are unnecessary when typing in English. Written Japanese typically involves the use of four different writing systems: hiragana (normally used for native words that lack characters, grammar particles, and verb and adjective inflections); katakana (normally used for loan words, onomatopoeia, and technical/scientific words); characters, or kanji, which are based on Chinese characters (used for nouns and verb and adjective stems); and English letters or Romanization. An example of use of all four can be seen in Figure 8.4, an excerpt from one of Cindy’s blog posts.

This plurality of scripts combined with extended font symbols available via the Japanese Input Method on computers also affords great flexibility in the use of nonverbal or paralinguistic communication, as noted by Nishimura (2007). A comparison between a sample of the Western text art (commonly referred to as “emoticons”) utilized by participants in the current study, and their more complex Japanese counterparts in the following table demonstrates this point. A more detailed explanation is provided by Hwang and Matsumoto (this volume).

The Japanese Ministry of Education requires that students learn over two thousand kanji characters, in addition to the two Japanese scripts, hiragana and katakana. Clearly, such a large number of symbols cannot fit

Figure 8.4 Example of Japanese writing systems in Cindy’s blog post.
“Digital Natives” and “Native Speakers”

Typing proficiency appears to be related to code switching between languages, particularly in fast-paced communication such as via chat. Knowing how to effectively switch between input methods facilitates speed in communication, and is therefore, as Kaylene observed, a vital factor influencing CMC competence. Being able to quickly select the appropriate characters also helps to avoid miscommunication. The complexity of “typing proficiency” is observable in an examination of participants’ code-switching practices, specifically, a comparison of intra (within the e-turn) and inter (between the e-turn) code switching. All of the Australian participants strongly preferred inter e-turn switching with over 71.5 percent of code switches preformed inter e-turn, while all of the Japanese NSs either preferred intra e-turn switching or only slightly preferred inter e-turn switching (Pasfield-Neofitou 2012). This means that while the native Japanese speakers, who were on the whole more confident and experienced in typing in Japanese than were the Australians, were happy to switch languages mid-turn, as we can see from the above statistic, the Australian participants strongly preferred to wait until the end of their turn and switch while waiting for their partner to reply. The Australian participants’ lesser familiarity with Japanese input methods was likely compounded by the fact that most of them were using Western keyboards.

The Japanese participants situated in Japan had the added advantage of having a keyboard specifically designed for the use of Japanese. Although the user still types in the English alphabet, Japanese keyboards feature additional keys not found on Western keyboards, specifically to facilitate the swapping between character sets. Thus, typing proficiency, rather than

digital native and native speakers.
being the dominion of “digital natives” or “native speakers” alone, is a factor affected by technological access also. In one example, Ruriko, a young Japanese native speaker and digital native, had to seek the assistance of her older, non-Japanese friend, Kaylene, in order to learn how to switch orthographies once she no longer had access to her Japanese keyboard. Kaylene, on the other hand, was a proficient typist on either.

Finally, willingness to handle multiple conversational threads within the one conversation is another important factor affecting CMC competence. In another study carried out by the author (Pasfield-Neofitou 2006, 2009a), it was noticed that participation between one Australian male, Jacob (who also participated in the present study), and his Japanese female chat partner, Miku, was particularly unequal.

Jacob reported that he would actively avoid multiple “streams of conversation” in chat, by monitoring the space at the bottom of the chat window, which would display “Miku is writing a message” when his partner was composing a turn. He said, “I’d go to write something in, but it would say underneath, Miku is typing, and so I’d go, oh, okay, and delete what I was going to say, because I’d wait for her response.” “Because often when . . . you’re both . . . starting off a question, it’ll get really confusing. So I thought, it’s probably easier, just to have one stream of conversation going” (Pasfield-Neofitou 2009a, 53).

In our interview, Jacob reported that when he began composing another e-turn to complete his turn, if he noticed that Miku was typing, he would routinely delete his response in order to wait for her to finish typing. Often, Miku would change the subject, rendering the e-turn Jacob was about to complete irrelevant. On one occasion, it was found that Jacob waited almost two minutes to read what she had written, all in an effort to avoid multiple streams of conversation occurring.

As a result of Jacob’s repeated use of this strategy to avoid overlap, in conjunction with Miku’s own preference for continuous typing to keep up the flow of communication regardless of potential overlap, Miku’s contributions to their chat conversation by far outweighed Jacob’s. In the conversation described above, Jacob composed and sent only seventy-four turns in comparison with Miku’s 124 (Pasfield-Neofitou, 2006, 2009a).

On the other hand, as Kaylene mentioned in her interview excerpted earlier, she and Ruriko frequently juggled multiple strands of conversation. Their complex management of concurrent topics and threads can be seen in Figure 8.5, which links three threads in black (discussing their days and sleep patterns), dotted grey (discussing the setting of the Japanese input method), and bold (discussing why Ruriko could not attend a party that evening).

From the preceding examples, it is clear that while it may be impossible to interrupt a chat partner mid-e-turn, it is certainly possible to interrupt the flow of conversation mid-turn, between two e-turns. This occurred, for example, where Kay interrupted Ruriko’s explanation of not
being able to attend the party (in the e-turns composed at 10:00:46 p.m.
and 10:01:01 p.m.) with her e-turn at 10:00:51 p.m. about input settings.
In the case of Jacob and Miku, Jacob’s preference to maintain a single
thread of conversation meant that he deleted his unfinished e-turn to
permit Miku to continue, meaning that he allowed Miku’s “interruption”
to effectively silence the remainder of his turn. In the case of Kaylene
and Ruriko, who had compatible chat styles, the disjunction of adjacency
pairs and multiple threads of conversation were not perceived as prob-
lematic, and, hence, participation was more balanced. It is important to
note that it is not that either of Jacob’s or Miku’s chat styles were bad
or ineffective, but rather that they were incompatible. Thus, while Kaylene
may describe a willingness to handle multiple threads of conversation
concurrently as an indication of being “good at” chat, it is likely that
Jacob may perceive a willingness to wait for one’s interlocutor to finish
composing their turn similarly.

WHO IS LOUDEST?

Finally, we turn to the question posed at the beginning of this chapter, how
can one “shout” without volume? And if this is possible, who shouts the
loudest? Although speaking loudly alone does not guarantee that others
will listen nor that one will be deemed a competent communicator, as Beiß-
wenger (2008, 2) points out: “In oral conversation it is almost impossible
physically to ignore the occurrence of an utterance as an acoustic event. In contrast, messages in written discourse are not noticed until the reader directs his or her attention to a specific visual target on which textual information is displayed.” In a chat conversation, on an SNS profile wall, on a popular forum, or in a crowded e-mail in-box, it is easy for a message to be lost, ignored, or forgotten, unread.

A number of strategies to emphasize one’s point have been identified in the literature on CMC (cf. Anis 2007; Baron 2001; Tanaka, Takamura, and Okumura 2005; du Bartell 1995; Werry 1996; Lee 2007; Nishimura 2007; Pasfield-Neofitou 2007b) and were also discovered in the data. Using capitalization or katakana for emphasis in Japanese is one way, but one must have the CMC competence to know when to avoid such strategies, as overuse may be perceived as aggressive shouting and can lead to one’s messages being ignored or marked as spam.

Punctuation can also be used to add emphasis; however, using only one or two exclamation marks may not signal anything out of the ordinary for some interlocutors. Analysis of Ruriko’s personal usage of exclamation marks found that in a single chat, she used 186 exclamation marks as opposed to just thirty full stops (Pasfield-Neofitou 2007b). When she really wanted to emphasize something, she used six in a row, “!!!!!!.”

Emoticon use, as mentioned earlier, is another relevant feature of CMC use; yet again, one’s interlocutor and the communicative setting can greatly affect the effectiveness of this strategy. One Australian participant, Oscar, commented, “I guess I’m one of those people who is pretty formal, I think, it’s just rubbish,” and refused to use any emoticons himself. Kaylene also stated that she tended to ignore emoticons and brushed them off as people “being emotional.” Other participants, such as Hyacinth and Genna, however, were very interested in discovering new ones. Using emoticons with these different people would be likely to elicit very different responses.

Other factors such as the use of netspeak (e.g., “lol” for laugh out loud), or specialized codes such as 1337 (“leet,” an elite symbol substitution system) as part of an in-group, in-game prestige. He or she who has the highest score or the most bejeweled armor and other salient forms of power and influence display such as rankings on forums and number of blog readers, etc. Detailed descriptions of these features are beyond the scope of the current chapter but are relevant to the discussion of whose opinion is heard and respected and whose is ignored or devalued.

CONCLUSION

CMC competence appears more subtle and complex than simply being a native speaker or a digital native. It requires not only linguistic and technical competence, but also a sensitivity to know how to combine these competences in a variety of situations with a number of different interlocutors. Prensky
(2009) has already noted that the distinction between “digital natives” and “digital immigrants” will become less relevant as we move further into the twenty-first century; however, in multilingual settings it may be the case that such categories are already quite blurred. It is possible to be a “digital native” in one’s own native language but not know the requisite keyboard shortcuts, emoticons, net slang, and other technology-based skills relevant to another. As this chapter has shown, typing proficiency, a seemingly mundane skill, is a very important measure of CMC competence, and, particularly in the case of character-based languages, it is perhaps more complex than it may first appear. Furthermore, as has been argued throughout this chapter, “native-ness” in terms of language and technology use should not be viewed as a dichotomy but, rather, defined situationally.

NOTES

1. All participants in this chapter have been assigned pseudonyms, and any identifying features have been removed.

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9 Facework in Intercultural E-mail Communication in the Academic Environment

Magda Stroińska and Vikki Cecchetto

INTRODUCTION

The international classroom is rapidly becoming the norm rather than the exception in most academic settings in North America and throughout the world. This internationalization also implies the co-presence of a variety of cultural backgrounds. At most Canadian universities, many classes have a very mixed student body, with many international students or recent immigrants to the country for whom English is not the first or even the second language (cf. Cecchetto and Stroińska 2006). In the last few years, electronically mediated forms of communication (CMCs) have replaced more traditional face-to-face exchanges between instructors and students and among the students themselves outside the classroom. This change in the medium and channel of communication naturally influences the dynamics of human interaction. Because of this shift, any principles of facework originally developed for the once natural face-to-face encounters (cf. Goffman 1967) need to be modified and adapted to the new means of communication. The fact that in CMC the addressee may not be aware of the cultural background and the native versus nonnative speaker's status of the sender may result in the addressee possibly forming opinions and impressions about the sender without the benefit of the information available in the face-to-face encounters. In this chapter, we focus on e-mails initiated by students and comment about the effects of the language and politeness strategies used (or lacking) in order to examine why some e-mail formats may appear impolite or rude to the instructor and how this may inadvertently affect the student. Even though CMC seems to offer a level playing field for nonnative speakers of the language, we focus on situations where the difference in cultural backgrounds may play a role in the perceptions of nonnative speakers and in negative stereotyping.

FACEWORK IN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Ervin Goffman (1959) treated human interaction as a kind of staged performance where individuals try to control or shape the impression that others
might form of them by modifying their own behavior, appearance, and manner of speaking. People also actively seek to avoid being embarrassed or embarrassing others. Like actors who perform onstage in front of an audience, we all engage in creating our *persona* and work with others on creating their self-images. All this constitutes what Goffman called *facework*: the collaborative effort to increase self-confidence by helping others to save their face and by limiting face-threatening actions to ourselves (Goffman 1959). Goffman understood face “as a sociological construct of interaction,” which, in his opinion, was “neither inherent in nor a permanent aspect of the person” (cited in Trevino 2003, 37). If we ever are ourselves, it is usually “backstage,” where no one can see us. In front of an audience, on the other hand, we remain guarded, trying to protect the positive image we hope others have of us. Clearly, one of the most obvious ways of upholding this positive image is to behave according to the norms of politeness that constitute the code of proper conduct in a given community. We normally do not want to present ourselves in an unfavorable way and will therefore avoid actions that may put our self-image in danger. Geoffrey Leech (1983) suggested that a Principle of Politeness operates in conversations similarly to Grice’s (1975) Principle of Cooperation, even though different cultures may apply its maxims in their idiosyncratic ways. However, while conversation partners normally assume that most people follow the Principle of Cooperation, very little is needed to raise the suspicion of rudeness. CMC is not an exception. In fact, we shall argue, conversation partners may be particularly prone to judge each other as impolite based solely on the explicit (written) part of the communication.

There is plenty of anecdotal evidence and a growing body of research (see, for example, Biesenbach-Lucas 2007; Bou-Franch 2006; Haugh 2010; Murphy and Levy 2006; Trosborg 1994) that CMCs used in academic environments, such as e-mails, course discussion board posts, or course Facebook posts from students, both native speakers and nonnative speakers very often violate the norms of what is considered polite or even appropriate in academic settings, from the structure/form to the content of the message. The choice of register, grammatical correctness, and lexical selection all contribute to the general impression of the manner of communication, whether appropriate or inappropriate. In the case of inappropriate communication, the misuse of these elements more often than not leaves the addressee with the impression of rudeness from the writer. When the writer is a student, they may have to pay a price for their lack of communication skills and *netiquette* (i.e., the etiquette that applies to communications online) as professors may be less accommodating to someone who, in their opinion, has been impolite (see also Jessmer and Anderson 2001; Hassall 2004). However, what may be interpreted as a violation of a norm of polite behavior from a native speaker may simply result from a lack of cultural awareness in the nonnative speaker. This is usually not an issue in face-to-face encounters where the student’s accent or other traits may
immediately reveal that they are not a native speaker of the language used for communication—English, in our situation. Foreign accent, in this case then, is a face-saving factor as it allows the hearer to adapt to the situation and modify their expectations. In countries like Canada, foreign-sounding names cannot serve as an indication of a nonnative speaker, since a large number of Canadians of different ethnic backgrounds, both recent and long established, have naturally maintained their surnames. Even grammatical errors do not necessarily point to a nonnative speaker, since the grammatical correctness of many native English-speaking students is constantly being questioned due to the impact of practices such as texting, chat groups, etc.

Our observations are based on a corpus of almost four hundred e-mails sent to us between November 2009 and April 2011 by students from our university. The majority of the e-mails were from students in our courses, with the rest coming from students outside our courses because of our role as academic counselors. From the original four hundred e-mails, we focused our analysis on approximately 270 since they were all of the same type: requests, for some kind of “accommodation,” for counseling appointments, or for assignment clarification. These e-mails have been stripped of all identifying information (sender’s and addressee’s name and e-mail address, etc.), leaving the messages in their original form (spelling, capitalization, etc.). Based on these electronically mediated exchanges between students and instructors, this chapter tries to identify and describe the types of linguistic behavior that violate the standard and generally accepted norms of politeness in Canadian universities. These norms include the use of polite address forms unless the parties have agreed otherwise, the use of standard spelling (rather than the abbreviations and other orthographic conventions normally used in texting), a respectful form for requests, and no profanity. We also look at the accepted norms of so-called netiquette, in order to see whether students’ e-mails obey its rules. We describe the manifestations of the student’s fluency in English and the impact of the student’s cultural norms on the form of their electronic communication. We then attempt to connect different types of violations of the politeness principles with the most common interpretation by recipients, to see which seem to be the result of the lack of information that would be available in face-to-face communication. We conclude with some guidelines for facework in non-face-to-face electronic intercultural communication.

POLITENESS AND FACE

The Cooperative Principle, formulated by H.P. Grice (1975; 1989, 26), describes concisely the assumptions that need to operate if we believe that conversations are acts of joint effort where the partners work together at producing meanings and interpretations. Grice directs: “make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs,
by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged” (1989, 26). Just as most of us expect that people would normally follow Grice’s Principle of Cooperation when they communicate, Geoffrey Leech (1983) suggests that we also naturally strive to be polite and expect others to do the same. His “Principle of Politeness” encompasses five maxims: tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, and sympathy. Following the accepted norms of politeness ensures that people feel comfortable with each other and allows them to maintain their face while taking care of the face needs of their conversational partners.

Mills (2003, 6) suggests that politeness is the expression of the speaker’s intention or desire to mitigate face threats that may be carried by a variety of face-threatening acts directed at the hearer or other persons. Politeness can, to a degree, disarm these potentially aggressive or threatening actions. Thus, a behavior is considered polite if it aims at saving the face of another person. It may be assumed that this type of action would motivate that other person to do the same, thus ensuring a comfortable atmosphere.

Following Goffman’s (1974) distinction of positive and negative face, Brown and Levinson (1987) talk about positive and negative politeness. Positive politeness is a display of inclusion and emphasizes the hearer’s need for approval. Negative politeness, on the other hand, is concerned with the need of others not to be subjected to impositions and intrusions and to be given enough space. Since positive face is defined as the need to be desirable and appreciated by others, it may be threatened by any display of real or apparent indifference and lack of proper respect or acknowledgment of the relationship between the speaker and the hearer. Negative face, on the other hand, is the desire for freedom from imposition, for independence, and for having one’s actions unimpeded by others. Thus, anything that may be an imposition or imposed inclusion threatens negative face.

In this chapter, we look at e-mails from students to professors, focusing in particular on those making requests. A request is a speech act where the speaker wants the hearer to perform an action and believes that the hearer is capable of doing so, but unlikely to do it without being asked. In English, polite requests are traditionally made in an indirect way, i.e., by means such as questions: “Can you pass the salt?” or assertions: “I would be grateful if you could stop making so much noise.” Searle (1975, 74) notes that politeness is “the chief motivation” for using indirect requests. He further explains that the question form suggests the speaker does not presume that the hearer is able to perform the requested action (which would not be the case if an imperative form were used) and it also leaves the hearer the option of refusing the request. Both are ways to save the negative face of the hearer and thus both are often employed and expected in communication with those who are higher in the hierarchy of power. Positive politeness reduces the power distance and is normally used among people of equal power or by those with a higher position toward their subordinates. If used by people of lower power toward their superiors, positive politeness may
be viewed as inappropriate or rude. The bald on-record politeness strategy uses direct requests, often formulated as imperatives with no hedging, and is appropriate among close friends or relatives of equal status (e.g., siblings or spouses) but sounds abrupt and impolite if used among people of different status.

In an academic context, just as in everyday situations, students e-mailing instructors with requests may be expected to adapt the level of politeness to the size of the perceived imposition of their request. Thus, the bald on-record politeness strategy may seem obviously out of place, and yet its use is not uncommon, as illustrated by the e-mail in example 1:

(1) From: Name <name@muss.cis.mcmaster.ca>
Subject: IMPORTANT MEETING
Date: Mon, 15 Mar 2010 07:01:53—0500

I am coming to your office at 10:30. Please be there so we can discuss the issue at hand. I will call you at 3 this afternoon if you can’t make it to your office at that time.

Name

It can be assumed that the student who wrote the e-mail would not utter the same bold demand in a face-to-face encounter with the instructor. While it can still be assumed that the student was not deliberately trying to offend the instructor, it appears that in the case of the CMC, the norms of what, in the students’ view, is acceptable are being considerably extended and stretched. In the rest of this chapter, we analyze the types of politeness strategies used in student e-mails with requests and identify and discuss the violations of the expected politeness norms.

REQUESTS

Requests are considered pre-event speech acts, which are meant to influence the hearer’s future behavior—in contrast to, for example, apologies, which are considered post-event speech acts (cf. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984). A request places the hearer into the situation of deciding whether to comply with the wishes of the speaker or whether to reject them. As such, a request is a face-threatening act, forcing the hearer to react and possibly demanding an action on their part, and the speaker may want to mitigate its face-threatening force through the use of politeness. The level of expected politeness depends on many factors, the most important ones being the size of the imposition and the power relationship between the speaker and the hearer, including the age difference.
However, when one discusses politeness strategies and what is considered appropriate or not in a given situation, no matter whether the communication is face-to-face or computer-mediated, it is very important to take into consideration the cultural values, norms, and expectations of the speakers. It is the culture that determines not only the relative position of the speaker and the hearer in the hierarchy of power, but also the responsibilities and expectations that are related to each position and role. Thus, for example, in Japan, university instructors are expected to provide services such as reference letters to their students, and so students do not feel that requesting such a letter is a huge imposition (cf. Obana 2010 for the notion of roles in Japanese politeness strategies). In Canada, on the other hand, instructors are often swamped with dozens of such requests, all at the same time (either because of scholarship or graduate school application deadlines) and sometimes at the last minute, and so requesting a letter of recommendation is perceived (by the instructor) as an imposition that demands a considerable effort on their part and thus requires considerable politeness. Students may in fact go to great lengths to try to ensure that the instructor not only agrees to write such a letter, but that, given their academic performance and “polite request behavior,” the letter will be a positive one.

One question that becomes particularly important in the context of the new technologies is whether the medium of communication influences politeness strategies. Based on our experience, the answer seems to be yes, but we would need much more data to be sure whether it is the effect of the technology per se or whether it is the effect of changes in etiquette and in manners in general.

In the past, the literature on the use of politeness strategies reported that even young children were cognizant of the appropriate politeness strategies for their cultural background. Two-year-old American children knew how to differentiate the levels of politeness in making requests (Ervin-Tripp 1982). Israeli children were known to vary the directness according to the relative power of the addressee (Blum-Kulka, Danet, and Gherson 1985). Brown and Levinson (1987) and Ervin-Tripp and Gordon (1985) predicted that power, familiarity, and the size of imposition determined linguistic forms used and that, with age, speakers learned to vary their language accordingly. If these premises are used to evaluate the communicative behavior of university students who are in their late teens or early twenties, they would certainly be expected to be quite able to differentiate between proper and improper politeness strategies in making requests to their instructors. While in face-to-face encounters students rarely violate the expected norms of politeness, they seem to apply different standards when they engage in CMCs.

Almost every day, we as instructors see in our in-boxes e-mails that clearly contradict the assumption that young adults know how to use language instrumentally and, more important, appropriately in order to achieve their goals. These e-mails come from both students who are native
speakers and those who are nonnative speakers of English. They come from
students who are high achievers and from those struggling to remain in
their programs. They come during working hours and after, on workdays
and on weekends: it appears that the modern professor is expected (by stu-
dents) to be accessible 24/7.

(2) From:  Name <name@muss.cis.mcmaster.ca>

Subject: academic advising for second year
Date: Wed, 06 Apr 2011 20:36:47—0500

Hello my name is <NAME> im in first year linguistics, i came by
today to get some help for academic advising for next year but you
were gone all day. I was wondering if i could book an appointment with
you for tomorrow for the afternoon or whenever you are available
next. if you can get back to me as soon as possible it would be greatly
appreciated.

<NAME>

See also example 1: e-mail sent at 7:01 a.m., expecting the professor to be
in their office at 10:30 a.m.

In example 2, the sender is not offering anything that could be consid-
ered an attempt at mitigating the force of request (for academic counseling)
through politeness: the e-mail is lacking a polite form of address (instead a
“Hello” is used at the very beginning, but it is not even separated from the
following thought by a comma or a line break); there is no proper closing
in the form of some formulaic “thank you in advance”; and the request is
maybe not bald on-record (it has the declarative form “I was wondering
if . . . ”), but it is relatively direct. Apart from these syntactic, lexical, and
pragmatic choices, the lack of adherence to standard norms of capitaliza-
tion makes the letter appear very casual. It is the fact that the expected
politeness indicators are missing rather than any signs of rudeness that
makes this letter appear impolite.

THE PERCEIVED IMMEDIACY AND
URGENCY OF STUDENTS’ REQUESTS

Since the majority of students at Canadian universities function with the
latest version of a cell phone/iPad/iPhone/BlackBerry, etc., they assume that
everyone else (including instructors) are equally equipped and therefore able
to answer their e-mails immediately (cf. Freeman 2009; Weinstock 2004).
Some students e-mail us even while they are in class with us. Being able to
access e-mail from their smart phones, they can e-mail us questions that
they could just as easily have asked in class that very minute. We wonder, what is preventing them from asking the question during the class itself? Is it that face-to-face communication has become “intimidating” for some people? Are nonnative speakers particularly likely to choose CMC instead of raising their hands and asking their questions in front of the entire class? As the necessity of using a foreign language may in itself be perceived as a face threat, nonnative speakers who are apprehensive about their language skills may indeed opt for asking questions online. For them and for many others who spend more time online than in face-to-face communication, CMC may seem a “safer,” “more natural,” “better” form of communication. All of these implications should be investigated more fully.

The fact that it is so easy to send a message to the instructor lowers the threshold of what kinds of questions can be asked: “Was there anything important covered in class today?” and what level of formality is expected or appropriate. The ease of access also changes the perception of the level of perceived intimacy with the instructors: one usually only e-mails close friends or relatives in the middle of the night (see examples 1 and 2; Glater 2006). With the popularity of social networks such as Facebook, even the very definition of the word friend has changed and some instructors become “Facebook friends” with their students, both graduate and undergraduate. The Ontario College of Teachers has recently issued a professional advisory to elementary and high school teachers strongly discouraging them from communicating with their students on social networks because it is easy “to cross the line” (Ontario College of Teachers 2011). So far, no similar suggestions have been made toward university instructors, but many professors set such limits for themselves. The medium obviously shapes the message.

CASE STUDIES

In the following, we analyze a number of e-mail messages (with students’ names and all identifying information removed but with no changes in grammar, spelling, or punctuation) from the corpus collected by the authors. The e-mails were sent either directly from the university student account, from personal accounts (a practice university regulations discourage), or from the course websites. While collecting the e-mails from our e-mail archives, we initially placed the majority of them into either a Non-native Speaker (NNS) folder or Language Status Unknown folder. This categorization was based on two types of information: foreign-sounding names and a high number of grammatical or spelling errors in the text. Subsequently, most of these e-mails were moved to the Native Speaker (NS) folder. This is why we believe that neither foreign names nor the presence of linguistic errors alone can point to a nonnative speaker as the sender of an e-mail. In our discussions, if e-mails did not contain information that would allow the recipient to identify the sender, we comment about that.
We first briefly look at e-mails sent by known native speakers (i.e., the students are well known to the instructors, who have identified them as native speakers; or students have identified themselves as native speakers in information questionnaires at the beginning of those courses where this type of information is relevant to the course content) and then compare their politeness strategies in making requests with those used by nonnative speakers. Many e-mails that we receive as instructors deal with requests: 1) for an extension of deadlines for the submission of written or other work, 2) for some other type of accommodation, 3) for letters of recommendation, 4) for academic information or counseling, and 5) for mark adjustment. This latter category could actually be seen as a combination of two speech acts: a complaint, which is a post-event speech act (the student complains about the mark assigned to them by the instructor), and a request (a pre-event speech act made with the expectation from the speaker of an action by the hearer).

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION FROM NATIVE SPEAKERS

The first letter comes from a student in a relatively small class of thirty students, and so there are some grounds to believe that the instructor would know the student, also because the student is identified by name in the user ID. Perhaps because of this, the student does not specify what course they are asking about and does not even sign the letter, since they probably feel they do not need to. This lack of information, though, requires the instructor to check for and retrieve important information in order to process the message, thus increasing the perceived imposition.

(3) From: Name <name@muss.cis.mcmaster.ca>
Subject: Final
Date: April 2, 2011 11:07:33 AM EDT

Hello, I am confused on what we have to write for this part: Literature or Methodology Review showing that you have consulted the available literature pertaining to the topic of your paper. How is your research related to the work others have done? (4 points)

The letter starts with a greeting (“Hello”) but contains no form of address referring to the recipient, and there is no closing formula. In fact, all it contains is a statement that the student is confused about what they are expected to write in a specific portion of the final paper and a quote from the requirements in the assignment outline, which, in the instructor’s view, was self-explanatory for a third-year student. Thus, the request in this case is expressed by a conversational implicature, since the only reason the student would want the instructor to know about their confusion is to make...
the instructor provide more information. The recipient is expected to be able to figure out the intention of the e-mail, which, on the surface, violates the Gricean Maxim of Relation.

In response to the instructor’s letter of reply (with an opening and closing greeting and a signature), the student writes back:

(4) Okay because what I did was write the methods of analyzing poems and methods of translating poems in a two paragraphs with the ideas of those who I researched (cited properly) along with my ideas. At the end I have a conclusion that simply states how the research others have done is used as a foundation of my own analysis. Is that okay? I guess I incorporated the research into my essay instead of just stating and summarizing . . . is this okay?

This time there is no greeting or closing but there is a question that requires a response. After the instructor’s follow-up response was sent, again with an opening and closing greeting, the student returns with the following e-mail:

(5) Okay thanks, and is there still no way to make an appointment with you?
Assuming you are still at home?

The instructor at the time was on an extended sick leave following an accident but was still involved in marking assignments for the course. It can be assumed that the question asked in a negative form: “Is there still no way to make an appointment with you?” is an indirect request for a meeting. The form of the negative request really assumes, on the part of the student, a negative response from the instructor. The following utterance: “Assuming you are still at home?” strengthens the perception that the instructor will answer negatively and turns the whole exchange into an implied/veiled complaint. Indirect forms of requests are usually considered more polite but this indirect request would not strike the reader as particularly polite. The last utterance: “Assuming you are still at home?” ends with a question mark but is not phrased as a question; it rather resembles an incomplete statement, possibly with an omitted tag question. If the reader did not know that the student was a native speaker, this form might be considered the result of a lack of linguistic competence. This exchange from a native speaker (who likely did not intend to be rude but has been rude in the end) has to be interpreted as evidence that students now do not seem to see any difference between e-mails to their professors and questions posted on the course online discussion boards or informal text or Facebook exchanges with friends and, therefore, they see no need to “pad” their e-mails with politeness strategies. It thus seems that the mere fact of using CMC makes some students believe that the rules of politeness have been relaxed and that
what they write can be equated to a turn in a conversation: we do not start each turn with “Dear So and So.”

And yet, this attitude is clearly not universal. Example 6, requesting an extension, also from a native speaker of English, has all the elements that would be expected in an e-mail from a student even by the most conservative and etiquette-concerned reader:

(6) From: Name <name@muss.cis.mcmaster.ca>

Subject: Paper #3
Date: March 28, 2011 9:45:29 PM EDT

Hi Dr. <last name>,

My name is X Y and I am in your Linguistics 2E03 class. I am emailing you because I have been swamped with work over the last week and especially over these last few day where I have had a test as well as another scheduled for tomorrow. I am feeling very stressed out about getting this paper done and studying for my test tomorrow and am not sure if I’ll be able to finish it at for the scheduled due date.

According to my accommodations with CSD I am aloud to get extensions on papers if I feel I won’t be able to get them done on time. I just wanted to make sure that it would be fine with you if I could get an extension on the paper and hand it in in a few days. If you could email me back as soon as possible I would greatly appreciate it. Thank you.

Sincerely,
First name, Last name
Student #- XXXXXX
Class- Linguistics 2E03

This e-mail provides information about the sender; gives the background for the e-mail: “I have been swamped with work”; gives reasons why they would like to ask for extra time to complete the assignment; and only then mentions that they are registered with the Centre for Student Development and so actually have the right to request special accommodations at any time. The e-mail ends with a request, phrased very politely, to confirm that the instructor agrees with the extension, followed by a “Thank you” and a respectful closing formula “Sincerely,” followed by the name and student number. It thus seems that the style and politeness level is an individual characteristic of the student rather than solely the function of the medium, and that many students—native speaker and nonnative speakers alike—are unsure of the conventions for the use of e-mail with faculty (cf. Baron 2000, 2002; Biesenbach-Lucas 2006; Crystal 2001; Davis and Brewer 1997).
The last e-mail that we would like to discuss here was sent to one of the authors by an undergraduate student dissatisfied with their final grade of 10, which on the McMaster scale corresponds to an A- (80–84 percent). Thus the letter is partly a complaint about the mark and partly a request for a grade adjustment. The face-threatening force of this request is relatively high. It suggests that the instructor was not fair or thorough in the evaluation of the student, and so one might expect a particularly polite form in order to soften the threat to the instructor’s face:

(7) Hi Dr. <Name>,

I was just looking over my grade and I received a 10. However, I calculated my final grade and I get an 84.975 %. Does that mean I am not getting an 11 in the course because of 0.025%? Would there be ANY way we could adjust this? It would really be appreciated!!

Thank-You,

The student in question made their grade assumption based on a perfect attendance mark (not posted on the course website), which they did not merit having missed a number of classes. In fact, the student was a few percentage points below the grade cutoff point, and 10 already represented an upgrade. All this, however, is beside the point as students often go to great lengths in order to get a better grade. What makes this letter worth quoting is the form of making the request: “Would there be ANY way we could adjust this? It would really be appreciated!!” The use of the first-person plural form “we” suggests that the grading is a process performed jointly by the professor and the student, and that final grades can be arrived at through negotiation. How is this approach to an element of the course that is supposed to be the instructor’s sole jurisdiction possible? Our interpretation is that students assume that a low level of formality between themselves and the instructors in communication implies that the instructor’s power over them is decreased, and that the power hierarchy in all elements of the course then also disappears, making them “partners” in grading.

A further complication in trying to account for pragmatic lapses/incorrect communication strategies in native speakers of English comes from a literacy problem. Most Canadian students come to the university never having been explicitly taught the rules and pragmatic conventions of Canadian English. This actually puts NS at a disadvantage vis-à-vis NNS, who have been explicitly taught at least the grammar rules.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION FROM NONNATIVE SPEAKERS

International students who are nonnative speakers of English often come to Canadian universities with a basic or intermediate knowledge of written
English but little understanding of the spoken language and of the pragmatic norms in various situations of Canadian English. Their levels of linguistic skill may be sufficient to follow a lecture or read an academic text, but they are usually not enough to allow the students to function confidently in more language-dependent academic disciplines or to perform adequately in tutorials or participatory courses (cf., for example, Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford 1990, 1993; Biesenbach-Lucas and Weasenforth 2002). Functioning outside the classroom, including in electronically mediated communication with course instructors or teaching assistants—beyond sending questions to course discussion boards—is a skill that international students often lack, and so they may write the way they would have written to their teacher in their native culture—if communication through this medium were culturally appropriate (see especially Baron 2000; Biesenbach-Lucas 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009; Crystal 2001). Alternatively, they may imitate the style of e-mails they themselves receive from fellow students or instructors. In both cases, the level of politeness in such letters would not be appropriate for communication initiated by a student and directed to an instructor.

Examples 8 and 9 were written by students of a Southeast Asian background who were asking for permission to register in a course that was showing on the course registration website as full:

(8) From: Name <name@muss.cis.mcmaster.ca>
Subject: 
Date: January 10, 2011:00:38 PM EST

I am planning to take ling 1aa3 but mugsi says I need permission of 1ao3 how do I get it?

(9) From: Name <name@muss.cis.mcmaster.ca>
Subject: Linguist 1AA3
Date: November 11, 2010 3:49:33 PM EST

Hi, prof
I found that Linguist 1AA3 is full. Can you put me in the waiting list or offer me a seat? I would really appreciate you help. Have a nice day.

The first letter looks more like a text message to a friend. It gives no information about the reason why the student wants to register and whether he/she has the prerequisite course 1A03. Both of these letters are short and either completely lack the politeness padding (the first one) or use an opening greeting (“Hi, prof”) that is inappropriate and may be perceived by some instructors as borderline offensive. The author of the second letter, however, clearly tries to be polite by adding the last two sentences,
which serve as an expression of gratitude in the case their request were to be granted, together with a standard closing formula “Have a nice day,” which the student may be familiar with from other social encounters, e.g., at a supermarket or at fast-food restaurants.

The following e-mail makes a request that the instructor was unable to understand:

(10) From: Name <name@muss.cis.mcmaster.ca>

Date: March 22, 2010 9:07:03 PM EDT
Subject: 3rd assignment rubric.

Hi Dr. <Name>,
Another question. For some reason I cannot seem to find a proper rubric for the third assignment. It’d be really helpful if we’re provided with one.
Thanks,
First name

The request—“It’d be really helpful if we’re provided with one”—employs the first-person plural “we” that has to be interpreted as referring to the sender and other students in the class. As such, the request sounds more like a complaint. The instructor should have thought about providing “a proper rubric” for the assignment in order to help the students. It turned out that the student was asking for the assignment outline that had already been posted on the course website. Knowing that the student was a NNS and being able to associate the name with the actual person helped the instructor to not take the request as impolite and simply direct the student to the information being sought. However, the e-mail could have been written by a NS and would then sound inappropriate. The opening, “Another question,” indicates that this is one in a series of e-mails and the student sees no reason to pad the request for an answer with any polite phrasing, such as “May I/Could I ask another question?”

The last e-mail in this section also comes from a student that the instructor had previously identified as an NNS.

(11) From: Name <name@muss.cis.mcmaster.ca>

Date: December 1, 2009 7:02:36 PM EST
Subject: paper

Hi,
This is <first name>. I was wondering if I could get at least an extra day to finish off my final paper and I was wondering what form of citation we were to use.
Thanks.
The student makes two very different requests in one sentence. The first one is a request for an extension for handing in the final paper. As such, one would expect a degree of politeness as well as an explanation why the extension is necessary or requested. Neither is given. The second part of the sentence is a request for clarification (which was given in the assignment outline). Both the opening address and the closing are minimal and the letter is not signed. The student introduced themselves in the first sentence and clearly saw no need for the repetition of the information already provided.

In the case of these four e-mails, the foreign-sounding names and/or the level of grammatical imperfection suggest that the student is not a native speaker of English and may not be familiar with the conventions of appropriate politeness expected in academic communication. In many situations, however, it may be impossible to confirm whether the form reveals a lack of linguistic knowledge (i.e., nonnative speaker) or a lack of manners (i.e., a native speaker) or a combination of both.

RUDE OR NOT POLITE? IS THE MEDIUM ITSELF THE PROBLEM?

Most of the people born in developed countries after 1980 grew up in a world of digital media, and many do not know anything else. Some of them learned to read and write before they had access to their own personal computer and so it is fair to assume that they can function both online and off-line. But the children who truly grew up digital, those whom Palfrey and Gasser (2008) label digital natives, never learned how to rely on printed sources. For them online computer-mediated communication is the most natural form of human interaction. They look up all the information they need on the Internet, they communicate electronically, and they may have problems when asked to write something by hand (such as tests and exams). The arguments that they should know how to write a proper letter or a “proper” e-mail (that imitates the traditional letter in terms of salutations, etc.) are unfair. They live online and often assume that this is what everyone else does.

As such, what appears to be rudeness in at least some of our students’ e-mails should perhaps be classified as lack of politeness. This is closest to the strategy that Culpeper (1996, 357) calls withhold politeness and Bousfield (2008, 93) summarizes as the situation where the speaker chooses to “keep silent or fail[s] to act where politeness work is expected.” Culpeper notes that this category of impoliteness is already indicated in Brown and Levinson (1987, 5), who said that “politeness has to be communicated, and the absence of communicated politeness may, ceteris paribus, be taken as the absence of a polite attitude” (Culpeper 1996, 357; see also Bousfield 2008, 93). The so-defined withholding of politeness, however, implies intentional behavior. We would suggest that in the case of students, even at the university level, the perceived impoliteness is more often than not the
effect of ignorance and not an intentional action. Unfortunately, *ignorantia legis neminem excusat* (“ignorance of the law excuses no one”).

Palfrey and Gasser (2008, 7) believe that the changes that are taking place in society are irreversible and that “the repercussions of these changes, in the decades to come, will be profound for all of us.” But those who are growing up as digital natives are on track to pay the “highest price” at least in part because they still have to report to those who have a more traditional set of expectations. The university’s mandate, in our view, is to prepare the students for this challenge rather than to simply acknowledge that the world of the younger generation is different than the world in which their parents grew up. When university graduates enter the employment market, especially in business, they will be expected to write respectful letters to their clients. One way they can learn to do this is by practicing polite communication with their course instructors and TAs.

While students need to remember that the use of technology does not and should not excuse poor manners, professors need to understand that a changing world requires profound modifications in the way they teach. Young people today are used to multimodal communication where the verbal, visual, and audio modes complement each other. Traditional teaching methods based on lectures that have a monologue format do not keep their interest for more than twenty minutes (cf. Faulkner 2006). They often have a shorter attention span than the length of one teaching unit (usually fifty minutes), and so two or three hour-long classes become a torture both for the student and for the instructor. The instructors complain about the students, and the students complain about the instructors, who do not understand that they need to adapt to changes if they want to keep the students’ interest and attention (cf. Kist 2010).

It seems to us that there are many logistical reasons that justify the students’ expectations about the format of their communication with instructors. In many cases, students are herded into large classes, where the instructor has no chance to get to know more than a few individual students. Many instructors use devices such as clickers that allow students to voice their opinions by answering the professor’s in-class “surveys” while remaining anonymous. In addition, there is usually no or very limited face-to-face contact between the instructor and the student outside the class because office hours are now commonly replaced by student e-mails or posts to class websites, discourse strategies usually reserved for their peers now being used toward their professors. This situation may also be compounded by generational differences in the professorate. On the one hand, some young faculty members espouse a reduced social distance between themselves and the students and encourage students to address them by their first name, which in turn may encourage students to assume, often wrongly, that other instructors are also open to a more informal relationship. On the other, the majority of older professors and some young faculty are more insistent on receiving “proper respect” for their academic accomplishments and expect a more formal address, by title and last name.
From the instructor’s perspective, students, unfortunately, are becoming a faceless mass and the name in the e-mail, even if provided, may not ring a bell. Many e-mails are not signed, and in some cases even university e-mail IDs (e.g., “smith35” or “kiml40” or nonuniversity addresses such as “Baby90”) do not allow the recipient to identify the sender. In turn, this added “distance” may make the instructors less tolerant of politeness strategy lapses in CMC.

More and more, we are of the opinion that the medium itself—CMC—may be at the root of the problem of NNS’s perceived rudeness/inappropriate language behaviors. As many researchers have pointed out (especially Biesenbach-Lucas 2001, 2005; Weinstock 2004), e-mail represents a hybrid medium: partly based on the strategies relating to spoken language and partly based on those relating to written texts, compounded by the addition of practices prevalent in other social media, such as texting and chat groups. Weinstock (2004, 366–367) quotes Naomi Baron’s (2000, 248) characterization of e-mail as “an emerging language centaur—part speech, part writing.” Since NNS are familiar with the medium for their own language and culture, there may be a tendency on their part to transfer strategies used in their native language to their English-language e-mail exchanges with faculty and/or their fellow students. We believe that this is the case especially with the use of address forms in salutations, and the “message directness” of some NNS e-mails (see examples in the preceding).

A further problem is the lack of stated conventions for academic e-mails in particular, a lacuna again pointed out by many researchers. While there are scores of websites detailing the correct format of business and professional e-mails, we could find no conventions for academic e-mails: a quick Google search produced many academic websites (our own university one included) that explained the approved uses of academic e-mail accounts, their size, the address, and the filtering capabilities, but no template for the appropriate format to be used with faculty. In addition, a generational divide seems to exist between “older” and “younger” faculty in what is considered “appropriate” address forms, so that the NNS is confused as to the speech strategies they should be using in CMC with faculty.

CONCLUSIONS

Electronic communication to a large extent has now replaced face-to-face communication between students and professors. Students’ messages are increasingly informal and often sloppy (i.e., reflecting texting habits) and ungrammatical. This is possibly due to the fact that students believe that computer-mediated communication sanctions familiarity, reduces social distance, and that the habits from one form of CMC can be transferred to all others. In this already informal environment, e-mails from non-native-speaking students often further violate the norms of what instructors
consider appropriate in academic settings by introducing unorthodox forms of address (e.g., “Dear Dr. Magda”), an improper choice of register, a high level of grammatical incorrectness, and faulty lexical selections: e.g., “Hye. I’m Radzuwan from Malaysia. I’m a degree holder. i grad with first class honour for my degree in B.ed TESL.” In such situations, more often than not, the addressee’s first impression is that the writer is rude/not respectful, rather than questioning whether the writer is having problems with the English language. In some cases, unfortunately, the instructor does not move beyond that first impression. In the faceless crowd of large lectures, international students and new immigrants, who may be struggling with expressing themselves in English, are even less likely to participate in front of such large audiences. If the instructor does not know or recognize the students’ names, does not know their individual stories, does not know where they come from or what their culture is, the students may have to pay a price for their assumed lack of communication skills. Professors may be less accommodating to someone who, in their opinion, has been impolite. This is usually not the case in face-to-face encounters, where the student’s accent may immediately reveal that they are not a native speaker. Foreign accent, in this case then, is a face-saving factor as it allows the hearer to adapt to the situation and modify their expectations. In countries like Canada, foreign-sounding names cannot be considered an indication of being a nonnative-speaker. Even grammatical errors do not necessarily point to a nonnative speaker.

As we have indicated earlier, perhaps the lack of politeness in CMC is evidence of a wider trend of incivility in society in general. Perhaps all of us—students, professors, and even university administrators—need to be more careful and cognizant of politeness strategies and their impact on those receiving our messages in the various forms of academic communication, from e-mails to website instructions to posts on course discussion boards. We cannot expect politeness if we do not practice it in our “official” communications. It is also important for us educators to be clear as to our expectations with respect to the format and style of CMC, and to make these requirements explicit in materials distributed to all students, native speakers as well as nonnative speakers, since the problems seem to exist in both groups. This will help the nonnative speaker to have a better chance of becoming fully integrated into the academic community, and ultimately to succeed.

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Facework in Intercultural E-mail Communication


10  Expert–Novice Orientations
Native-Speaker Power and the Didactic Voice in Online Intercultural Interaction

Anthony J. Liddicoat and Vincenza Tudini

INTRODUCTION

Technology has widened the possibilities for interaction between native speakers (NSs) and nonnative speakers (NNSs) by removing the need for geographic proximity. Online dyadic text chat in particular provides NNSs with opportunities for spontaneous free conversation with speakers other than the language teacher in an online one-to-one out-of-class setting. That is, online dyadic chat provides a context where language learners can potentially engage in social interactions with others using the language as a medium of communication (cf. Anderson and Corbett, this volume). Online chat is a form of conversational interaction in which participant roles are relatively unconstrained. Tudini (2007) has shown that, contrary to expectations, in these online textual conversations, NNSs of Italian generally have equal status with NSs as interaction managers and can nominate and pursue topics. These equalities, however, exist in relationship with other possible asymmetries, most notably between the statuses of the participants in relation to the language itself—the status of native speaker (NS) and of nonnative speaker (NNS).

The distinction between NS and NNS has been a pervasive one in Second Language Acquisition, but has a much wider application influencing perceptions of interactions in everyday life (Lindemann 2002, 2006). Sato (2009) points out that NNS is only one of the possible identities that are available to an Internet participant and notes the possibilities of reconfiguring identities in online settings (cf. Hall 1996; Turkle 1995). However, indexes of NNS status, such as linguistic errors, and the omnipresence of the ideologies of NS and NNS identities may mean that these identities have greater salience and fewer opportunities for manipulation, at least for many language users (cf. Woodin, this volume). The existence of the construct NS–NNS as an everyday category means that this construct has the capacity to have an impact on intercultural interactions in which NSs and NNSs are perceived to be interacting. In this chapter, we discuss one manifestation of the identities of NS and NNS in online chat, which we call didactic voice. In adopting a didactic voice,
NSs step outside their role of social interactants and produce talk that is reminiscent of talk between teachers and students. In particular, we will examine three such teacherly activities: correction of errors, explanation of linguistic forms, and evaluations of linguistic performance. The activities represent an eruption into social interaction of the identities of NS and NNS as the salient dimension of interaction and produce asymmetries in what are otherwise symmetrical interactions. In such activities, the NS is positioned as an expert in the language and the NNS as a novice, and it is the identification of each participant in relation to the language that provides the resource for and the legitimation of such activities. The didactic voice of the NS, and the NNS's orientations to it, can therefore be understood as interactional expressions at the microlevel of the power of the native speaker.

THE CORPUS USED IN THE STUDY

Sequences selected for this study are derived from chat transcripts of online interactions that involved 133 NNSs and 584 NSs, who participated in the project over seven years. The data consist of the printouts of the chat logs as recorded by the computer and these are reproduced in the form given in the printout, preserving the conventions and variations of chat usage; however, all participants are referred to using fictional rather than actual names. The transcripts were accompanied by written reflections by the students on the interaction, which involve comments on aspects of the interaction.

The NNSs are intermediate-level students of Italian at an Australian university, who have either completed two years’ study ab initio or a high school certificate in Italian and one year of Italian study at university level. Online chat sessions were conducted out-of-class to provide NNSs with opportunities to interact with NSs other than the language lecturer and establish online language-learning partnerships and relationships with NS peers who are often also NNSs of English. While some NNSs of Italian chose to interact with NSs whom they had met previously either through travel or family ties, many partnerships were established via SharedTalk (http://www.sharedtalk.com) and eTandem (http://www.slf.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/etandem/etindex-en.html).

These dialogues will be analyzed to examine the ways in which NS and NNS roles become interactionally salient in chat. Such identities are typically manifested in instances in which the focus of the interaction is placed on language itself, and it is in these instances that NS and NNS roles as interlocutors become conflated with other possible interactional roles, most notably that of expert and novice and teacher and learner. This chapter explores the interactional accomplishment of NS power through the co-opting of a didactic, that is, a teacher-like, voice.
CORRECTIONS OF LANGUAGE: NSs AS PROVIDERS OF FEEDBACK

Correction is a common feature of most of the interactions that form the corpus for this study. In corrective talk, NSs identify NNSs language errors and provide correct target language forms. In the data used for this study, these are particularly salient when NSs initiate other-repairs of the NNSs ungrammatical language, even where this does not cause problems of understanding. For example, in extract 1, the NS corrects one item in the NNS’s language, in an online conversation regarding photographs participants have recently exchanged:

EXTRACT 1

1. Erica: La ragazza quella di destra è mia amica preferisca.)
   (The girl the one on the right is my best friend.)

2. Luca: Preferita.
   (Best.)

   (Sorry.)

   (Best.)

5. Erica:

6. Luca:

7. Luca: Figurati!
   (No problem!)

In this extract, the corrective talk is triggered by the error in turn 1, where Erica produces a subjunctive verb form preferisca rather than the adjective preferita. In turn 2, the NS produces an other-initiated other correction, producing the correct token form. The interaction therefore takes the form of an other-initiated other repair by the NS (Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks 1977), which often takes the form of repetition of the repairable NNS utterance in a modified form, in the turn that follows the problem utterance. There is no further mitigating or explanatory talk as is common in face-to-face and online conversations (cf. Jefferson 1987; Tudini 2010). There is also no space provided for the learner to self-correct, which is an overwhelming preference in social interactions in a face-to-face context (Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks 1977). That is, the NS uses a dispreferred
strategy—other-initiated other-correction—and asserts the correctness of his alternative without explanation or discussion.

The correction shifts the conversation from a social orientation—a discussion of the photograph—to a metalinguistic episode dealing with an item in the NNS’s previous utterance. That is, the participants move from social interaction into corrective talk (Jefferson 1987) and the act of correction becomes the action of record at this point in the interaction. The NNS responds by apologizing for her error and then repeating the correct form. That is, she acknowledges her error, an action often found in correction talk, and then produces the correct form. This episode is followed by both participants’ blank turns, which are either unintended or possibly express hesitation. The NS subsequently provides an appropriate response (second pair part figurati) to the NNS’s apology. The NS’s response to the apology figurati is courteous but accepting of the apology.

In this interaction, NS and NNS identities and asymmetries are invoked in the ongoing corrective behaviors adopted by the participants in online intercultural interaction. The NS is positioned as a competent speaker of the language and the NNS as a less competent speaker. This asymmetry in perceived competence becomes a resource that allows the NS to perform a particular operation—correction—on the language of the NNS. The trigger for such work is not a problem of hearing or understanding—the usual motivations for correction (Schegloff 1987)—but rather with a problem of form. That is, a social action in conversation has given way to a didactic action—the correction of a learner’s errors. In this case, the correction is a unilateral action of the NS and is tied with his identity as an NS in this interaction. The act of correction is legitimized by his identity as an NS and by the resulting asymmetry of competence attached to NS and NNS identities. Moreover, the correction reinforces the asymmetry in the interaction by making this asymmetry a focus of attention in the interaction itself. The asymmetry is not simply asserted by the NS, but is also accepted by the NNS—her apology in turn 3 is an acceptance of her lesser competence and of the right of the more competent other to provide correction.

In extract 2, the NS corrects by reformulating the NNS’s entire problem utterance in the subsequent turn.

**EXTRACT 2**

1. Corinna: Abiti in Brisbane quando traslocherai all’Australia? Non in Melbourne?
   (Do you live in Brisbane when you move to Australia? Not in Melbourne?)

2. Giovanni: * “Abiterai a Brisbane quando traslocherai in Australia?”
   (“Will you live in Brisbane when you move to Australia?”)
   (Oh, thanks. I forgot.)

In turn 2, the NS uses an asterisk to draw attention to his correction of
the NNS's previous ungrammatical utterance and distinguish the cor-
rect alternate from the remaining talk. The NNS thanks the NS for this
correction, and formulates an excuse for her error: *ho dimenticato*. The
correction is therefore constructed as a beneficial action for the NNS
and as one that derives from the asymmetries of competence. Thanking
suggests that “an act beneficial to the addressee has been duly acknowl-
edged” (Terkourafi 2011, 225) and recognizes a “good deed entitled
to appreciation” (Schegloff 2007, 46). The “beneficial act” or “good
deed” in this case is the NS's enactment of his expertise as language user
through correction. By expressing gratitude, the NNS invokes her lan-
guage learner role and the NS's language user/teacher role, which is to
“do correction” because of his status as expert user of the language. She
also positions herself as being available to be corrected on form. Again,
as in extract 1, the correction in this example does not address com-
prehensibility—the NS has to have understood the utterance in order
to make the correction—and orients instead to the status of the NS as
a guardian of correct form, with both the power and the right to make
corrections of form.

The mutual engagement of both NS and NNS in the communicative
asymmetry may become a focus for the interaction itself as framed by the
NNS. In extracts 1 and 2, the role of corrector is a self-selected action of
the NS by virtue of his expertise as a language user; however, NNSs may
also invoke the interactional asymmetry and position themselves as recipi-
ents of didactic action. Extract 3 is a typical example of how NNSs allocate
the role of corrector to NSs, if it is not simply assumed by both parties.

**EXTRACT 3**

1. Sarah: Per favore, voglio parlare meglio il mio italiano, se io faccia
   uno sbaglio puoi correggermi?
   (I want to speak Italian better, if I make a mistake could
   you please correct me?)

2. Giacomo: Si.
   (Yes.)

   (Thanks.)

In line 1, the NNS initiates her request for the NS’s corrective feedback
with *per favore*. Through the request, she positions herself as a deficient
communicator requiring intervention by an expert user to improve her Italian and invites correction. The NS then accepts the teacherly role of corrector; this acceptance confirms the role of expert user/teacher, and the NNS provides further validation of that role by thanking the NS in line 3. Whether participants allocate or assume a corrective role, the NNS collaborates and frames the NS as expert by actions such as accepting correction, expressing appreciation for correction, and apologizing for nontarget forms, as in extracts 1 and 2.

These episodes show an orientation in online intercultural interactions to NS and NNS identities as salient for the ways in which interaction unfolds. These identities may be invoked as relevant at some point in the discussion, as was the case in extracts 1, 2, and 3; however, they are more usually tacit in the interactions. Nevertheless, such identities are rarely far from the surface in such interactions and emerge in activities that have a language education function. This means that there is a certain multivocality (Bakhtin 1981): they are voiced by language users who communicate through a shared linguistic code, and they are simultaneously voiced by NSs and NNSs. These identities are invoked when the interaction moves from the social purpose of the exchange to a didactic purpose in which a more competent speaker corrects errors of a less competent speaker.

**INSTRUCTION AND EXPLANATION: NSs AS LANGUAGE INSTRUCTORS**

NSs may also accompany their corrective behaviors with explanations and instructions, thus assuming the role of language teacher more explicitly. In extract 4, the NS takes on the role of instructor by explaining a problem in the NNS's use of polysemic *magari*, even though it is in fact potentially used appropriately.

**EXTRACT 4**

1. Louise: Ho fatto una gita scolastica con la mia scuola. (I went on a study tour with my school.)
2. Franco: Ah capito. (Oh I see.)
3. Louise: Siamo state in Italia per tre settimane. (We stayed in Italy for three weeks.)
4. Franco: Bello. (Nice.)
5. Franco: Magari ci siamo incontrati da qualche parte!
(We may have bumped into each other somewhere!)

6. Louise: Si, era un’esperienza fantastico.
(Yes, it was a fantastic experience.)

7. Louise: Magari!
(Maybe! or If only!/I wish!)

8. Louise: La mia famiglia venga da Molise.
(My family comes from Molise.)

9. Franco: Magari come hai scritto tu significa :”sarebbe bellissimo”
the way you wrote magari means: “It would be wonderful"
come ho scritto io significa “forse.”
the way I wrote it means “Maybe.”

10. Franco: La mia famiglia viene dal molise.
(My family comes from Molise.)

11. Louise: Oh . . . comunque, si forse ci siamo incontrati (invece di
magari).
(Oh . . . anyhow, yes perhaps we met (instead of magari).)

(Comes from Molise, Ok.)

(Thanks.)

(You’re welcome.)

15. Louise: Sei mai stato all’estero?
(Have you ever been abroad?)

The learner here talks about her school trip to Italy (lines 1 and 3) and
the NS provides the feedback tokens ab capito and bello to register his interest
in her talk. At line 5, since he is from Rome, a city she has visited, he sug-
gests that they may have met somewhere, magari ci siamo incontrati da qual-
che parte! concluding this statement with an exclamation mark to indicate
that the statement is in jest. The learner agrees with the statement two turns
later (line 7) by responding with an interjection magari! which in Italian can
mean either “maybe” or “if only/I wish.” Either of these meanings would be
appropriate affiliative responses to the NS’s suggestion, to indicate that: a)
Maybe!—perhaps they met while the learner was in Italy without knowing it since the NS lives in Rome and the learner visited this city, or b) If only!— the learner is indicating that she would have liked to have met the NS. The NS, however, takes issue with her use of magari in line 9, interpreting it as “if only!” Hence, he assumes that the learner does not know how to use this expression. In this case, the NS does not provide correction but rather indicates how the learner’s language was inappropriate. The talk here does not take the form of correction, but rather it is an instance of an NS providing information about the language the NNS is believed to lack.

The NNS’s initial response to the NS’s correction is an information-registering oh followed by comunque, which normally announces a topic shift (Liddicoat 2007) (probably from talk she had initiated in turn 8). It could also be a tactic to stall the talk, as it is in fact preceded by multiple dots, which indicate hesitation, and is followed by action-accepting si and a paraphrase of what she intended with magari! In this paraphrase, she substitutes magari with forse ci siamo incontrati and adds a further bracketed explanation (invece di magari) to avoid further confusion and clarify her intended meaning, “maybe” to indicate agreement with the NS’s previous statement. The learner therefore responds to the NS’s explanation by self-repairing, clarifying, and providing an extended alternative. She does not, however, reject the NS’s correction, though her use of magari was correct. She accepts his interpretation though she may have considered it to be correct. In a commentary on the chat episode produced by the student, she reflects on the magari episode in her report on chat interactions, as follows: Ho capito che ‘magari’ significa alcune cose—forse o sarebbe bellissimo, dipendere al contesto e se si usa un punto esclamativo (“I understood that ‘magari’ means numerous things—perhaps or it would be wonderful, depending on the context or on whether an exclamation mark is used.”). This suggests that she has acquired an understanding of the double meaning of magari thanks to this explicit correction, and despite the fact that the NS misunderstood and corrected her unnecessarily.

This episode illustrates that NNSs find it difficult to contest NS’s corrections even where they make errors of interpretation. Again, there is an asymmetry at work in the interaction whereby NSs versions of accounts of their language have greater legitimacy than those of NNSs. This means in this case that the NS’s version of the use of magari and of the NNS’s intended meaning in producing magari becomes the ratified account of what was said and done in the interaction. In line 11, the NNS ratifies the NS’s version of her own talk, substituting forse for magari and explicitly marking this. In so doing, she constructs her own contribution as mistaken in the interaction with the NS, although in her reflective commentary she constructs a different understanding.

The expert-instructor role and identity that are invoked during explanatory talk in contexts of corrective talk are sometimes referred to quite explicitly. In extract 5, the NNS receives a brief lesson from the NS-instructor on the grammar relating to Italian football teams.
EXTRACT 5

1. Martha: Penso che gli australiani hanno giocato per parma.
   (I think that the Australians played for Parma.)

2. Angelo: Sì, sì . . . adesso non ricordo i nomi (non sono un esperto di calcio), però hanno giocato con noi.
   (That’s right . . . I don’t recall their names right now (I’m not an expert on football), but they played with us.)

   (Yes.)

4. Angelo: *Per il Parma . . . when you talk about teams you must use IL/LA . . . if you don’t use IL/LA seems you talk about cities.

5. Angelo: Okies.

6. Martha: Spero di non essere troppo pendatic come insegnante!
   (I hope I’m not too pendatic a teacher!)

7. Angelo: Spero di non essere troppo pendatic come insegnante!
   (I hope I’m not too pendatic a teacher!)

8. Martha: Pendatic?

9. Angelo: Pignolo/meticolo . . . I think pendatic is in english, too.

10. Angelo: *Meticoloso.
    (*Meticulous.)


13. Angelo: Yes!

14. Angelo: Grazie!
    (Thanks!)

In turn 4, the NS’s asterisk signals that talk has shifted from a social to a corrective activity. The NS corrects the trouble source—Parma, used by the NNS in turn 1, by providing a correct version, including the definite article il. He then explains his correction, in English, by indicating that a feminine or masculine definite article (il/la) is required when referring to Italian football teams. The inaccuracy of the NNS’s version is reinforced...
further by the suggestion that the teams can be confused with cities if the
article is omitted, even though this is unlikely given the contextual cues
within the same utterance (e.g., giocare, calcio). This correction/instruc-
tion occurs three turns after the trouble source turn. The delay in respond-
ing to the trouble source turn is possible in online text chat because talk
can be reviewed and commented on in later turns due to the split adja-
cency (Smith 2003; Tudini 2010) and visual saliency (Pellettieri 2000) of
these interactions. The NS makes the most of the textual environment to
review the conversation and pick up a repairable item earlier in the NNS’s
talk. The NS’s “lesson” is followed by a blank turn, probably unintended,
and the NNS’s colloquial English acceptance of correction: “Okies.” The
NS’s didactic voice then becomes the topic of the talk. The NS produces
a turn in Italian with a code switch into English and refers to his role as
“pendatic” (that is, “pedantic”) teacher in turn 7. The NNS subsequently
initiates a repair sequence of the code-switched element in the NS’s turn.
In this case, the repair is an other-initiated repair that requires the NNS
to self-repair his misspelling of “pedantic” by providing Italian synonyms.
These attempts at repair eventually lead to the NNS providing of the cor-
correct English form “pedantic.”

This extract shows repairs of another’s second-language performance
in two ways. In the first, the NS produces other-initiated other repair to
deal with a problem of form, which at this point does not appear to be con-
ected with a problem of understanding. In this sequence, the NS adopts a
didactic voice in the form of corrective talk in correcting and explaining,
and he uses his NS identity as his authority to speak in such ways. The
second repair is again produced by an NS, in this case, of English, and
the repair takes the form of an other-initiated self-repair dealing with a
problem of understanding, and it is the NNS who repairs the problem, by
providing Italian translation equivalents, although ultimately it is the NS
who provides the correct English form. It is notable here that although the
talk does not become didactic, it takes the form of an attempt to reestab-
lish meaning. There is, at least, implicit acknowledgment of the differential
capabilities in Angelo’s fi nal grazie, which works to validate the NS’s exper-
tise in resolving the word search.

These extracts show that in intercultural interactions, NSs adopt a
didactic voice by giving explanations about the conventions of target
language use, typically in conjunction with correction work. That is,
the correction talk we discussed in the previous section may be further
elaborated with additional correction-related talk. In this talk, the NSs
display an orientation to expertise in the language on the basis of their
NS status. This status here goes beyond the idea of the NS as more
competent language user and takes the form of the NS as one who has
declarative knowledge about the language that can be transmitted to
the NNS. Again, there is a positioning of the NNS as less competent
other, in this case not simply at the level of performance but at the level
of knowledge.
EVALUATING PERFORMANCE: NS AS ASSESSOR

The asymmetries in intercultural interactions are also played out in contexts in which NSs evaluate the abilities of NNSs as communicators in the target language. This is different from the correction talk discussed in the preceding sections and instead takes the form of a meta-communicative comment about the linguistic performance of the NNS. A typical example can be seen in extract 6.

EXTRACT 6

1. Luca: Sei molto brava a scrivere in italiano. (You're very good at writing in Italian.)
2. Luca: Sei molto brava a scrivere in italiano. (You're very good at writing in Italian.)
3. Erica: Really?

In extract 6, the NS compliments the NNS on her language use in turn 1 and repeats it in turn 2 with a small correction to the original text. This compliment does a number of things in this interaction. Firstly it positions the NNS's language use as being a possible assessable. This construction of communicative ability as an assessable constructs the ability to communicate as something that is not a taken-for-granted capability. That is, the ability to communicate becomes an assessable only where there is some perception of degrees of ability—to be assessable, something must have degrees such as good, bad, etc., that can be assessed. For NSs, linguistic ability is rarely a matter for assessment, as it is rarely something that is perceived as having assessable degrees. This means that an NNS's language is a possible assessable in ways which an NS's is not. In addition, the act of assessment in this extract positions the assessor as having the capacity to assess, that is, as having some form of expertise that enables the evaluation to be made. In this case, it is the NS's identity as NS that confers the ability to assess. The NS is a type-case for language use and therefore can evaluate the language use of others who are not NSs.

In extract 7, the NS similarly makes an assessment of the NNS language abilities; however, in this case there is a positive other assessment followed by a qualification.

EXTRACT 7

1. Rose: Ha ha allora mamma andare a letto. (Ha ha well mum went to bed.)
2. Giovanni: Eh beh!
   (Oh well!)
   Si comunque il tuo italiano va bene.
   (Yes anyhow your Italian is fine.)
   Ci sono alcuni piccoli errori ma di scrittura.
   (There are a few small errors but to do with writing.)
   Comunque sono troppo contento . . . mi sono anche
   emozionato avederti dal vivo.
   (Anyhow I'm so happy . . . I was also moved to see you
   live)
   insieme alla mamma. . . .
   (With your mother. . . .)

3. Rose: Ah si si, l’italiano e’ una lingua difficile per imparare.
   (Oh yes, Italian is a difficult language to learn.)

   (Yes especially the grammar.)

Here, the NNS produces an ungrammatical sentence in turn 1, using the
infinite andare instead of a finite verb form. The NS responds with a posi-
tive assessment of the NNS’s language in turn 2 but then goes on to say
that the NNS still makes errors. In this way, the NS’s talk is not simply a
compliment as it is in extract 6; it is in fact framed as an evaluation of the
NNS’s progress in language learning. As such, it makes the NNS’s status as
a learner of Italian salient not only as a feature of communication, but as a
mentionable in that communication.

In these two extracts, the NS makes an assessment that is occasioned
by the language use of the learner. That is, the act of communicating in
another language is seen as making the fact of that communication poten-
tially always available as something to be talked about in the interaction
and that NS may produce assessments of the NNSs’ linguistic abilities as
relevant contributions to the conversation. This shows an ongoing rel-
ance in the talk of the identities of NS and NNS not simply as “demo-
graphic” categories but as ways of understanding participation. Such
assessments of language ability mark a series of asymmetries in NS–NNS
interactions. The first asymmetry is that the language use of the NNS is
available for evaluation, while that of the NS is not. The second is that
the role of evaluator is allocated to the NSs in such interactions: NSs, by
virtue of their status as NS, have the capacity to evaluate the language
use of NNSs.
The relevance of NNS status to NNSs' contributions to talk is not only seen in the talk of NSs but also in the talk of NNSs themselves, as extract 8 shows.

**EXTRACT 8**

1. Giacomo: Ho capito che sei veramente una ragazza molto valida e intelligente.
   I've realised that you’re truly a very competent and intelligent girl.

2. Giacomo: Veramente.
   Truly.

3. Marie: Beh intelligente??? non riesco nemmeno a parlare bene l'italiano.
   Well intelligent??? I can't even manage to speak Italian properly.


5. Marie: Ma grazie.
   But thanks.

   You know, you speak it very well.

7. Giacomo: E sai anche scrivere molto bene.
   And you also know how to write it very well.

8. Marie: Ha ha.

   Thanks you're very kind.

10. Giacomo: E la verità, in poche parole sono rimasto folgorato . . . a questo l'avevo già scritto nell'email.
    It's the truth, in a few words I was stunned . . . and I had already written this in the email.

Here, the NNS (Marie) makes a negative self-assessment of her own language competence in turn 3: _Non riesco nemmeno a parlare bene l'italiano._ Through this self-assessment of her language, the NS positions herself as less competent and less capable as a communicator. This self-assessment is
prompted by a compliment in turn 1 of the extract and downplays the compliment. She questions the attribution of intelligence and uses her language ability as the downplaying of this attribution. In this way, the NNS uses language to position herself as less able as a speaker. The NS's response is a positive other assessment that provides a counterevaluation of the NNS as a speaker in turns 6 and 7: *Lo sai, parli molto bene, e sai anche scrivere molto bene.* That is, the NS evaluates the NS as a competent speaker and writer of the language. This exchange has the form therefore of a negative self-assessment followed by a positive other-assessment, and such sequences are not uncommon in the context of negative self-assessments (Pomerantz 1984).

What is salient here is that the NNS's status as NNS can be invoked by either NS or NNS as a mentionable in the conversation, although it is typically done in different ways. The NS's evaluation can be positive or negative, while the NNS's self-assessments are typically negative. This can also be seen in extract 9.

**EXTRACT 9**

1. **Gianni:** Ora io dovre andare a studiare un po."
   Now I have to go and study a little.

2. **Julie:** Ok. Grazie per palare con me.
   Ok. Thanks for talking to me.

3. **Gianni:** Ma fi gurati è sempre un piacere parlare con te!
   Not at all it's always a pleasure to talk to you!

4. **Julie:** E grazie per la tua pazienza, so che il mio italiano e' non buon e molto lento!
   And thanks for your patience, I know that my Italian is not very good and very slow!

5. **Gianni:** Quando vuoi parlamì sempre.
   When you want talk to me anytime.

6. **Julie:**

7. **Gianni:** Anche il mio inglese è così!
   My English is like that too!

In this extract from the closing of a conversation, Julie expresses appreciation for the conversation and receives a response to this. She then produces a further appreciation, which is oriented to her capability as an NNS, and which she constructs negatively: *Non buon e molto lento.* In this extract the
NS responds to the negative self-assessment by producing a similar assessment of himself as an NNS of English. That is, although his identity as an NNS of English is not at that point a relevant identity in the conversation, the NNS's invoking of her NNS status, which is relevant to the conversation, allows for reciprocity as a response to the negative self-assessment.

In these extracts then, the NS is positioned as having the capacity to evaluate the language use of the NNS, and the NS and the NNS are then placed in an asymmetrical relationship. In such evaluations, the NS is positioned as one who can assess the competence of his/her interlocutor. The conversation is focused on the language performance of the NNS, and this becomes an object for assessment; the NS is a legitimate assessor of this. NS status becomes seen as both a capacity and as having a right to evaluate, and this status is accepted by the NNS, in an apparent deployment of classroom-like interaction patterns in a social context (cf. Wilkinson 2002).

CONCLUSION

In these interactions, even though their purpose is social interaction, there are two salient identities for NNSs: language user and language learner (cf. Kern and Liddicoat 2008), and these identities are both potentially co-present at all moments of the interactions. The presence of these identities invokes complementary/contrasting identities for the NS, in this case language user and language teacher. At various points in these interactions, participants move between these identities and NSs take on a didactic role through acts of correction, explanation, and evaluation of the NNS's performance. The enactment of the didactic voice represents an exercise of linguistic capital (Bourdieu 1982), that is, of individuals’ capacity to express themselves adequately in a certain context, which (re)produces the linguistic capital of the NS and positions the NNS in a subordinate position. The NNS is positioned as in some way less capable than the NS, and the NS provides some resources with which the NNS can achieve a greater capability, an action for which NNSs typically express appreciation. This can be seen as an enactment of the perceived “complete and possibly innate competence” of the NS (Pennycook 1994, 175). In the performance of such acts, the identity of the NS becomes a resource for the exercise of power in the interaction, making manifest Davies’ (1991, 167) observation that the distinction between NS and NNS is “at bottom one of confidence and identity.” Online chat, and we would argue other forms of intercultural communication in which NS and NNS identities are salient, is therefore a location for the exercise and construction of linguistic capital. It may, however, be the case that in online chat the salience of NS and NNS status may be highlighted because the written contributions of the participants create a durable record of the indices of NNS status—variations from the accepted norms of language—and make them more available for uptake by the NS. The didactic voice is a form of social stratification of speech and of legitimate linguistic practice in contexts of intercultural
communication (Bourdieu and Passeron 1970). It allocates differential power to the NS and the NNS and makes salient the perceived differences between them. It involves the capacity of the NS to move out of “ordinary” forms of social interaction and invoke his/her linguistic capital in performing operations on the linguistic performance of the NNS. It is therefore embedded in recognition of the legitimacy of certain speech varieties and of speakers through the exercise of asymmetrical power expressed through correction, explanation, and evaluation of language. The NS’s ability to correct, explain, and evaluate resides in and derives from the greater linguistic capital that the NS possesses in the interaction (Bourdieu and Passeron 1970; Bourdieu 1982). It is not only a deployment of this linguistic capital, but also an enactment of the asymmetries between the participants, although reciprocity may come into play where the NS is also a learner of the NNS’s native language. It allows not only for the possibility of moving from social interaction to corrective talk, but also a movement from a context of equality to one of inequality. By invoking the didactic, the NS is positioned within other contexts of power, most notably that of teacher and learner. The didactic voice adopted by the NS is inherently heteroglossic (Bakhtin 1981) in the sense that the identities of NS and NNS resonate with those of teacher and student, expert and novice, etc., which cast the NS in a position of dominance and the NNS in one of subordination.

In situations where both participants have access to the language of the other, there may be reciprocity as interaction switches between the L1 of the participants and each moves between NS and NNS identities. In fact, this is what happens in extract 5. In such situations, the asymmetry remains at each point; however, the movement between identities means that participants’ linguistic capital fluctuates as the interaction moves in and out of their respective L1s, achieving reciprocity only in the sense that each participant has potential access to the identities of NS and NNS. Such reciprocity is therefore a possibility in interactions between multilingual participants, but where one participant is monolingual, such shifts are no longer possible and the asymmetries of power remain constant.

REFERENCES


Reviewing James Glieck’s *The Information: A History, a Theory, a Flood*, Freeman Dyson asserts:

Science is the sum total of a great multitude of mysteries. It is an unending argument between a great multitude of voices. It resembles Wikipedia more than it resembles the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. (2011, 10)

Following Dyson’s logic here, is Wikipedia not more like the polyphonic debate of science than it is like its encyclopedic forebears? The question goes to the crux of the current controversy about the place Wikipedia occupies in our pedagogies, much of which focuses on ease of plagiarism and (un)reliability of information. If, however, we were to approach Wikipedia less as an encyclopedia and more as an open-ended process of argumentation, could there not be other, more helpful ways of framing the debate, and perhaps of rehabilitating Wikipedia? As teachers of language and culture, the authors wondered if the potential for cross-cultural comparison and intercultural communication presented by Wikipedia might be worth investigating, and might even enable a pedagogical recuperation of this highly contested resource. What if Wikipedia, rather than being banished from the tertiary classroom as a lapse in academic rigor, could find a place there as a support for training in intercultural competence?

Our question might be said to be one of diminishing relevance, as Wikipedia becomes ever-more polished, and ever-more accepted as the first port of call for the most routine and the most specialized of questions. Yet there is a rarely visible contradiction in this forward momentum: the more seamlessly Wikipedia insinuates itself into the knowledge economy and our research practices, the more discursive sediment it accumulates. Lapses of style, grammar, and judgment; personal vituperation; debates among amateurs, specialists, and anyone in between; intercultural conflict . . . all of these accrete below the surface.

We begin, therefore, with a curiosity giving surprising, yet perhaps inevitable, physical form to this paradox.
ARCHAEOLOGY

In 2010, James Bridle published a twelve-volume history of the editorial changes to the Wikipedia entry devoted to the 2003 war in Iraq (Bridle 2010a). Wikipedia, or its most controversial aspect, lay-editing, represented by this collection of successive versions of one entry, appears clothed in the most decorous of guises: visually at least it resembles nothing so much as the domestic multivolume encyclopedias that furnished the material for so many predigital school projects.

Figure 11.1  The Iraq War: A Historiography of Wikipedia Changelogs (The Iraq War: A Wikipedia Historiography—A Set on Flickr). Courtesy of James Bridle.

Figure 11.2  Advertisement for the 1911 Encyclopædia Britannica from National Geographic Magazine (May 1913), scanned and uploaded by Infrogmation (Wikimedia Commons 2004).
At the 2010 dConstruct Conference, Bridle explained his motivations, most particularly stressing his desire to show the hidden dimensionality of Wikipedia, and of the Web in general, as opposed to the “endless digital now,” that is, the atemporality and flatness of the digital world evoked by William Gibson (2010). Bridle (2010c) ascribes four dimensions to Wikipedia:

i. The individual pages
ii. The collective sum of all Wikipedia pages
iii. The links between them
iv. Time: the diachronic dimension of each Wikipedia page, its history

Of Bridle’s four dimensions, the last is the least immediately obvious: many daily users of Wikipedia are unaware of the “view history” button at the top of each page. The history page logs every surface ripple of a page, the edits, the revisions, the reversals, and the reinstatements. The radio button next to each log entry allows the comparison of successive revisions, and thus the retracing of the effects of contributors’ decisions—and their disagreements. It is this fourth dimension that Bridle seeks to reveal with his twelve volumes. They contain, he says, “every edit and reversion” to the Iraq War entry.

It’s pages and pages of arguments over numbers. You can see the process of history being constructed, the gradual accretion of knowledge and understanding, arguments over numbers, a consensus that comes together, whether that’s true or false [. . .]. There’s [sic] endless arguments over what constitutes “history,” what constitutes “important,” and every now and then someone erases the whole thing and just writes “Saddam Hussein was a dickhead.” (Bridle 2010c)

Without wishing to take issue with Bridle’s good intentions, it seems to us that his twelve-volume conceit also bodies forth many of the tensions underpinning the Wikipedian project. Like the classic encyclopedia, it aims for completeness. Bridle’s assertion that Wikipedia is “a structure for encoding all human knowledge” (Bridle 2010c) is only the latest iteration of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* slogan, “The Sum of Human Knowledge.”

Granted, “structure” is more open-ended than “sum,” but the teleological thrust is manifest, even if not quite so neatly contained as those twenty-nine volumes snug in their bespoke, book-ended shelf.

The temporal dimension is the enemy of completeness and Bridle’s twelve volumes, like every encyclopedia before them, were out of date at publication. While they stop at 2009, the revision of the Iraq War page continues, albeit by the limited pool of contributors whose authoring rights extend to pages locked because of editing wars.

Yet most telling, for us, is the linguistic limitation of this changelog history. Missing from Bridle’s (2010c) four dimensions is the multilingual: while “the [. . . ] sum of all Wikipedia pages” and “the links between
them” should include the different language versions of every page, Bridle’s ostensibly comprehensive project is entirely monolingual.

To demonstrate the shortcomings of this restriction, let us quote merely the first sentence of the “Iraq War” page:

The Iraq War or War in Iraq, also referred to as the Second Gulf War or Operation Iraqi Freedom, was a military campaign that began on March 20, 2003 with the invasion of Iraq by a multinational force led by troops from the United States under the administration of President George W. Bush and the United Kingdom under Prime Minister Tony Blair. (Wikipedia 2011)
And contrast it with the first sentence of the equivalent French page, “Guerre d'Irak”:

La guerre d'Irak, parfois connue sous le nom de troisième guerre du Golfe, a débuté le 20 mars 2003 avec l'invasion de l'Irak (dite « opération Iraqi Freedom ») par la coalition menée par les États-Unis contre le parti Baas de Saddam Hussein. (The Iraq war, sometimes called the Third Gulf War, began on the March 20, 2003, with the invasion of Iraq [“Operation Iraqi Freedom”] by the coalition led by the United States against Saddam Hussein’s Baath Party). (Wikipédia 2011)

However numerically slight the mismatch (Second or Third Gulf War) it betrays a major shift of perspective, with the French sequence including the Iran-Iraq War, and the Anglo-American counting only conflicts in which the United States was a belligerent. And this, before the end of the first sentence, and without even accessing the history or the discussion pages. “This is what history looks like, this is what culture looks like,” said Bridle (2010c), who himself appears to be counting only history and culture in which Anglophones are active: it is not clear that the intercultural, cross-cultural and multicultural have more than a marginal role to play. Bridle may well be the first to acknowledge the oversight, but his omission suggests to us an exploration of what it would mean to add those dimensions to an archaeology of Wikipedia.

Figure 11.5  Wikipedia logo, May 2011. Used with permission.
Wikipedia’s multilingual dimension is manifest most obviously in its logo. This has moved through several versions since inception, initially displaying English text superimposed over a globe, later becoming today’s jigsaw globe. Currently (May 2011), each puzzle piece represents a different terrestrial language. According to the Wikipedia pages devoted to the site’s logos (Wikipedia 2011, WikipediaWP 2011), the pieces collectively symbolize the multilingualism of Wikipedia. We must assume, by extension, that the missing pieces represent, firstly, language versions to come and, secondly, the radical incompleteness of the encyclopedia. This certainly seems to stand in fundamental opposition to the Britannicus ideal of “the sum of all knowledge.” Indeed, the much-told story of Wikipedia most usually is one of rupture. Whether set as a song of victory (triumphant celebration of a new age) or as a lament (dirge for loss of reliability and respect for expertise) the leitmotif is the same: rupture with past technologies, past distributions of power, past economies of knowledge, past encyclopedias, past encyclopedic projects. The shape-shifting, ever-fluctuating, free, online Wikipedia is a long way from the solid encyclopedia sets of the authors’ childhoods. And yet the tightly filled shelf and the perforated globe might not be different species after all. For all this talk of radical innovation, to be credible Wikipedia must inscribe itself within the encyclopedic tradition it seeks to disrupt: Wikipedia produces itself in the tension between rejection, continuation, and transformation of the classical model. For all its ambition, and despite how the online architecture of Wikipedia precludes such completeness, there remains a clear thrust toward wholeness as embodied by the jigsaw globe, its crust arching toward a state of completion that would be all-inclusive and without residue.

However, we suggest that it is ultimately unhelpful to fixate on this clash between completeness and incompleteness (on which turns much of the debate concerning the quality and reliability of Wikipedia), not least because that conflict has always underwritten the classical encyclopedia, in spite of the latter’s claims. We raise two points, to complicate both the conventional understanding of the encyclopedia and the claims to radical newness of Wikipedia.

1. The constantly updated encyclopedia format is not, in fact, a new idea. Behold (Figure 11.6) Nelson’s Perpetual Loose-Leaf Encyclopedia, as advertised in the New York Tribune in 1908. See that little bar and nut? Unlike the more conventional New Americanized Encyclopedia, advertised three pages later in the same journal and claiming to be “the most comprehensive, authoritative and up-to-date encyclopædia in the world,” that little bar and nut acknowledge incompleteness on the temporal dimension and allow constant interleaving of new, and removal of obsolete, material. Notice also how it is technological innovation—albeit the arrival of the mass-produced ring binder, rather than Web 2.0—that drives change to the use and idea of the encyclopedia.
French philosopher Michel Serres reminds us that the coinage *encyclopedia* was based on a misreading in Quintilian of the Greek *enkyklios paideia*, and that the notions of the circle of knowledge, and no doubt of the neat and self-sufficient circularity—or the intact globe—of the *encyclopedia*, have little to do with ancient Greek epistemology.

I regret, as soon as I’ve said it, the term *encyclopædia*, which is not a concept formulated by the Greeks. Had they thought so for a moment, they would have told us if knowledge traced a cycle within a circle, if pedagogy closed a cycle of circles, believing as they did that the circle

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*Figure 11.6* Image from advertisement for *Nelson’s Encyclopedia*, April 1908 (*New York Tribune*).
was the optimal figure. But they did not, by virtue of the Homeric exodus. (Serres 2008, 263)

Thus “encyclopedia” suggests a false Greek paternity, a false continuity with an antique tradition of learning that was not, in fact, about containment and stasis but rather about discovery and reaction to new conditions. In counterpoint, Serres invokes Ulysses’s journey as a template for classical Greek knowledge:

The story of the Odyssey, a discourse on exodus, then becomes an encyclopædia of knowledge. [. . .] Not a method using the shortest route, but a long, winding, intricate, brightly-coloured path. (2008, 263)

Serres here lines up the classical encyclopedia, and the self-containment of the circle of knowledge against the _Odyssey_, which stands, in his analysis, for knowledge accrued through meandering, rather than straightforward geometries. We therefore summon the figure of Odysseus as guide to the always-new world of Wikipedia. We suggest that there is much to be gained by navigating between the different language versions of Wikipedia, and that like the wanderer, the man “skilled in all ways of contending” (Homer 2007, 1), the reader of Wikipedia will learn much from negotiating the knotted intersections. The Wikipedian globe will not fit together as neatly as the logo suggests. There are inevitable troughs and chasms. There be dragons.

**NAVIGATION**

Wikipedia is a privileged space that is simultaneously transcultural, multicultural, and intercultural. In this it resembles international symposia and sporting events, the United Nations, or perhaps your local shopping precinct and certainly the multinational workplaces described by Angouri and Miglbauer (this volume): brought together by some common purpose—be it academic, athletic, diplomatic, or commercial—different cultures find themselves cohabiting the same space and bound to interact according to supervening conventions. However, unlike these, Wikipedia provides a detailed record of all transactions. And in contradistinction to many other Web-based sites of cultural contact, Wikipedia allows users to enter via different language portals, thus minimizing the effect of a hierarchy of languages and cultures. The discussion pages on media websites, for instance, typically operate under the aegis of one particular language. Unlike these and despite Wikipedia’s Anglophone, American origins, the role of a North American host culture is downplayed.

How then does culture manifest itself on Wikipedia?
Transcultural Rules

Firstly, across the Wikiverse, we might well expect to find transcultural uniformity: many aspects of its conventions and working practices transcend cultural difference. Or, to put it another way, the practices of different cultures converge on a single site, or cluster of sites, through its interface and protocols. Indeed, if we follow the invitations offered by language version links and leave the version via which we entered, we find pages that are visually and functionally similar. In part this is due to the necessary use of the template and software, but the tendency toward diversification is also checked by the application of a set of core rules. It should be noted that despite their authority, these are not immutable laws established at the inception of the Wikipedia project, but rather have been introduced and modified through discussion, over time.

At the time of writing, the English-language site “simplified ruleset” gives four guidelines for producing a “high-quality article”:

1. Neutrality of Point of View advisory
2. Verifiability
3. No Original Research
4. Be Bold! Go ahead, it’s a wiki! No mistake can break Wikipedia, because any edit can be undone. Encourage others, including those who disagree with you, to likewise be bold! (WikipediaWP 2011)

While rule 1 might seem self-explanatory, its application, as we will see, fuels vigorous dispute. It also features among the “Five Pillars” or fundamental operating principles of Wikipedia (WikipediaWP 2011). Rules 2 and 3 decree that contributors have sources for their assertions and that these sources be referenced. When the rules are observed, they distinguish Wikipedia from a traditional encyclopedia: rather than reporting the issue itself, Wikipedia records what has been said about it. It is the literature review—without the critique.

Wikipedia departs from traditional encyclopædias by not presenting knowledge as such, but the divergent representations of knowledge currently in wider circulation; it describes (interpretations of) reality rather than itself making judgments of what is real. (Bruns 2008, 119)
We add parenthetically that the No Original Research rule is thus connected to that of Notability (Bridle’s 2010c “important”), which is often cited (see, for example, WikipediaWP, “Notability”), without appearing as one of the core rules: since an entry should be based on information provided by other sources, the topic must have been deemed worthy of interest by someone other than the author of the Wikipedia article. This link is made particularly clearly in the French discussion of “Admissibilité,” which corresponds to the English page on “Notability”:

Un article est admissible s’il expose des connaissances vérifiables, pertinences et neutres sur un sujet développé dans des documents dignes de foi. (An article is worthy of inclusion if it sets out verifiable, relevant, and neutral knowledge on a subject that has been developed in reliable documents). (WikipédiaWP 2011)

A Wikipedia page devoted to your research into the daily nonactivities of your cat is likely to be challenged on both grounds, notability and verifiability, but also challenged would be ill-disguised attempts at self-promotion or unsourced fan-writing on video games. Trivia sections are discouraged, if not entirely eliminated.

Thus, across Wikipedia, articles carry banners advising of their current inadequacy vis-à-vis these rules, and inviting improvement, bold or otherwise, from readers (see for example, Figure 11.7).

The Potential for Difference: The Multicultural Dimension

Given the preceding, are the different language versions the same, apart from the critical linguistic difference? Our hypothesis at the outset of this project was, rather, that Wikipedia would serve up regional variations on the original North American recipe.

What encouraged our expectation of multicultural differences? While Wikipedia is built on a small number of consistent universals as discussed earlier, there is a great deal of freedom and therefore space for diversification. It is this possibility for self-organization, and the fact that many of Wikipedia’s procedures and protocols are made up on the fly in the context of local discussion, that make space within which cultural and subcultural variation might be produced. “Local” communities are able to bring local understandings to the application of general Wikipedia rules. In the example we will analyze in the section “Contention,” we see that other principles are invoked—discussants choose to go beyond Wikipedia’s policies and guidelines and call on other conventions regarding what constitutes right and proper forms of argumentation. Again, given such appeals to practices outside Wikipedia, we might expect there to be transference of at least some cultural habits into the different language versions and therefore variation between them, despite the ease with which their borders can be crossed. Indeed, what interests us most of all are the border crossings—which brings us to the intercultural.
Intercultural Contact

Although Wikipedia is a multicultural, multilingual entity, each language version can be entered from its own language specific portal; therefore, for the reader of the encyclopedia articles, apart from the sidebar listing of the other language versions, there is no obvious way in which the cultures interact. One’s use of Wikipedia can be untouched by languages other than one’s own—and skipping across language pages will produce an experience of serial monolingualism. Whereas the two previous perspectives on culture—transcultural and multicultural—are almost immediately apparent when consulting Wikipedia as an encyclopedia, the intercultural aspect, the meeting of cultures in communicative transactions, is less obvious. Do we not simply take our pick of languages and retire to our linguistically defined spaces? Certainly not. In the Wikiverse those linguistically defined spaces bleed into one another, through hyperlinking on the one hand, and garden-variety polyglotism on the other. Many contributors to Wikipedia read, edit, annotate, and reference other language versions of the pages on which they work—and, furthermore, they take part in the lively behind-the-scenes discussion that accompanies the elaboration of the encyclopedia entries. Indeed, in 2007, Viégas et al. (2007, 1, 5) reported that the amount of activity on the discussion pages clearly surpassed that on the article pages themselves. As Cory Doctorow puts it: “Wikipedia entries are nothing but the emergent effect of all the angry thrashing going on below the surface” (2006).

Of course, most publications are the effect of some kind of more or less fraught process (bitten nails, discarded drafts, hours of dull staring at a screen): where Wikipedia is distinctive is that the writing process is accessible not only through the “History” tab, whose praises Bridle sings so well, but also via the “Talk” tab. Already, on the surface, a Wikipedia entry frequently carries an advisory pointing to its status as a work in progress (as seen in Figure 11.7). And one click away are the palimpsestic (Bruns 2008, 138) tracings of the work that has gone into producing the surface structure of the encyclopedia: both the changelog (via “History”) and the discussion about the entry itself (via “Talk”). The construction of Wikipedia’s version of knowledge is a “white” as opposed to a black box in that the processes are open to scrutiny and the thrashing on display for all to see, should they care to look.

The “Talk” tab opens an interstitial space, allowing readers and editors to move between different language versions and disturb their apparent self-containment. It makes interaction, negotiation, and intercultural contact possible. It also engenders a second tier of textual production beyond the encyclopedia proper. Indeed, it undoes our conventional understanding of what an encyclopedia can be, much more than that little bar and nut.
Clicking on the “Talk” tab, we should find meta-discursive guidance on the production of the front pages. The banner at the top of many of these discussion pages resembles that of Figure 11.8.

Note that this reminder begins with a genre statement that sets up the “Talk” pages as discursively reliant on the encyclopedia entries, whereas the converse is not true: for all that the majority of Wikipedia pages depend on background discussion, that relationship is never explicitly evoked in the articles themselves. On the “Talk” pages, however, the primary issue is the entry itself, and much of the discussion is given over, sometimes explicitly, often implicitly, to negotiation of the generic rules at stake.

Rosenzweig asserts that Neutrality of Point of View (NPOV) issues are the primary source of disagreement on the “Talk” pages:

The NPOV policy provides a shared basis of discourse among Wikipedians.[8] On the “Discussion” pages [...], the number one topic of debate is whether the article adheres to the NPOV. Sometimes, these debates can go on at mind-numbing length, such as the literally hundreds of pages devoted to an entry on the Armenian genocide that still carries a warning that “the neutrality of this article is disputed.” (2006, 122)

This recalls of course Bridle’s (2010c) “pages and pages of arguments.” We contend, and will demonstrate in the next section, that these are not solely readable as disagreements over what constitutes “important” or what constitutes “neutral,” but also, sometimes, as moments of intercultural encounter. For the purposes of this chapter, we take the intercultural encounter to be the primary teachable moment of Wikipedia. As Freadman writes:

The encounter of cultures can be mutually exclusive and conflictual, in which case “the intercultural” is the name of the most pervasive problem of the modern world; but it can also be inventive and adaptive, in which case it is the name of the solution. In both cases [...], we should not be looking at the generalised global form, but at the localised, contingent forms that conflict and understanding take under particular conditions. (2001, 275–276)
The linguistic skills (and content knowledge) that enable interventions across language versions of Wikipedia are not necessarily accompanied by intercultural skills. Wikipedians, intercultural agents though they may be in practice, cannot reliably be said to be adequately trained in intercultural agency. Many of the discussion pages thus offer ample opportunities to study examples of intercultural breach, even if they do not all do so to the same degree.

As language and culture teachers, we are in the business of training intercultural mediators. Our initial hypothesis regarding the existence of cultural variation was thus accompanied by a second hypothesis: that Wikipedia could be an important site of intercultural learning for students; could lend itself to the work of sensitizing students to cultural difference and guiding them to read culturally specific assumptions. What we propose is a learning odyssey that works with Wikipedia, suggesting that rather than skimming the smooth encyclopedic surface, students and researchers may explore techniques of the construction of knowledge, and in particular, cultural constructions of knowledge, by navigating the arguments and disjunctures of the “Talk” pages.

Our objective is to make a different space for Wikipedia in our work practices. It is already engrained in student—and indeed academic—habits. Our analysis is therefore motivated in part by the desire to find appropriate tasks to challenge students’ bad habits, to encourage them to travel farther or to dig, to resist the surface seductiveness of such a contested resource. As with Odysseus, the longer and bumpier path is frequently the only one with a story worth telling.

**CONTENTION**

We propose a learning activity that involves comparing a Wikipedia entry in different language versions. For the purposes of this chapter, we take an article from English-language Wikipedia and compare it to its French-language Wikipédia counterpart, also making a brief foray into Italian. *Counterpart*, in most instances in Wikipedia, does not mean *equivalent*. The articles often do not say the same thing, quite beyond the issue of translatability. While there are pages that are indeed simply translations, more commonly there are omissions, additions, alterations, contradictions, or even a different page altogether. Delving down into the discussion logs is a means of tracing the genesis of these divergent surface pages.

To find a particularly rich set of discussion entries, we turned to the list of pages protected from revisions in light of the volume of changes and the vehemence of dispute which has accompanied them. Here are the usual suspects of George W. Bush, Scientology, Palestine, and any number of other pages where partisans of irreconcilable opinions, able to meet online through Wikipedia, carry on debate grounded in intractable differences in faith, politics, or other forms of ideology. But there
are vast numbers of more unexpected items. One such, surprising in its apparent banality, was “telephone,” the entries for which were for some time semi-protected in both French and in English. (At the time of writing, the French page has been unlocked, but the protection persists on the English-language page). The exploration we are about to retrace shows how this perhaps unpromising subject leads to an extremely interesting set of discussion pages, rich in intercultural and cross-cultural insights. And indeed, we suggest that for the purposes of work with students, a less predictably controversial topic has its advantages. Cultural insights can be swept away when the issue at stake is too obvious and distracting. Analysis can easily stop at the summary identification of the opposing points of view or the assertion that proponents of X or Y are patentilly irrational, or, alternatively, become mired in attempts to elucidate the participants’ political or ideological convictions. So it is the apparently innocuous “telephone” that will provide some instances of intercultural lessons to be learnt through examples in which participants police and contest the generic ground rules.

Lesson One

If we drop in on the English-language “Talk” page, the controversy is immediately apparent, as hydra-like it raises its head time and again: which American immigrant invented the telephone—Italian-born Antonio Meucci or Scottish Alexander Graham Bell? Archived discussion offers statements like the following anonymous contributions:

> It’s typical American to say that Graham Bell is considered the Inventor of the telephone. Cause in other parts of the world he is not. Meucci invented the telephone but it was Bell who was first to patent the idea. I read somewhere that the US Congress acknowledged that Meucci in fact was its inventor. (no date, WikipediaTalk 2011)

> Sure a lot of people created the telephone, but after Meucci! [ . . . ] Meucci, from 1849 started to create and produce over 30 different models of telephones, even a telephone to use under the sea. How old was Bell the thief in 1849? and the others? If you cannot something on the subject is due because you speak english only. Try reading http://www.radiomarconi.com/marconi/meucci.html.10 (no date, WikipediaTalk 2011)

The discussion pages are no happy utopia of intercultural harmony here: as a first part to our lesson we see, rather, that cross-cultural difference can be used as a hook on which to hang an argument, or a tactic for dismissing another opinion—for a culturally bound perspective of course infringes neutrality of point of view.

Lesson One
Posting on the Alexander Graham Bell thread, our next contributor exemplifies the Anglo-centrism decried by the previous writer: a polite introduction deftly sweeps aside the contentious US congressional resolution and then reiterates—as if it were quite sufficient an argument in itself as to the rightfulness of the pro-Bell position—the dominance of his acceptance as inventor in “the English speaking world.”

With all due respect, aside from a resolution of the US house which merely states that Meucci’s “work in the invention of the telephone should be acknowledged” it is Bell who is still widely credited with the invention of the telephone at least in the English speaking world. The passage of one non-binding resolution of one half of one branch of one government (that is the House (not the whole congress) of the United States) does not justify this article stating that Bell is not the inventor of the telephone. (Jord 17:58, April 30, 2005, WikipediaTalk 2011)

Six years later, the argument rumbles on:

Excuse me for my bad english. One month ago I saw on television a reporter asked the American people on the street “who was Antonio Meucci?,” someone said italian cook, another stylist, actor ecc. I’m Italian and I’m tired of listening this story. I don’t know if Bell stole the invention, but is shure that Meucci was the true inventor of the telephone. why still not clear? (unsigned comment, January 27, 2011, WikipediaTalk 2012)

By way of further contrast, we note that Bell’s status as the inventor of choice in the English-speaking world occurs in a quite different rhetorical context on the Italian page—which, incidentally, is not locked and, at time of writing, had a mere 204 words of discussion. And while the US congressional recognition is mentioned, it functions here not as proof of Meucci’s status as father of the telephone, but rather as a mere consequence of a fact taken to be self-evident. It chronicles recognition of his claim.

La paternità dell’invenzione del telefono fu attribuita al fiorentino Antonio Meucci che nel 1871 dimostrò il funzionamento del suo apparecchio che chiamò telettrofono [ . . . ].

[ . . . ]

Elisha Gray lo inventò indipendentemente e ne diede dimostrazione nel 1876, ma due ore prima di presentare la richiesta di brevetto, Alexander Graham Bell presentò la sua [ . . . ]. Come risultato, soprattutto negli Stati Uniti e Canada, Alexander Graham Bell viene accreditato dell’invenzione. [ . . . ]
On the 11th of June 2002, the US Congress historically recognized the precedence of Antonio Meucci as the father of the telephone. (Our emphasis, Wikipedia [Italian] 2011)

So lesson one is that “facts” may vary and be debated according to how you are linguistically and culturally positioned. In the case of the telephone, where the disputed facts are concerned, it seems that the battle lines are drawn up such that the supporters of Bell are monolingual Anglophones—the US Congress being the much-cited exception. This leads to a second lesson.

Lesson Two

The positioning of participants is more interesting than the cultural determination of “facts.” Certainly, there is a form of anti-Bell argument on the Anglophone pages that says: you only think this because Bell was also Anglophone and because you have a partial Anglophone view of the world. Yet if we move to the French pages we find the same contest (Bell vs. Meucci) playing out, but this time language loyalties do not enter into it. The focus of discussion shifts from neutrality of point of view to that of use of verifiable and reliable sources: here the issue at stake is what constitutes credible scientific knowledge. To put it another way: if the target is Bell, neutrality of point of view is the weapon. On the other hand, if your target is Meucci, what are needed are accusations of shonky sources and problems with verifiability.

Bonjour,

tu viens de faire des modifications sur ces deux pages, dans le sens de la thèse des partisans de Meucci. Cette thèse n’est absolument pas reconnue par les historiens des sciences, et n’est connue de la communauté que comme un exemple du folklore de l’histoire des sciences amateurs.
L’auteur que tu cites est un autre exemple de ce folklore. Pour avancer des hypothèses aussi extraordinaires, il faudrait des sources bien plus sérieuses qu’une émission de radio. [. . .]

Bien cordialement,
—EL

Hallo,

You’ve just made changes to these two pages in favour of the pro-Meucci position. This theory is completely unrecognized by historians of science, and is only known to that community as an example of the folklore of the history of amateur science [. . .]. The author you quote is another example of that folklore. In order to advance such extraordinary hypotheses, you would need more reliable sources than a radio programme. [. . .]

Best wishes,

EL (EL, 16:22 July 2, 2007, WikipédiaDiscussion 2011)

EL can make this categorically anti-Meucci assertion and run no risk of denunciation as being Anglocentric, for the anti-Bell argument that attacks supposed assumptions of Anglophone centrality has no strength as a weapon against French-speaking partisans of Bell. So if, as a first lesson, we saw that canonical versions of knowledge may be culturally specific, as a second we see that convictions about what is culturally specific may also be culturally specific: the belief that Anglophone blinkeredness produces Bell supporters clearly cannot be held in a context where Bell supporters are not English speakers.

Lesson Three

Our third lesson comes from Ekto-Plastor, whose unappreciated contribution earns him the rebuke of “épistémologue amateur” (amateur epistemologist) (EL 15:51, July 20, 2007, WikipédiaDiscussion 2011). He calls the French pages to order with an explicit reference to the established conventions, specifically to the principle that it is not Wikipédia’s place to decide on truth: the rule is verifiability, not veracity. Wikipédia contributors are neither arbiters of truth nor researchers:

Ce n’est ni à EL ni à Cdang de trancher le noeud [Meucci/Bell] en tant que simple contributeur de Wikipédia, et de décider qui a raison et qui a tort. Vérifiabilité n’est pas vérité ! (It’s not up to EL or to Cdang, as mere contributors to Wikipédia, to resolve the Meucci/
Bell argument and to decide who’s right and who’s wrong. Verifiability isn’t truth! (Ekto-Plastor 15:11, July 20, 2007, Wikipédia-Discussion 2011)

The implication of this is that sources must be provided, as we have seen. Ekto-Plastor is right to invoke verifiability, but it is not always enough to remind participants of the guiding principles of Wikipedia. Those principles are in turn subject to interpretation. Indeed, they are frequently the sites of inter- and intracultural conflict in their own right.

Firstly, specific rules can be mobilized tactically, as we noted previously, and as we see in the following intervention. In answer to the Italian contributor lamenting in 2011 the persistence of ignorance with respect to Meucci, Arakunem explains:

We have to go by what we know and can verify. We know that Bell was granted the patent. Any speculation about what might have happened *if* Meucci had the funds, or how much of his work was or was not used by Bell, is original research and synthesis, which we’re not allowed to have in articles. (Arakunem, January 31, 2011, WikipediaTalk 2012)

Arakunem uses the No Original Research rule to dismiss the pro-Meucci position summarily. Whereas the patent granted to Bell is played up as verifiable fact, the converse suggestion is that nothing about the Meucci claim could be as demonstrable as a patent number.

Secondly, on both the French and English pages Wikipedians go beyond simply providing sources to debating their quality, as is indeed encouraged by the policy. As we have seen, EL, objecting to the inclusion of pro-Meucci materials, impugns the source used. Zedh, intervening in the discussion, also appeals to the rules on verifiability in a beautifully pedagogical contribution on source quality and choice:

L’exigence de qualité de la source est fortement corrélée au caractère extraordinaire de l’information qu’elle relaie. Votre quotidien préféré ne sera sans doute pas considéré comme une source valide pour exhiber un exemple de mouvement perpétuel qui fonctionne ; il sera par contre pertinent pour sourcer un scandale politique par exemple.

[...].

Concernant la source incriminée, il semble qu’elle ait pour objet une controverse d’ordre scientifique, et que l’auteur soit un journaliste spécialisé en économie. C’est probablement ce qui en fait une source de moindre qualité, d’autant que la controverse ne semble pas appuyée par les historiens (affirmation qui elle réclame un réel sourçage !).
The requirement that a source be reliable correlates strongly with the extent to which the information it imparts is out of the ordinary. Your daily newspaper will undoubtedly not be considered a reliable source to demonstrate a functional perpetual motion device. It would however be appropriate as a source for a political scandal, for example.

[...]

As for the incriminated source, it seems that its subject is a controversy of a scientific nature and that the author is a journalist specializing in economics. That’s probably what makes it a less reliable source, all the more so since the controversy does not seem to involve professional historians (now there’s a statement which requires its own sources!).

(Zedh, 21:37, July 16, 2007, WikipédiaDiscussion 2011)

But the debate about quality of sources, and thus the degree of respect paid to Wikipedia rules, can be subject to culturally specific criteria. On the French site, names are named and culturally bound comparisons deployed to bolster a case:

Contrairement à ce que tu crois, ce genre de machines est l’exact équivalent en histoire des sciences des fumisteries à la Bogdanov en physique. (Contrary to what you believe, this kind of thing is to the history of science what the Bogdanovs’ rubbish is to physics.) (EL, 17:48, July 3, 2007, WikipédiaDiscussion 2011)

Giraud chez Cheissoux, c’est quand même pas Meyssan chez Delarue. (Giraud interviewed by Cheissoux, it’s hardly the same thing as Meyssan appearing as a guest on Delarue’s show.) (Cdang, 20:45, July 3, 2007, WikipédiaDiscussion 2011)

Giraud, Cheissoux, Meyssan, Delarue: the Anglophone reader encounters a set of references additional to those familiar from the English discussion pages (competing US and Canadian governmental texts, or a pro-Meucci episode of QI) (WikipediaTalk 2011, 2012).

Not only can facts and the shape of an argument change, but so too can the sources. Reading the cultural repertoires of references raises the question of whom you can quote on an issue in France/in the United States/in Australia. Are they the same? Are they deployed in the same ways, and do they always hit the same target? These are all questions rich in pedagogical uptake.

CONCLUSION

From this very brief excursion into the “telephone” “Talk” pages, we see that the points of contention are far more subtle, interesting, and useful
than simply finding that some people think Bell invented the telephone
and others do not. Nor do these pages yield a simple story extolling mul-
tilingualism’s benefits: such a version of the controversy would be a tale
of a Meucci whose career and legacy had been blighted by limited pro-
ficiency in a second language—firstly his own, limiting his capacity “to
navigate the complex American business community” (US House of Rep-
resentatives 2002), and, secondly, the monolingual Anglophone world’s,
restricting its ability to see any further than its own version of history. But
that would be a story that would itself be the product of a monolingual
(if multicultural) viewpoint, based only on the English discussion pages.
By moving to the French pages and reading both together what we see,
rather, is a historiographic discussion about writing to the rules of Wiki-
pedia (neutrality, verifiability, no original research) that shows similari-
ties and differences across cultural boundaries and records moments of
intercultural encounter.

Is this a journey worth taking with undergraduate students? First
among the benefits we discern are those of a general nature: student dis-
cussion of verifiability versus original research, and reliability of sources,
would be of relevance to essay writing in a wide array of subject areas.
And—although it has not been possible to explore this in this chapter—
the telephone debate also illustrates the necessity of reflecting on whether
the right question is being asked. Our focus on cultural issues has meant
that we have passed over the many discussion contributions that view
the Bell–Meucci debate and its assumption of one single inventor as mis-
placed in their simplicity.

In terms of training intercultural agents, we have seen the telephone dis-
cussion provide pedagogically exploitable examples of:

- Culturally located facts
- Culturally specifi c names and sources
- Culturally and interculturally shaped arguments

Obviously, not all sets of “Talk” pages will yield the same cluster of issues,
although the central point around which arguments circle is likely to remain
the Wikipedia rules. Our wider reading of participants’ discussion suggests
that there is potential for work on:

1. Techniques of argumentation.
2. Patterns of argumentation regarding application of particular rules,
or of authority to speak on certain issues.
3. Repercussions of decisions regarding the organization of materials,
i.e., on Wikipedia pages of different languages the same topic will be
developed in structurally different ways: while those differences are
not necessarily culturally signifi cant, contributors can be observed
talking about the consequences of their choices and students could
usefully discuss their own preferences.
4. Meta-discursive skills, not only the referencing and evaluation of the arguments being advanced, but also the explicit invocation of the Wikipedia rules and the tension that arises when discussants debate the validity of continuity with writing practices established elsewhere within the cultures with which they identify (other encyclopedias, academic writing, blogs, and fan sites, etc.).

More generally, as a class follows discussion and discussants across the pages behind the Wikipedia entries, with their regular references to other language sites, students are exposed to a normalization of multilingualism: in other words, the “Talk” pages might encourage students to stop seeing themselves as situational monolinguals, for whom using material from another language would count as being a special case, rather than the everyday condition of the work they already do and may continue to do in workplaces such as those described by Angouri and Miglbauer (this volume). Here then is a catalyst for thinking in new ways about the pragmatic advantages of working in a multilingual and intercultural space.

To conclude, instead of bewailing the fact that consulting Wikipedia is our students’ or indeed our own first step in any research task, we suggest that ways can be found to turn that to everyone’s advantage, even though there is work to be done on integrating these findings into classroom practice. There is a time and a place for the quick consultation of Wikipedia, when the shortest journey is all that is required. But there are also times when the first port of call should be just that, the first stage of a much longer, more difficult, and necessarily roundabout voyage.

“Everything should have a history button,” says Bridle (2010b, 2010c), and although as writers we might shy away from the implications of that assertion (may that spelling error on page ten remain forever inaccessible) we take his point. His time-lapse photography approach to a controversial Wikipedia entry documents the emergence of an historical narrative. But the history button merely exposes the successive layers, following Bridle’s trope of archaeology. It does not “surface [ . . . ] the process” (Bridle 2010b), as he would have it do. Rather, this is the power of the “Talk” tab, which reveals the actual communicative transactions through which final versions of texts are co-constructed. Perhaps Wikipedia is revolutionary after all, allowing an exposure to that process that is useful to students, not just as users of this particular online encyclopedia, but as intercultural agents who are readers, writers, and, we would hope, critics of a wider variety of texts.11

NOTES

1. All translations are the authors’.
2. Ge’ez has now replaced Klingon.
3. The two entries referenced differ in their accessibility and genre: the first is from the Wikipedia encyclopedia itself, the second from the collection of
Anglophones, Francophones, Telephones

pages providing a guide to the encyclopedia. Following the style of the shortcuts used in this online instruction manual, we indicate the provenance of pages in the latter category as WikipediaWP.

4. We understand that this method is still employed by many law librarians.

5. Not that cats are excluded *per se*: be they members of expeditions (Trim, Mrs. Chippy); Downing Street mousers (Wilberforce, Larry); or Internet celebrities (Maru, Nora), cats whose exploits or relationships have already made them worthy of note by other authors have their place in Wikipedia across various languages.

6. The reading of multiculturalism as “salad bowl” rather than “melting pot” is of course very Australian. Or British, or Canadian. We also acknowledge that aligning linguistic groups with cultural communities is clumsy at best, but trust that the reader will recognize the shorthand notation for what it is.

7. While warnings such as those regarding disputed neutrality (Figure 11.7) may be generated because of furious debate on the “Talk” pages, the “Talk” pages themselves are not explicitly referenced—the dispute might be evidenced through discussion elsewhere on the site, formal e-mail complaints, or vicious editing wars carried out through reversals alone.

8. “Wikipedians are people who write and edit the pages for Wikipedia, unlike readers who simply read the articles. Anyone can be a *Wikipedian*—including you” (WikipediaWP 2011).


10. All discussion contributions are reproduced verbatim.

11. On the development of students’ critical literacy, see Kramsch, this volume, and also Anderson and Corbett, this volume.

REFERENCES


**Wikipedia References**


Part III

Intercultural Communication in Context
INTRODUCTION

One of the characteristics of modern business environments is the collaboration across national borders for an increasing number of companies. Large and small enterprises have set up headquarters, established subsidiaries, or expanded their business activities far beyond the limits of one national country over the last few decades. This increased mobility, however, does not only concern businesses, but also large numbers of people who migrate or work across borders. Globalization scholars (see, e.g., Friedman 2006; Christopherson, Garretsen, and Martin 2008) distinguish between different “globalization waves,” where the emphasis has shifted from countries to the individual (Charles 2009; see also Hay and Marsh 2000). Even though there is an ongoing debate in relation to the stages of globalization and its sociopolitical significance, what is relevant for this chapter is that the concepts of global and local have been reconfigured especially in the context of multinational workplaces, which is the focus of this chapter, and have become inextricably linked (as the term “glocal” suggests; Robertson 1994). In this context the employees need to be able to operate “successfully” in environments that are multilingual and multinational.

To take this further, the globalization of business activities results, among others, in complex realities (see also Charles 1998, 2009) for a large number of employees who work in linguistically diverse environments and communicate in languages that are not necessarily their L1s. As these environments are de facto multinational, they are also seen as the prime locus for intercultural (IC) encounters. IC skills and competences are often represented as a new set of skills the employees need to develop. This is reflected into public discourses and policies (e.g., CILT National Occupational Standards for Intercultural Working in the UK).

However, seeing communication as a “skill” reduces language and “culture” to a measurable commodity that acquires value through its importance to the global economy. The employees’ skills and knowledge as means to economic ends have a central role in what Gee, Hull, and Lankshear (1996) have characterized as the “new work order” (see also Sarangi 2005),...
while the concept of the knowledge worker (Drucker 1999) is enacted in official policies. As put by Heller (2010, 107), “the commodification of language confronts monolingualism with multilingualism, standardization with variability, and prestige with authenticity in a market where linguistic resources have gained salience and value.” And in the same vein Dunn suggests that “the long path of cultural commodification ( . . . ) leads to a highly commercialised field of new kinds of objects and experiences” (2000, 113; see also Cole 2007).

Focusing on the workplace, it is generally accepted in business circles that IC skills are needed for successful business encounters, resulting in a growing number of businesses undertaking training in IC to assist the mobility of their employees between subsidiaries (Pires, Stanton, Ostenfeld 2006). This is based on the understanding that employees need support to adjust to communities that may be more or less unfamilar to their “own.” Hence corporate companies expect IC training to facilitate “awareness” and “adjustment” (e.g., Waxin and Panaccio 2005) for employees to be able to become efficient and efective in their (new) workplace. In this vein, recent research (Selmer 2010) reports that IC training is perceived as benefical by both the trainees and the companies who report tangible benefits (e.g., Uber Grosse 2002; cf. Kealey and Protheroe 1996).

Although self-awareness and support while adjusting to any new environment is clearly important, what is relevant to the issues discussed here is that IC (training) literature often takes a rather static understanding of culture and attempts to reduce it to a list of behaviors, linguistic or other, that are perceived to be common, with some undefined variation, within different countries. From this point of view then these behaviors can be broken into units, learned and measured (e.g., Bennett and Bennett 2004). This still-dominant paradigm is a remnant of work in the 1970s and 1980s, particularly from a management studies and psychology perspective of that time, and takes a rather essentialist view where “culture” is reduced to a series of (measureable) features and behaviors (for an overview, see Piller 2009, 2011). The dynamics of situated language use are often not part of this body of work. Constructionists and critical scholars, on the other hand, have put a lot of emphasis on the limitations of essentializing “culture” (Angouri and Glynos 2009; Holliday 1999, 2011). For constructionists, culture is actively “done” in interaction and:

\[ \text{does not refer to stable, generalised dimensions assumed to be held in common by members of a particular group. Rather, it is fluid, contextually dependent, and created by actors within a group who may hold conflicting assumptions and worldviews. In other words, culture is what culture does. (Weisinger and Trauth 2002, 309)} \]

Work by critical theorists foregrounds the power imbalance, inherent in sociopolitical systems, and the influence of the financial, political, and
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historical context on intercultural encounters (e.g., Nakayama and Halu-alani 2010). The stance taken in this chapter is that “culture” is an abstract concept that is enacted in and takes meaning depending on the discursive context where it is evoked. It constitutes a powerful resource individuals draw upon in daily life to explain perceived similarities/differences. This in itself, however, does not mean that “culture” can be reduced to either a set of commonalities or a set of measurable skills. “Culture” in this context constitutes an ideological construct and not an objective fact. As put by Fine (1979, 733) over thirty years ago: “Because of the difficulties and ambiguities involved in the use of the term culture (Geertz 1973, 89), it virtually has been disregarded in recent sociological writing as a major theoretical variable.” Overall, accepting that societies or countries orient toward common cultural patterns/values/behaviors and relating this to specific instances of mis/communication superimposes a rather rigid analytical frame on the dynamics of everyday encounters, attributes explanatory power to abstract concepts, and can mask power and other imbalances. At the same time, however, it is often argued that generalizations are useful. For instance, Bennett and Bennett (2004, 151) recently argued that “useful cultural generalizations are based on systematic cross-cultural research. They refer to predominant tendencies among groups of people, so they are not labels for individuals.” And this view is often represented in employees’ discourses (Angouri 2007) particularly in multinational/multilingual environments where perceived communication problems are attributed to “cultural” differences (e.g., Ting-Toomey and Chung 2005).

Against this backdrop, the aim of this chapter is twofold: a) to discuss multilingualism at work, and specifically the role of local languages, an important issue often not foregrounded in ICC literature despite its significance and implications (Piller 2009), and b) to discuss the perceived communication challenges the employees face. Special attention is paid to “cultural differences.” The chapter is organized in four sections. We start by discussing the ecologies of languages used in the workplace; we then turn to the methodology and data collection procedures before discussing our data analysis. Finally, we close the chapter with the implications of the study and conclusions that can be drawn.

THE DYNAMIC ECOLOGY OF LANGUAGES USED IN MULTINATIONAL (MNC) WORKPLACES

In the MNC context, linguae francae have been called upon for conducting business across national and language borders. Unsurprisingly, English is reported to be the most widely used language in Europe (which is the geographical locus of this chapter), followed by French, German, Spanish, and Russian (Eurobarometer 243 2006, 12), with English being used daily at work for a quarter of the interviewees and also cited as the most useful
language for one’s personal career. At the same time, a multinational and
defacto multilingual workplace cannot and does not operate on the basis of
one language only, English or other, nor can it be turned to a monolingual
one (Vollstedt 2001, 103; Louhiala-Salminen, Charles, and Kankaanranta

Undoubtedly, high levels of proficiency in English are needed for the
employees in many modern workplaces. Studies on language use (e.g.,
Charles and Marschan-Piekkari 2002; Vandermeeren 1999), however,
have revealed the importance of language skills in a number of languages
other than English for business success. Large-scale surveys (e.g., InterAct
International, Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research
2006) also show that different languages serve as linguae francae depend-
ing on the local context. As an example, Russian is most likely used as
a common language in the Baltic States (Eurobarometer 243 2006, 12),
whereas in Luxemburg and Belgium French is considered most useful
(Mettewie and van Mensel 2009). Historical reasons and familiarity with
language families/linguistic continua impact on language use or even the
creation of “mixed languages” such as in Scandinavia (Louhiala-Salminen,
Charles, and Kankaanranta 2005) and in the ex-Yugoslavian states (Migl-
bauer 2010). Overall, local languages (Gunnarsson 2006) are used in a
wide range of communicative situations, such as in informal meetings and
everyday interactions in the workplace. This is further attested by a number
of studies (e.g., Poncini 2002, 2003; Angouri 2007) that show the strong
relationship between local language use and perceptions of integration/
belonging and for rapport management.

The complexity of communication in modern multilingual environments
is also clearly captured by Fredriksson, Barner-Rasmussen, and Piekkari
(2006, 407), who show that internal communication in multinational com-
panies involves “crossing language boundaries and operating at the inter-
face between several languages including those of the home country and
the host country, the corporate languages and ‘company speak.’” They dis-
tinguish between corporate language and “company speak,” i.e., language
practices and varieties specific to the company, pointing to the complex
relationship between corporate language, company structures, number of
nonnative speakers of English, communication practices between subsid-
aries and headquarters, and so on. The concept of the company’s specific
language has been discussed by Welch, Welch, and Piekkari’s work (2005,
13) on “‘company speak,’ which is seen as a register or variety ‘replete
with acronyms, special terms, and management process terminology spe-
cific to the company that evolves over time.” Hence apart from the employ-
ees’ L1s and any corporate languages, another register needs to be acquired
for day-to-day business. To expand on this, the fact that different compa-
nies, departments, or teams “talk the work” in different ways is, evidently,
not new to discourse analysts (Holmes and Stubbe 2003). It is, however, an
important angle to consider in relation to the complexity of multilingual/
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multinational workplace talk that often takes a “backseat” when decontextualized accounts on “intercultural talk” attempt to solve alleged communication problems (we return to this point in the light of the data).

In this context, the chapter focuses on the perceptions of employees regarding the role of local languages and the challenges they report in their everyday communication, two overarching themes that have emerged from the analysis of a set of ethnographic interviews. Before turning to our data, we discuss the methodology and data collection procedures we followed for the needs of this chapter.

METHOD AND DATA

In this chapter, two projects, corresponding to the authors’ previous work, have been brought together. The projects both addressed multilingualism in multinational companies in Europe. Despite differences in specific research questions, both authors collected significant data on language use in the workplace. Among the collected data sets, both projects include ethnographic interviews exploring perceptions of language use, perceived communication challenges, and the role of English.

For the needs of this chapter, we draw on qualitative data collected in twelve companies situated in Croatia, Greece, Italy, Serbia, Sweden, and the UK. The data were collected between 2005 and 2009, and the sample consists of senior and junior managers and post holders (the term denotes employees who have no line management responsibilities). The companies’ specific activities are not relevant for this chapter and will not be discussed in detail to protect the companies’ anonymity. They, however, undertake activities related to the following sectors: construction, banking, energy, communication, financial consulting, and retail. English is the working language of all the companies we studied. In this chapter we report on findings emanating from the analysis of forty interviews with senior and junior employees. The sample discussed in this chapter was selected from the two projects on the basis of their similar work experience/profile and number of languages used. The data were coded (open coding; cf. Strauss and Corbin 1998), and the thematic analysis indicated the main themes and categories, the two most relevant to the discussion here being, “local languages” and “communication challenges.”

THE ROLE OF LOCAL LANGUAGES

English is the corporate language of the international companies where the interviewees are employed. However the analysis of the data shows that L1s are used alongside the corporate languages (Welch, Welch, and Piek-kari 2005).
Despite the increased collaboration between and within subsidiaries, it is often the case that in different geographical locations, large numbers of employees share the same L1. Our data show that when this is the case, employees prefer using their L1 unless they believe they have a reason not to do so (see Mahili, forthcoming; Angouri 2009). This is nicely illustrated in the following quote:

(1) well we're we are not like trying to speak English whenever possible you know only when there is the need

While oral communication is reported to be context specific, written communication, often in the form of official documents, is typically reported to be in English.

(2) when you KNOW there is somebody who is not speaking Serbian but is going to read that then of course you r- s- (.) write in English

When interactants share the same L1, work-related communication as well as office small talk tends to be conducted in the local language as one interviewee states: “when we talk we talk in our language.” A clear pattern favoring local language use is revealed when typological and/or geographical proximity between languages is noted. Extensive research in Scandinavian companies has shown that Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, or rather a variant function called “skandinaviska,” serves as lingua franca in the Nordic countries (Louhiala-Salminen, Charles, and Kankaanranta et al. 2005, 402; also Gunnarsson 2006). Similar findings are reported in Croatia and Serbia (Miglbauer 2010). The successor states of ex-Yugoslavia are on the South Slavic dialect continuum (e.g., Chambers and Trudgill 1999), and the fact that Serbo-Croatian was used as the official language until 1991 influences the use of language in the workplace. Hence apart from official documents, English is not used to communicate with subsidiaries in Belgrade, Ljubljana, and Zagreb.

(3) I mean we don’t (.) speak English you know here in the office because we’re all Croatians so (.) we don’t speak English between us but (.) with all of our offices except for the Belgrade [and the] Slovenian one (.) eh we speak in English so Czech office (.) eh Polish office Austrian office Russian office Bulgarian Romanian whatever (.) we speak eh English
This interviewee clearly indicates that the “office language” is Croatian because all employees share this language as their L1. Even though the use of the L1 is reported as “common sense,” it also performs an important function in relation to managing rapport and solidarity between the employees. As they share the same L1, switching to or using their L1 seems both more efficient in managing communication, but is also an obvious “identity act” (e.g., Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985). The use of L1s in the workplace is, however, also associated with the “clustering” of employees (Tange and Lauring 2009) and communication barriers. Ailon-Souday and Kunda (2003), for example, show in their study in a former Israeli company that was taken over by an American company that Hebrew is used by Israeli employees as a means of displaying national identity. By using the local language, social interactions are not accessible to the American employees (Ailon-Souday and Kunda 2003, 1082), who are excluded from the group of Hebrew speakers. Even though Hebrew is used for voicing censored attitudes or opinions that the non-Hebrew speakers are excluded from hearing, the local language also serves as a justification for the exclusion. The authors observed situations in the companies in which the American employees in fact render exclusion from interactions excusable (Ailon-Souday and Kunda 2003, 1083).

This, however, is not shown by the analysis of our data. What is consistently reported by all our participants is a switch to English or the preferred common language (e.g., French was reported to operate as work language for one team although it was not the L1 of any of the employees) to include employees who lack competence in the common local languages.

(4)

in all relevant correspondence that anybody else not speaking Serbian receives you need to talk in English and also from external partners we have a lot of people who don’t speak Serbian (. .) so mostly all the documents we have (. .) when you leave a written (. .) let’s say sign or file anything it is it is in English

The presence of colleagues who do not have a good command of the local language determines the use of English in both written documents and oral communication such as in meetings or small talk. This also includes communication with the headquarters abroad as well as clients.

Hence inclusion instead of exclusion of all communication partners is consistently reported in our data.

(5)

if you have 15 people and just one non-Croatian speaker of course then you will speak English (. .) so that’s normal (. .) and it’s never happened that (. .) somebody is you know like really excluded (. .) in that way
Interview data always constitute performances of identity for and with the researcher and evidently our presence had an effect on these workplaces. We still consider it indicative, however, that all the participants consistently put forward narratives of inclusion (both those who shared dominant L1s and those who did not).

(6)

I think people here we are lucky we all speak two or three languages and we can always choose the ([best match]) when people don’t speak Italian [interviewee’s L1]

The employees seem to accommodate each other and often they would cross languages (e.g., Italian and French in a “receptive multilingualism” mode). In the same vein, one Serbian interviewee argues “we talk Serbian they talk Croatian but it’s same language in the end,” and another interviewee elaborates further:

(7)

well (. ) usually sometimes when we work (. ) I mean together with with Belgrade or Slovenian office we communicate in (. ) ((laughs)) we call it REGIONAL language (. ) they talk in Serbian we in Croatian but we understand each other

Interviewer: and the Slovenians

and the Slovenians usually tend to speak (. ) combination of Serbo-Croatian (. ) because nobody actually understands Slovenian ((laughs)) I mean we do understand it but it’s more difficult for us to speak Slovenian (. ) so we can understand them (. ) but it’s difficult for us to speak eh Slovenian but Serbian and Croatian are more (. ) similar than Slovenian to any of those two (. . ) and it’s even then it’s fine

Although research has shown (Lippi-Green 1997; Hay and Drager 2010) that perceptions of similarity/difference between languages are ideological and political, what is particularly important here is the perceived role of local languages. The interviewee’s laughter could indicate some uneasiness with his previous statement (that nobody understands Slovenian), and as the interview goes on he qualifies what he earlier represented as a general truth. What is relevant for our discussion is the continuum of “foreignness” of languages where (partial) mutual intelligibility is a weighing factor affecting language use. The interviewee draws a distinction between English as a “completely foreign language” and Slovenian, which is not perceived as such.
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To sum up, the data discussed here show the multilayered role of L1s, where rapport management and enactment of group identity as well concepts of inclusion and competence are the most significant categories. It is clear then that these considerations of language use are also directly related to managing the “intercultural” aspect of workplace communication as will be more fully discussed in the next section.

“COMMUNICATION” CHALLENGES

The coding of the data shows that despite high levels of competence in a range of languages, and particularly English, the employees report challenges related to the use of a non-L1 for work purposes. Interestingly, in our data there seems to be two clear patterns, those who take a pragmatic approach and self-assess their English in relation to the tasks they need to carry out in the language and those who compare their language competence to the native-speaker ideal.

Switching to English is represented as a useful “resort” but also a “necessary evil,” as an interviewee argues:

(8)

it’s not ehm (.) eh eh comfortable for us (.) to switch to English all the time because we d- we cannot express ourselves in English as we in eh (.) our mother la- eh language but (.) it’s not a problem because I understand that [. . . ] it’s (.) minimum respect to others

English is the official language in all the companies we studied, and, as employees need to be able to participate in the life of their workplace, a common language is represented as useful. Switching to English, as soon as a NNS of the local language is present, is constructed as “obvious”; however, using English in interaction is often represented as less “comfortable.”

The employees also report difficulties when they first join a workplace where English is used daily. As the rich body of work on needs analysis has shown over the years, a good command of language does not necessarily mean the employees can meet the exigencies of a workplace operating in English (or any other language) (Long 2005).

(9)

I was very fearful at the beginning at in my first year I really was trying to prepare thoroughly and to think thoroughly: ((laughing)) about what am I gonna say especially in terms of that terminology and I was using that black legal dictionary
Acquiring the “technical jargon,” however, is reported as less problematic than using a language for small talk. Louhila-Salminen, Charles, and Kankaanranta (2005), for instance, investigated changes in communication patterns and practices after a merger of two companies. Their informants suggested that while learning the necessary “terminology” for work-related tasks was “not a problem [. . .] finding the right expression in ‘ordinary small talk’ or acting assertively in negotiations” (2005, 407) was.

In our data there is a fine line between work talk, “company speak,” and use of English for small talk, which is an important part of daily interactions (see also Fredriksson, Barner-Rasmussen, and Piekkari 2006; Holquist 1984).

There is a special English that we use because there are so many nations I mean [company’s name] operates in like 180 endmarkets so there are so many (laughs) words and (. .) I think that even English people eh native English speakers are not eh when they see that your English is good then you a- almost feel how they get relaxed and start talking (. .) with the whole fluency they can use (. .) whereas there is this (. .) special [company’s name] language (laughs) of I don’t know how many thousands of words not too many thousands (. .) that everybody can understand

At the same time, the presence of an English NS seems to pose a considerable barrier for some of the participants in our projects. And a significant percentage of our interviewees compare their performance to the native-speaker ideal.

As a manager argues:

Well I guess all the people have a barrier (. .) at the start (. .) when (. .) they are talking to a native speaker (. .) yeah they think oh he’s gonna (. .) eh you know track my mistakes :and: ((laughing)) you know they test me because of them

Research on the perceptions of employees using English as NS/NNS in business contexts is still a relatively new territory for applied/sociolinguistics. Rogerson-Revell’s (2007, 2008) useful study is inconclusive as to perceptions of “easiness” or “comprehensibility” (Rogerson-Revell 2007, 115) in NS–NNS speaker interaction.

Along the same lines, the data we discuss here show a perceived difference but also contradictory accounts. Both NS and NNS construct the “other” as not having enough skills to engage in “efficient” MNC business
interaction. While NNS seem to have been projected identities of not hav-
ing “enough English”, NS are also constructed as not being “versatile and
flexible” with NNS varieties of the English.

I know that in my company sometimes because it’s inter-
tional and people (. ) tend to ehm well not tend to but there ARE a lot
of ehm (. ) people from (. ) which are not native speakers of English (. )
eh and sometimes there are only one or two native speakers and all the
others are (. . ) eh (. ) that English is their s- second third language (. )
ehm the people ehm to whom English is a foreign language understand
themselves eh (. ) eh very well (. ) you know (. ) even when they speak not
proper English really (. ) but Englishmen or (. ) Americans or whatever
(. ) eh they ehm (. ) they eh sometimes cannot understand that (. ) it’s you
know ((laughs)) to them it’s it sounds strange I guess (. ) :so: ((laugh-
ing)) sometimes people make jokes eh in our company eh by saying oh
you should improve your English ((laughs))

We consider these narratives to be ideological in nature but useful in reveal-
ing ideals around native speakerism (Holliday 2006) in professional con-
texts. 6 Quotes 12 and 13 both highlight the fact that NNS of English claim
NNS understand each other “better” because they are NNS. Although this
is clearly an important area for further research to explore, “accents” are
reported both in our work and in Rogerson-Revell’s (2007) study as a per-
ceived “barrier.”

what I noticed is we have several native speakers of English (. ) in in
not here but in Vienna (. ) and also we had one here (. ) he’s not work-
ing with us anymore but (. ) you know what he said and this one girl
eh from Vienna (. ) they said you know (. ) you make mistakes a lot of
mistakes but they do also and you can talk to each other great but you
know when you speak to somebody who’s a native speaker (. ) then it’s
difficult for you to understand him and eh for him to understand you (. )
or her (. ) nevermind but (. ) you know when you speak between yourself
you know like people from this region or Central Eastern Europe (. )
then you can understand yourself (. . ) I guess (. ) there are always some
difficulties but you know (. ) you’ll overcome that

Even though further research on perceptions and attitudes toward different
accents would be very useful, it is important to note that accounts around
the multiple accents are related to multilingualism as a reality for all our
participants.
for example within [company] with the XX offices in the region and with the (. ) variety of (. ) sort of nationals eh working in in within the company this eh (. ) is probably something that eh comes on the job (. ) because eh (. ) obviously ((xxx)) today I have spoken to eh at least eh one American and eh one Asian and one Belgian and eh one :Serbian: ((laughing)) and one Pole yeah I mean (. ) maybe I’m exaggerating but (. ) eh it’s really a I would say wide variety of backgrounds eh where people are simply at at eh at one place although not geographically but eh in the communication sense for sure

Clearly this multinational reality raises issues around the use of non-L1s and perceptions of competence. A number of ELF studies (e.g., Björkman 2011; Kaur 2009) have shown the importance of negotiation and co-construction of sociopragmatic norms for efficient communication between speakers who use English in professional contexts. This evidently applies to all multilingual contexts where employees use a mixture of L1s and linguae francae (English or not). From this point of view it is particularly important to stress that “interactional cooperation” is a paramount strategy all our participants highlight.

sometimes it’s (. ) more difficult sometimes less difficult to explain something to somebody but you know at the end of the day (. ) you always (. ) manage to do that [communicate]

At the same time, tolerance in pragmatic ambiguity (House 2003), politeness norms that are sometimes (but not always) attributed to different nationalities are widely reported, as is the rare occurrence of communication breakdowns.

we had in London office there is sometimes our colleague which she’s an (. ) American (. ) and (. ) she’s for example too polite for me because ((laughs)) we were working in some project together and then (. .) on (. ) her every second word was thank you thank you for your help you are so ((laughs)) you’re so helpful thank you thanks a lot and come on :you don’t need to (tell) me (. ) every twenty seconds: ((laughing)) but okay that’s (. ) I believe the American way of (. ) doing it

We consider these narratives to be particularly relevant for ICC research; the way these data (e.g., quotes 14 and 16) could be analysed points to
two distinct approaches in the field. One that would compare the interviewees’ nationalities to, say, “American” norms—on the basis of cultural values—heh hence come to heh conclusions as to whether Americans are “more/less” polite (for our argument here). And a more dynamic approach that goes beyond a static deterministic role attributed to “culture” and that would put emphasis on the negotiation of norms and co-construction of meaning in the local context.

From this point of view it is important to consider quote 17 on the perceived outcome of IC training undertaken by one of the companies.

(17)

these eh (.) results and it was really interesting to see that (.) and then how eh Slovenians perceive ehm Croatians how they perceive ehm Austrians and so [ . . . ] it was eh eh one of the statement that Croatian ehm are tolerant to being late for example that we are coming to our meetings eh too late and then we when we are come to meetings that this is more ehm (.) it’s not so official like in [company’s name] but eh while we are having coffee that eh it’s very pleasantly agreed and set up everything (.) while in [company’s name] as they are very very structured not the [company’s name] but Austrians let’s say it like that (.) that you are so very (.) well structured they come on time (.) eh to the meeting then they have a fi- min- eh five minutes for the coffee and then okay now it’s finished coffee let’s agree da da da da da [ . . . ] you just (.) have to eh adjust to to reach the result

Although our aim is not to discuss IC training per se, we consider this important in showing how frames of analysis of behaviour were associated with differernt nationalities. While different teams of employees have different ways of “doing things,” the projection of static identities is rather limited and does not capture the dynamics of individual agency in co-construction of “reality” or the heterogeneity of national groups (or other large collectivities), and it “renders invisible the varied lived experiences of individuals within groups” (Kelly Hall 2002, 40). Drawing on “culture” to construct narratives of similarity/difference is a discourse that points to the participants reenacting powerful discourses rather than “face value” accounts of reality.

To further elaborate on the complexity of these accounts, the analysis of the data shows that the employees also perceive their multinational realities as an inherent part of the fabric of modern workplace and of specific professions compared to an “old era” mononational workplace.

(18)

well it’s kinda hmm normal for us ( . . . ) even those of us who haven’t travelled that much we always work with people from all over the world
so it’s just normal I mean I have my own biases and prejudices but hey
just biases and prejudices right ((laughter))

This senior manager in enacting his professional identity, self-aligns with
a mobile professional group for whom national borders matter much less
than in the past. And often managers render “culture” irrelevant to the
work at hand.

(19)

For me it doesn’t matter, I mean socially it doesn’t make a difference.
The issue is always to agree on how to carry out the work

With more and more workplaces turning multinational, we consider a focus
on the study of situated communication in different contexts, and the use of
a range of languages for work purposes, a fruitful way for shedding light on
complex phenomena, such as the perceived relationship between language,
culture, and identity. As linguists have argued, “knowledge about cultures”
perpetuates a rather outdated view which has dominated the IC field. We
discuss this further in the following and last section of our chapter.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

The discussion of our data shows that modern workplaces cannot operate
on the basis of linguae francae only. In our projects, the employees put
forward a number of challenges they face, the most significant being the
perceived limitations of communicating in English or non-L1 languages. In
line with ELF research, however, the informants have developed strategies
in tackling perceived barriers. The strategies are context specific and often
contradictory. As an illustration, while some of our informants resort to
oral communication, as the most economical way to avoid or address prob-
lems, others seem to find written communication preferred for tackling the
issue (see quotes 20 and 21).

(20)

sometimes I’m talking about something and the other person understood
and I’m talking about something totally different and then (.) we con-
tinue like that until in one second we realise what the hell is going on (.)
but (.) it happens sometimes with other colleagues from other offices in
English (.) that we simply don’t understand each other (.) and then we cut
all the communication via e-mails and we go to (.) phone communication
and then until we both say AH (.) then you know it’s fine ( . ) because
mail is not that good as phone communication
Oral communication, via telephone or video conferencing, is often reported as limited and “the message does not always get across,” which results in either changing the communication medium or attempting to adapt to the perceived levels of competence of their interlocutor in future communication.

I’m not happy about this but years of bitter experience have proven that my English is uhh too English to work with our partners ((laughter)) and you know what hmm I naively thought that I can communicate in English and adapt easily [. . .] but well now we put everything in writing and I guess my English is good enough to write clearly ((laughter))

These accounts are not only linguistic or typological, and attitudes toward language/s affect perceptions of intelligibility and difficulty/easiness between NS/NNS interaction (Davies 2003). Although we discuss the strategies the speakers use in multilingual interaction in more detail elsewhere (Angouri and Miglbauer, in prep), we note here the efforts the speakers make in order to avoid miscommunication or communication clashes. Evidently these accounts are related to self/other competence in the target language and are subjective. Further research, however, needs to address this as it directly influences language choice and use. Jensen and Millar’s (2009) study also shows how language choice is constructed according to the participants’ attitudes and beliefs toward their own and others’ competence in language.

Across the two projects, a range of languages were used in the workplace, depending on the activities of each company. While research often distinguishes between work and small talk, we consider the latter as an integral part of the former as it is through small talk encounters that individuals “navigate the complex social waters” of the company (Crosling and Ward 2002, 43). Hence studies taking an ethnographic approach, discussing practices and perceptions of employees on the interplay between linguae francae and local languages, are needed to shed light on this dynamic linguistic landscape. In this context the interrelated concept of “pragmatic fluency” (House 1996) becomes relevant and useful. IC and language skills are often presented as commodities the employees need to develop/acquire. However, the analysis of the employees’ narratives reveals a more complex picture; rapport management, identity, concepts of belonging, and inclusion are constructed, emphasizing the social importance and the interrelated nature of language and “culture,” rather than its narrow economic value.

“Intercultural communication” is a daily activity that is reflected, among others, in language choice for work and social purposes. At the same time, as argued elsewhere:
We characterize “culture” as a floating signifier here because its meaning and significance emerges only in and through the process of articulation, namely, the way it is partially fixed by connecting it to available discursive resources and the problems animating a particular context. (Angouri and Glynos 2009, 11–12)

From this point of view, we argue for a more sophisticated understanding of IC particularly in multilingual contexts, one that will go beyond stereotypes and will look into the local context of multilingual interaction to address perceived language issues the employees face in their daily work lives. Relationships of power and ideological orientations, as well as their influence on professional communication, can then come to the fore and be further analyzed.

NOTES

1. For a discussion of the concept, see Angouri and Glynos (2009). Quotation marks are used to reflect the stance taken in this chapter; namely, that culture is socially constructed (and hence the term as used here does not refer to a static ontology).
2. We use the term ‘ecologies of languages’ to refer to how languages interact with other languages as a medium of communication (Haugen 1972, 325).
3. For a discussion on ideological implications of language policy “as common sense,” see Angouri (forthcoming).
4. “Good” here is not used as a technical term but denotes the employees’ perceptions. Our projects were based on self-evaluations of language competence, which evidently bears inherent limitations.
5. Based on self-reported data/evidence.
6. A more extensive discussion on English as lingua franca versus NS English goes beyond the scope of this chapter. The reader is referred to relevant literature (e.g., Seidlhofer 2001, 2005; Jenkins 2006, 2007).

REFERENCES


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TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

(.) indicates a pause
(word) best guess when material was difficult to make out
(xxx) indicates speech that was impossible to make out
(laughs)) additional information
//word// indicates speech overlap
[word] indicates original word was made anonymous
[ . . . ] indicates text omission
:word: ((laughs)) indicates speaking and laughing simultaneously
WORD capital letters indicate emphasis
wor- dash indicates word was cut off by speaker
eh/ehm/uhm fillers
“I Don’t Know How to Speak, So I Just Stay Silent”
Uncertainty Management Among Chinese Immigrant Women Seeking Health Care in the United States

Mikaela L. Marlow and Howard Giles

INTRODUCTION

The United States is rapidly evolving into a nation that is racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse (US Census Bureau 2010, 1). In 2007, an estimated 37.9 million immigrants resided in the United States, accounting for approximately 12.5 percent of the total population (Camarota 2007, 1). Also, 17.3 million Asians currently live in the United States, which is approximately 5.6 percent of the total population. Individuals with Chinese descent comprise 1.2 percent of the total population, or 3.8 million people in the United States (US Census Bureau 2010, 1).

Several diaspora groups throughout the world belong to diverse race, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds (Sutherland and Barabantseva 2011). Initially, many Chinese immigrated to the United States during the mid-1800s in order to work for railroads, coal mines, or plantations. Often, people planned to return to their families in China within a few years (Takaki 1989). However, US laws like the Nationality Act of 1870 prevented Chinese from applying for naturalization, while the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 mandated that “no State court or court of the US shall admit Chinese to citizenship.” The Chinese Exclusion Act was repealed in 1943, yet laws like these prevented many Chinese men from being reunited with their wives and children and denied them citizenship, while antimiscegenation laws banned Chinese men from marrying Caucasian women. Events like this indicate that Chinese people in the United States have encountered discriminatory laws in the past that have inhibited their ability to become citizens, acquire education, and establish gainful employment (Pendery 2008, 205).

Thus far, a substantial body of research has been devoted to Chinese history and diaspora in the modern era (Lee 2009). However, less attention has been devoted to the ways that language and culture may contribute to communication challenges for Chinese immigrants during health-care interactions. Evidence suggests that immigrants often maintain diverse health values, beliefs, and practices (Ma 1999a, 421–437). Chinese immigrants
have faced unique challenges associated with acculturation (Lu 2001, 203–220), values (Zou 2002, 270–273), philosophies of medical care (Chen 2001, 270–273), utilization of traditional methods (Ma 1999b), and holistic styles within Chinese culture (Wong and Pang 2000, 12–22). Considering that ninety-eight thousand deaths annually in the United States have been attributed to misunderstandings between patients and providers, this seems an important topic of inquiry (Meyer and Arnheim 2002, 47–49).

According to the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center (2002, 1), Asian American women seek routine medical exams and cervical cancer screenings less often than Caucasian women. Survival rates among Chinese women following a diagnosis are also lower than other Asian and non-Asian groups in the United States. For instance, breast cancer is the second-leading cause of death among Chinese women in the United States (American Cancer Society 2005), despite the fact that Chinese women actually have lower incidences of breast cancer than African American and Caucasian women. Chinese immigrant women also have higher incidences of heart disease, cervical cancer, diabetes, and osteoporosis than other groups in the United States (Lauderdale et al. 2003, 508–604; Lin et al. 2002, 1175–1182). Given the relative disparity in health status for Chinese immigrant women in the United States, this seems an important topic for further inquiry.

This chapter addresses linguistic and cultural factors that have influenced some Chinese immigrant women’s health-care experiences in the United States. To begin, we present a brief overview of the history of Chinese immigration trends and discuss acculturation issues that may influence health communication interactions for Chinese immigrant women. Next, we preview uncertainty reduction theory and introduce the theory of motivated information management to frame narratives about linguistic and cultural challenges. To conclude, we present a model of accommodative processes in intercultural encounters to guide future research.

ACCULTURATION, LANGUAGE, AND CULTURE

Often, immigrants attempt to adopt the values and practices within a new culture (Berry 2008, 328–336) and may experience difficulties (Giles, Bonilla, and Speer 2012, 293–305), reconciling the tensions that may exist between two cultures (Thomas and Choi 2006, 123–143). This process is often accompanied by stress, resistance, adaptation, modification, and survival (Nwadiora and McAdoo 1996, 477–486). Acquiring and maintaining gainful employment may also be challenging for individuals who speak English as a second language, yet are expected to speak English exclusively at work. Expressing specific ideas or concepts may prove to be more challenging in a second language. For instance, research has found that employees who work for multinational and multilingual corporations face
challenges adjusting to speaking English with colleagues and supervisors (Angouri and Miglbauer, this volume). Other research has also suggested that migrants who exhibited low levels of acculturation experienced higher levels of stress than those who were more acculturated (Sodowsky and Lai 1997, 211–234). Chinese immigrants in the United States reported more communication competence the longer they resided in the country (Hsu 2010, 414–425).

In 2007, the United States Census Bureau estimated that approximately 20 percent of the population over the age of five spoke a non-English language in the home (55.4 million) (US Census Bureau 2010). Of these 55.4 million, 25 million reported that they were not able to understand or speak English “very well.” Clearly, an individual who is unable to effectively speak or understand English may face challenges when communicating with English speaking medical professionals. However, cultural issues also may significantly influence the way in which people perceive they should behave during medical interactions. The following section will briefly preview cultural gender issues that may influence Chinese immigrant women during health-based interactions.

By the year 2050, 50 percent of the United States population will belong to racially and ethnically diverse groups (Wells 2000, 189–199). Almost 75 percent of Asian and Pacific Islanders have been foreign born, which predisposes many to adhere to traditional cultural values, beliefs, and healthcare practices (Ma 1999a, 421–437). Also, respect for authority may play a prominent role in Chinese thought and values. Xiao (filial piety) is a Chinese value that refers to the obedience, harmony, and devotion that people demonstrate toward parents and family elders (Ho 1996). People are expected to adhere to li, or the expectations associated with fulfilling their social roles. Values emphasizing familial loyalty, social harmony, and self-restraint are usually prevalent throughout traditional Chinese culture (Yum 1988, 374–388). However, empirical evidence now suggests that filial piety has been eroding for some time in Chinese society (Giles et al. 2002) and in ways that may negatively impact perceptions of intergenerational communication (Noels et al. 2001; 1999, 120–134). In response, the Chinese government has established a voluntary contract whereby adult children agree to provide support for their elderly parents (Chou 2011, 3–16).

Gender may also influence the ways in which Chinese immigrant women approach communication. In traditional Chinese filial networks, power is generally distributed according to gender, age, and generation. Usually, the elder male in the family is privileged with important decision-making responsibilities. Chinese immigrant women may identify with traditional cultural values that influence their self-perception, beliefs, and actions, even after relocating to the United States. In some cases, women who identify with traditional Chinese beliefs may relegate important personal medical decisions to those who are perceived as entitled or responsible (i.e., fathers, husbands, or physicians). Understanding how such dynamics have influenced Chinese
immigrant women’s experiences with health-care services—the topic of the present chapter—may help identify communication alternatives that accommodate people more equally and successfully based on unique orientations.

UNCERTAINTY REDUCTION FRAMEWORKS

Uncertainty is common for individuals who lack the cognitive framework or cultural knowledge they need to understand a given situation (Berger 1979). This may leave people with an inability to predict behavioral or situational outcomes (Weitz 1989, 270–281). In the United States and Britain, patients have reported the highest levels of dissatisfaction with regards to information access. Dissatisfaction like this is evident in the literature (Cartwright 1964) even when compared to things like high medical costs and excessive waiting (Duff and Hollingshead 1968). The relationship between patients and medical specialists may also be asymmetrical, with health-care providers asserting control over interactions, treatment, and prescription (West 1984). Patients who perceive that they are unable to express concerns or ask questions during health-care interactions may encounter substantial anxiety and/or uncertainty related to examinations, diagnosis, and treatment.

Uncertainty reduction theory explains how people manage uncertainty during intercultural communication interactions (Gudykunst 1983, 49–55). This framework suggests that when people experience new situations, they encounter uncertainty. In order to decrease uncertainty, people naturally seek out information that will reduce predictive uncertainty (what others will do) and explanatory uncertainty (why people do what they do). When one reduces predictive and explanatory uncertainty, they are often able to approach communication interactions with more confidence and comfort. People with an established self-concept, flexible attitudes, and the ability to avoid stereotypes will be most effective at intercultural interactions. The most ideal environments for reducing uncertainty are informal, consisting of individuals who are equally represented and who are receptive to new information (Gudykunst 2005).

This theory enables us to understand the foundation of the uncertainty reduction perspective and provides valuable insight about the ways that people attempt to manage uncertainty during communication. In order to frame the current study, we now preview the theory of motivated information management (TMIM), which addresses how people communicatively manage uncertainty through information seeking (Afifi and Afifi 2009; Afifi and Matsunaga 2008). Thus far, and in the health sphere, TMIM has been applied to college students seeking sexual health information (Afifi and Morse 2009) from their dating partners (Afifi and Weiner 2006, 35–57) and community members seeking information about organ donation for family members (Afifi et al. 2006, 188–215). Until now, the theory has not been applied to health information-seeking strategies among immigrant populations, which is the focus of this chapter.
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Uncertainty management develops through a three-tier process of interpretation, evaluation, and decision making (see Figure 13.1) (Afifi and Morse 2009, 167–190). Interpretation stimulates a cognitive awareness of a discrepancy between the amount of information one has and the amount of information one desires. Awareness of an information discrepancy will typically provoke internal anxiety and may motivate people to manage

**HEALTH-CARE SEEKER**

**HEALTH-CARE PROVIDER**

![Diagram showing the three-tier process of Interpretation, Evaluation, and Decision Phase for Healthcare Seeker and Provider.]

*Figure 13.1* TMIM’s proposition structure.

the uncertainty through evaluation. During evaluation, people consider
the possible advantages and disadvantages related to information-seeking
behavior (outcome expectancy) and evaluate their ability to acquire and
cope with the desired information (efficacy).

Perceptions of efficacy include communicative efficacy (possessing the nec-
essary skills to acquire information), target efficacy (evaluation of another’s
willingness and ability to provide information), and coping efficacy (expecta-
tions about one’s ability to cope with the information that is being sought).
People are less likely to seek information when they expect negative outcomes
and will rarely seek information when communicative efficacy and coping
ability are perceived as insufficient. Drawing from interpretation and evalu-
ation, people then decide to seek information directly (questioning directly),
indirectly (asking a mutual friend or talking around an issue), or to engage
passive avoidance (not seeking information, but not avoiding it) or active
avoidance (going out of one’s way to avoid information).

A NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE

To assist in understanding the plight of Chinese immigrant women who
have sought medical care in the United States, data were collected from a
small group of women using the ethnographic approach of narrative analy-
sis. Data analysis utilized ethnographic narrative analysis, a method fre-
cently used among scholars, across a range of disciplines (Rosaldo 1989).
Given that this research approach privileges human experience and agency,
it is an appropriate method to use when seeking a better understanding of
the role of language and culture during health-based interactions.

Six Chinese immigrant women were interviewed in-depth (three on the
Big Island of Hawai‘i and three in Chicago, Illinois). Respondents were
between the ages of twenty-seven and sixty-six at the time the interviews
were conducted. Most of the women had completed their postsecondary
education prior to the interviews. Interviews were mostly conducted in
English, which was the second language of all respondents. All intervie-
wees reported that they felt proficient enough to express thoughts and feel-
ings accurately in English, with the exception of one, who was assisted
by a translator. The translator was selected by the respondent and was
instructed to translate the respondent’s answers verbatim. Interview ques-
tions inquired about communication with health providers, cultural and
gender values, and health-care satisfaction. Data was audiotaped and tran-
scribed verbatim, to ensure accuracy.

Our interpretation of the interview data supports the conclusion that
some Chinese immigrant women may have a relatively difficult time adjust-
ing to a medical system that appears to be unprepared, at times, for their
unique communication needs. The data indicate that respondents may often
feel unsure or anxious about the best way to establish satisfactory health
care. It is an image that appears incomplete and tentative, a process in transition, very much like the assimilation required of many immigrants.

LANGUAGE ISSUES

Language often serves as a barrier between immigrant patients and effective medical treatment. A majority of those involved in this study expressed that they had faced linguistic difficulties in seeking routine medical interactions. Two participants had immigrated several years ago and had studied English prior to their arrival. They both asserted that, although they were well trained in understanding English, speaking was often difficult. Participant #4 recalled her first experience visiting a physician in the United States.

Everything was strange and everything was different. There are no translators. We need translators and we need Chinese medical care people.

Participant #6 recalled her communication challenges during medical examinations.

I understand everything my doctor says, but if I want to say where it is or what kind of problem, I can’t tell her, because I don’t know how to say it. Have some language barriers. There is still a problem with me.

Participant #6 also recalled her frustration and self-criticism for not being able to communicate effectively with the nurse during the birth of her child.

I asked the nurse to bring some milk to the baby, but she misunderstood me and called breastfeeding expert to teach me how to breastfeed. I criticize myself that if I could speak better English. I was embarrassed, a horrible feeling, my baby is crying.

Participant #2 was employed at a medical facility in Hawai’i when data were collected and has volunteered to assist in translating several interactions with Chinese family members, friends, and strangers in the past. As a hospital employee for over ten years, she has observed many situations where linguistic difficulties have influenced medical outcomes. She reported her observations about the communication between a health-care worker and a non-English-speaking Chinese immigrant woman preparing for labor.

If one will have a baby, the Doctors will do a lot of talking, but the patient is Chinese and she doesn’t know, so, she just stands there and nods. But, actually they really don’t understand what the doctor is
talking about. She doesn’t know the consequences, the privacy. We need translators here, especially Chinese.

This excerpt corroborates respondent narratives that suggest that medical providers should implement translation services that can better assist recently arrived immigrants in the United States. Overall, these findings suggest that the Chinese immigrant women involved in this study have encountered communication difficulties during health-care interactions.

CULTURAL GENDER ISSUES

All of the women in this study acknowledged that cultural values and beliefs had influenced their health-care perceptions and behaviors. Values of modesty have inhibited respondents or other women they know from undergoing certain physical examinations. For example, Participant #4 articulated the ways in which cultural values of modesty may influence health-care norms among Chinese women.

In Chinese culture, the only person who can see your body is when you’re married. Your husband, so private, so personal, it’s for him, to show you are pure. You keep your virginity for this man. This is a kind of traditional idea.

Participant #3 recalled her interaction with a male physician who attempted to perform a pelvic exam when she was twelve years old and discussed her reaction and her mother’s resistance to the procedure. Due to strongly held cultural values, the physician’s insistent attitude about performing the pelvic exam was extremely offensive and uncomfortable for the patient and her family.

The way we were brought up you are supposed to be a virgin and you can’t share your private parts with anyone. Typically we don’t talk about medical exams and especially pelvic exams. Once a woman is married and they’re pregnant, having that part examined was allowed, but prior to that it was just, still a very sensitive thing to talk about.

Given the extreme discomfort reported by this individual, she has deliberately sought out female physicians since then, to ensure that she will feel more comfortable sharing her expectations with her provider and inquiring about medical conditions and/or treatment protocol. In doing this, the woman is also able to adhere to her cultural gender values of modesty.

Participant #5 discussed events in which she deferred decision-making power to her husband. She recalled her third pregnancy, which she was not expecting, and the process leading to her husband’s decision to keep the child.
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Although she felt terrible and did not want the baby, her husband wanted the child, and the decision about her pregnancy was gender determined.

So, I keep the baby. So, he was happy. Although I really felt we don’t like baby, it’s a burden. It’s hard for us to make the decision to get rid of baby. It’s kind of a dilemma and if you keep baby, you feel reluctant, if you get rid of baby you feel guilty and terrible.

The same individual also reported that her female physician ignored her repeated requests to replace the birth control pill with the patch. Rather than acknowledging her complaints and showing concern about the negative side effects she experienced while taking oral contraception, the physician scolded her for the previous unplanned pregnancy and instructed her to stay on the current birth control pill.

I’m on birth control and I told my doctor I don’t want to take pills. I want another method for birth control. I chose the patch, but my doctor told me I cannot use patch. So I feel bad and discouraged. I am still sick. I want to change doctors.

Similarly, Participant #4 explained her adjustment difficulty in understanding the best way to communicate with her doctor. Despite the fact that she studied English for several years prior to her arrival to the United States, has experienced stress and uncertainty in medical interactions because she is unclear about how to effectively communicate with her physician.

I am always concerned about her. I shouldn’t waste her time. Chinese culture is always concerned with others. I am not sure what behavior is appropriate. There is anxiety between people of Eastern culture communicating with Western culture because they don’t understand the two cultures.

This section has presented narratives that verify that language and cultural gender values have influenced health-seeking perceptions and behaviors among this group of Chinese immigrant women. Language challenges have often prevented the women from acquiring all of the health-care information they need. Health practices may be culturally informed, while health-care decisions may be culturally bound. In the next section, we discuss the experiences of two respondents who perceived they had been the recipients of discrimination.

DISCRIMINATION ISSUES

Two of the women that were interviewed reported that they perceived having been discriminated against during health-care interactions. In
fact, Participant #5 expressed the feeling that she had been treated poorly because of her Chinese ethnic background. In the following excerpt, she discussed her perception of the negative views that some people may have toward immigrants in the United States.

The others don’t see me as an individual. They think Chinese, that country, many people are very poor. Many people are illegal immigrants, like Mexico and try to live in the country.

Similarly, Participant #6 (whose husband was a physician) felt she was treated poorly by a nurse after a routine operation and attributed it to her race. When she requested that the African American nurse check the draining equipment because she felt ill, the nurse told her it was fine, disregarded her discomfort, and reacted harshly when she requested a second opinion from another nurse. When the respondent was finally able to get a different nurse to check the drainage equipment, the second nurse discovered that it was not assembled correctly and needed to be repaired. Had Participant #6 not requested a different nurse, she would have become seriously ill.

I think this is some kind of prejudice. I think if patients are White, I think they probably get better care (begins to cry and reaches for a tissue). And, I don’t like her attitude, the way she talked. I think this is discrimination. I did feel upset, she is very mean and her gesture is not right.

The preceding excerpts verify that two of the women in this study felt that they had been treated poorly during health-care interactions because of their race or ethnicity. Participant #5 is married to an academic professional in the local community and enjoys middle class socio-economic standing. Also, Participant #6 is married to a medical physician who was employed at the hospital where she recalled her negative experience. It seems noteworthy that, despite the relative privilege that both women occupy in terms of socio-economic standing, health communication interactions have still been problematic and unsatisfying. In the next section, we discuss the ways that respondents attempted to mitigate the communication challenges they encountered, with varying levels of success.

UNCERTAINTY COPING STRATEGIES

Most of the women in this study have developed coping strategies to establish greater satisfaction in medical interactions. Drawing from TMIM, participants applied information-seeking strategies based on interpretation, evaluation, and judgment about decision-making opportunities. For instance, Participant #1 reported seeking health-care information by writing out questions, being direct, and remaining persistent.
I tell the doctor what to do. What are some of the symptoms I have had, since the last time I seen the doctor? And then I say, what bothers me. If I have a question, he’s at the door already, but I’d follow him and I would ask him questions. I do it in such a nice way, killing them with kindness.

Although some individuals reported that they would actively question health-care providers, others perceived decreased communicative efficacy, especially with regards to their English proficiency. In line with TMIM, respondents engaged indirect information-seeking strategies in order to reduce information discrepancy and enhance communicative efficacy. More specifically, Participant #5 reported her feelings of desperation at not being able to understand what her prenatal physician said about her baby’s health. To reduce uncertainty, she learned how to read the written medical notes on the doctor’s clipboard. Despite these creative strategies for accessing information about her unborn child’s health, she reported that she felt inadequately equipped to accurately describe all symptoms to her physician.

If I want to describe the illness exactly, I have difficulty. I didn’t understand and I felt a little bit shy to ask her to repeat everything. I just gave up. I felt desperate. Even though I cannot understand the doctor, I learned to interpret baby heartbeat number from notes on doctor’s paper and understood that the baby and I were well.

These findings suggest that those who perceived they had robust communicative efficacy, target efficacy, and coping efficacy employed direct information seeking strategies to reduce their uncertainty. However, individuals who evaluated their efficacy as low reported seeking information through indirect strategies, such as reading the physician’s notes or questioning third parties for further information.

Although all participants reported that they desired to be informed about symptoms, treatment, and medications, many were unable to articulate specific or technical questions in English. In tandem with TMIM, those who did not perceive they had communicative efficacy reported employing various passive avoidance strategies in health-care interactions. For instance, Participant #5 would write down information from her doctor, but perceptions of low efficacy contributed to her “staying silent,” rather than asking important questions.

I keep a diary of words. I wanted to be a good mom. To tell every symptom I observed. Sometimes I worry that the doctor didn’t examine the right way. I have lots of questions but I don’t know how to speak, so I just stay silent.

TMIM also predicts that when people perceive they do not have the ability to cope with certain kinds of knowledge—medical in this case—they may
engage active information-avoidance strategies rather than seeking information to reduce uncertainty. Participant #1, sadly, recalled her deceased friend, who had traditional values of female modesty and avoided seeking medical care until her disease was terminal.

My neighbor that died, she never did go for a check-up. She finally got sick and too late. She did tell me, I wish I would have a check-up. By the time you realize it you’re gone.

Although Chinese women have lower incidences of cancer than African American and Caucasian women, communicative uncertainty and perceptions of low efficacy may prevent them from seeking medical care until symptoms progress to a terminal state. The narratives presented here suggest that language barriers and cultural challenges may complicate health-care interactions when Chinese immigrant women do seek medical care, despite the creative strategies they apply to reduce information uncertainty.

EPILOGUE: TOWARD AN ACCOMMODATION FRAMEWORK

This chapter emphasizes the ways in which patient backgrounds and perceptions of authority may shape health-care interactions among Chinese immigrant women in the United States. Acculturation research suggests that the length of time a person resides in a new country is positively correlated with communication satisfaction (Hsu 2010, 414–425). This study also found that respondents who lived in Hawai‘i reported more satisfaction, had been living in the United States longer, and were relatively older than respondents who resided in Illinois. Given that Hawai‘i maintains an ethnic plurality between Caucasian and Asian and Pacific Islander groups, physicians may be more sensitive to cultural sensitivity issues during interactions with immigrant patients.

Doctors often maintain control in routine interactions because of situational dependency, authority, and technical training. The National Academy’s Institute of Medicine released a report in 2002 documenting that minority groups from all educational, income, and access levels reported being discriminated against (Smiles 2002, 22–29). Two participants in this study recalled perceiving that they had been discriminated against during health interactions. These findings suggest that medical professionals in the United States could do more to establish effective and satisfying communication with immigrant patients. Effective training for future health-care professionals may include well-defined programs and internships that expose medical students to diverse cultural, social, and gender orientations. Interventions like these could also discuss how cultural orientation may shape perceptions, behaviors, and responses to medical advice and treatment. Such multicultural training, if well-defined and competently
integrated, could promote medical procedures that are perceived as a type of partnership.

In line with communication accommodation theory (Gallois, Ogay, and Giles 2005), Figure 13.2 models some of the intercultural communication processes that may be invoked to conceptualize improvements in status quo (Giles and Giles, in press).

Starting with the top left box, intergroup knowledge can be gained from face-to-face medical interactions, vicarious observations of, and even imagined contact with out-group members (Turner 2010, 289–301). Of value in the present circumstances would be interventions (or so-called mediated intergroup contact programs) that engage the values and practices of Chinese and American societies as they relate to medical situations.

Enriched by this intergroup knowledge, people may develop more positive attitudes toward the other group and may experience increased motivations to be communicatively involved with them (middle lower box, Figure 13.2 A model of accommodative processes in intercultural encounters.)
13.2). This process allows one to be better equipped to make appropriate communicative accommodations to the other, be it in terms of language, key words, phrases, and/or accepted medical regimens for particular contexts.

In an ideal world, these mutual interpersonal and intergroup accommodations will be recognized by participants, and should reciprocal accommodations follow, positive health-care interactions and outcomes will ensue (e.g., intercultural satisfaction with the medical encounter). The situation may become more complicated when Chinese patients who present their medical problems need to incorporate medical subspecialties for treatment and diagnosis. Indeed, problematic dynamics may develop regarding medical “turf wars” even when participants are from the same ethnic group (Watson, Hewett, and Gallois 2012, 244–259). How many more communication issues would surface in an intercultural medical situation is an empirical question worthy of exploration.

Health-care providers have begun to develop community-based interventions that integrate consumer cultural orientations and health education efforts. Designing culturally relevant health messages, enlisting at-risk populations for participation, and promoting computer and technologically mediated interactions have enabled health-care providers to reach marginalized populations who may minimally utilize health or preventative services (Neuhauser and Kreps 2003, 7–23). Educational interventions have effectively provided low-income, uninsured, and underinsured Latina women in New Mexico with health information, Internet access, and health-care services (Ginnossar and Nelson 2010, 328–343). Services like these may help to alleviate the challenges faced by immigrant populations in the United States, many of whom are more likely to suffer from serious health conditions when compared to other populations (Kreps et al. 2008, 315–318).

Health-care organizations have also begun to utilize mobile phones, Facebook, YouTube, and virtual reality to more effectively enhance public health awareness (Macario et al. 2011, 145–150). For instance, the San Francisco Department of Public Health has initiated a sexual health text messaging service that provides facts, referrals, and recommendations to African American youth, ages fifteen to nineteen. Also, the Center for Disease Control has begun to post vaccination videos on the Internet through YouTube that encourage people to avoid preventable diseases through vaccinations. With regards to immigrants in the United States, immigrant-advocacy organizations could collaborate with medical organizations, such as the American Cancer Society, in order to develop and disseminate culturally appropriate health-care messages that accommodate linguistic diversity and expand access to medical services.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has underscored the fact that some Chinese immigrant women may lack voice and representation during health-care interactions in the
United States. Our research also suggests that medical professionals in the United States could better accommodate the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of their patients. The unique experiences of these women suggest that cultural sensitivity and multilingual services have become essential to medical interactions in the modern era. Implementing programs to achieve such competence will expand access to health services for millions and, ideally, will begin to reduce disparities in health and medical access for minority groups in the United States and abroad.

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14 The Multilingual Teacher and the Multicultural Curriculum

An Asian Example for Intercultural Communication in the New Era

*Andy Kirkpatrick, John Patkin, and Wu Jingjing*

**INTRODUCTION**

It is an established fact that there are now many more multilingual speakers of English for whom English is an additional language than there are native speakers. Nevertheless, the native-speaker model and the native-speaker teacher are proving extremely resilient and remain the preferred options in many English-language teaching situations. This is certainly the case in East and Southeast Asia, where governments and language-teaching institutions privilege native speakers over locally trained multilinguals. Indeed, many advertisements explicitly state that only native speakers can apply for English-language teaching positions, even when these teachers have no language-teaching qualifications and have little experience themselves of second-language teaching or learning. (Examples of such advertisements are provided later in this chapter.)

This chapter will critically challenge this privileging of the native-speaker teacher on a number of fronts. First, it will be argued that, as the great majority of Asians are learning English in order to communicate with fellow Asians, the authority of the native-speaker model is much diminished. Instead, serious thought needs to be given to promoting a “multilingual model,” whereby the language of successful multilinguals can be used to provide linguistic benchmarks for the multilingual learner.

In addition to adopting multilingual linguistic norms, the role that English is playing as a lingua franca across Asia also suggests that the pragmatic norms and values of multilingual speakers may be more appropriate for language learners to study than so-called native-speaker norms.

The adoption of a multilingual model has potentially significant implications for the English-language teaching (ELT) curriculum as the study of regional varieties of English and regional cultures become important curriculum components. For example, if people are learning English in order to operate successfully in the multilingual environment of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), where English has recently been adopted as the sole working language, does this not imply that they would profit more from an English curriculum that included the study of regional cultural and regional varieties of English, including the use of English as a lingua franca (ELF)?
This chapter will argue these points, drawing on naturally occurring data, including data from the Asian Corpus of English (ACE) project, of which Kirkpatrick is the director and which comprises naturally occurring spoken English used as a lingua franca by Asian multilinguals. The data are being collected at various sites, including Brunei, Hong Kong, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Vietnam. The chapter will conclude by arguing that much of Asia is entering a “post-Anglophone” period, and this gives further impetus to the need to promote the multilingual teacher and the multicultural ELT curriculum in order to ensure successful regional intercultural communication in this new era.

OUTLINE

It has been well attested for several years that the great majority of speakers of English are multilinguals for whom English is an additional language, and that the major role of English is as a lingua franca. The increase in the role of English as a lingua franca has been further highlighted with the recent creation of the BRICS group, which originally comprised the four countries of Brazil, Russia, India, and China, but now also includes South Africa. In their opening addresses at the April 2011 gathering of BRICS in Hainan Island, China, Hu Jintao of China, the host of the meeting, spoke in Putonghua; Dilma Rousseff of Brazil spoke in Portuguese; and Dimitry Medvedev of Russia spoke in Russian. All three speeches were simultaneously interpreted into English. Presidents Manmohan Singh of India and Jacob Zuma of South Africa spoke in English. The joint declaration was issued after the meeting was written in English.

The BRICS group comprises slightly over 40 percent of the world’s population. With the exception of a small minority of highly educated elites in both India and South Africa who may classify themselves as native speakers of English, the overwhelming majority of the BRICS population are not native speakers of English. Those who speak English will be multilinguals for whom English is an additional language and who use it as a lingua franca.

In China alone, it has been estimated that there are more learners and users of English than there are native speakers of English (Xu 2010). This means that English is being used as a lingua franca and as a language of intercultural communication to an international extent never before seen. Despite the fact that the European Union acknowledges as many as twenty-three languages as official working languages, it is well known that English remains the most commonly used language (Wright 2007).

The ten countries that comprise the ASEAN have used English as the de facto lingua franca of the Association since its founding in 1968. This use of English as the sole official working language of ASEAN was formalized in the Charter of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (the ASEAN Charter), which was signed in February 2009 (Kirkpatrick 2010a).
In this chapter, we shall use the countries of ASEAN as the context for illustrating how the development of English as a lingua franca has influenced intercultural communication in the region. As will be exemplified in the following, Asian multilingual users of English are discussing Asian topics that are related to Asian cultures. This, of course, is not surprising, as the increase in the role of English as a lingua franca will naturally have an effect on intercultural communication in the region.

This shift toward the use of English as a regional lingua franca provides a powerful reason for preferring local multilinguals as English-language teachers, as they are likely to be more familiar with regional cultural norms and values than native speakers. Thus, a traditional advantage of the native-speaker teacher, which is that their in-depth knowledge of the target culture is appreciated (Moussu and Lurda 2008), is no longer relevant in contexts where English is primarily used as a regional lingua franca. In such contexts, teachers with knowledge of the cultures of the speakers are to be preferred. Nevertheless, as shall be shown in this chapter, so-called native speakers remain the preferred choice as English-language teachers, despite the shift toward this Asian intercultural use of English. We shall consider this preference for native speakers over nonnative speakers as teachers of English before arguing the potential importance of regional multilingual and multicultural teachers in this new era of intercultural communication within East and Southeast Asia.

In recent years, there has been an upsurge in interest of the rights of the nonnative-speaker teacher (Braine 2010), along with an increased understanding of the potential advantages and disadvantages of native- and non-native-speaker teachers (Moussu and Lurda 2008; Medgyes 2002). This increased understanding has included the realization that, for the majority of learners of English, approximation to a native-speaker model no longer represents an appropriate target. For example, English speakers in the BRICS and ASEAN groupings may well feel that their major goal in learning English is to be able to use it successfully in international settings. This has been reflected in a call for the inclusion of a more sociocultural approach to second-language learning, whereby the learner’s ability to function successfully in the language can be judged more important than an the ability to approximate an idealized native speaker (e.g., Larsen-Freeman 2007; Firth and Wagner 2007; Swain, Kinnear, and Steinman 2011).

There has also been the realization that insisting on monolingual benchmarks may not be appropriate for those that are learning English to use it as a lingua franca in multilingual settings (Cook 2005). As Garcia has argued, we must understand that a bilingual education “doesn’t accommodate to monolingual standards” and we must “avoid the inequities in comparing bilingual children to a monolingual child in one of the languages” (2009, 386). The aspiration of native-like competence is thus misplaced (Benson 2009, 71), and the second-language speaker should be measured against the bilingual or multilingual speaker (House 2003). In the context of Hong
Kong, where the government policy is to produce citizens who are trilingual in Cantonese—the L1 of the great majority of the community—Putonghua, and English, and biliterate in Chinese and English, it has been argued that the linguistic benchmarks for language learners should be derived not from idealized native speakers of English or Putonghua, but from local L1 speakers of Cantonese who are recognized as being successful multilinguals in Cantonese, English, and Putonghua (Kirkpatrick 2007).

A further tendency that needs to be recognized is the increasing number of “boundary-crossing” language teachers. For example, there are countless examples of teachers of European languages working across the European Union, so that a multilingual L1 speaker of Spanish may be teaching Italian in France. Mainland Chinese who are first-language speakers of Putonghua or other Chinese languages other than Cantonese, are entering Hong Kong’s primary and secondary schools as English-language teachers to students whose first language is Cantonese (Trent, Gao, and Gu, forthcoming).

The importance and value of the trained multilingual-language teacher is also reflected in the increase in the number of nonnative English speaker teachers NNEST special interest groups, such as the nonnative English teachers in TESOL Special Interest Section, founded in 1998 by George Braine.

The special interest group has posted a message on the website that identifies a range of issues that will be discussed (http://nnest.asu.edu/). It reads:

For TESOL 2011, these are the major topics that came up during the meeting:

Proposed topics for 2011

- Examining the ‘E’ in TESOL (i.e. which English)
- Employment issues in Asia
- Non-native speakers and race in the workplace
- How NNEST can compete with NEST in the teaching profession
- Reviewing previous studies and envisioning future of NNESTs
- Topics related to other IS’s can include NNEST focus
- How the NNEST issue is affecting everyone in the field
- Analysis of policies in other organizations

The topics proposed for 2011 suggest that, while progress has been made in the ten or more years since the founding of the group, the nonnative speaker still meets prejudice in the workplace. Despite the increased understanding of the value of the multilingual teacher and the realization that policies that privilege native speakers are prejudicial, if not racist, the demand and preference for the native-speaker teacher remains extraordinarily resilient. The extent that this remains can be seen from viewing a selection of recent advertisements for English-language teachers, almost all of which still insist on applicants being native speakers. The list is, of
course, not exhaustive, but the advertisements illustrated in the follow-
ing are representative of those found in Web pages where ESL jobs are
listed. Note that these advertisements demand a native speaker, and many
require no relevant qualifications. They have been slightly edited where
indicated, and all come from online advertisements such as http://www.
eslcafe.com/joblist/.

Ad #1 English First
Application: English Teachers and Directors of Study—China

Please note: Due to China’s visa requirements, only citizens of the UK,
Ireland, the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa
will be considered for job openings.

Ad #2 Teaching English Overseas with the Peace Corps—77
Countries Worldwide
Posted by: Peace Corps
Date: Friday 22 April 2011, at 2.29 p.m.

(After giving a brief background to the Peace Corps and listing the ben-
efts included in the package, the advertisement goes on to say):

As an English teacher in the Peace Corps, you will be serving a commu-
nity that could not otherwise afford to hire a native English teacher.

Ad #3 Teach English—Korea Thailand ESL/TEFL Job
February 15th, 2011

Teach English in Asia with Aclipse—No teaching Exp Req’d—Korea
and Thailand.

(After giving some information about Aclipse the advertisement lists the
minimum qualifications. These are):

Hold Bachelor’s degree from an accredited university or college
Be a native English speaker (your fi rst language is English)
Hold a valid passport from USA, Canada, UK, Ireland, Australia, New
Zealand or South Africa and have completed 10+ years of education in
one of these countries
Able to commit to a one-year contract
No criminal record of any kind
The advertisement gives a brief description of the campus and position. Then, one of the bullet points listed under the heading Interested candidates MUST is:

‘Be a native English speaker (Non-native English speakers need not apply) from Canada, The United States of America, Australia, England, New Zealand or South Africa.’

These four advertisements are typical of the thousands posted on the Web. It is disheartening to note that the multilingual nonnative speaker is disqualified from applying for any of these positions. This represents a complex combination of linguistic, cultural, and racial discrimination.

So, despite all the advances and scholarship, it would appear that the market remains uncritically and prejudicially in favor of the native speaker. We have elsewhere argued why this is sociologically, politically, and linguistically unsupportable (e.g., Kirkpatrick 2006) and will not repeat those arguments here. In the next part of the chapter, we shall instead argue the case for the multilingual nonnative speaker of English from an intercultural point of view. To do this, we shall be using data collected as part of the Asian Corpus of English (ACE). This is a corpus of naturally occurring spoken English being used as a lingua franca in the Asian region, particularly across the ASEAN countries. The corpus is being collected by a number of teams across East and South East Asia.

The data used here will focus on the content of the interactions, rather than the linguistic features (see, e.g., Deterding and Kirkpatrick 2006; Kirkpatrick 2010a). The reason for this “content” and “cultural” focus is to show that, as English has become a lingua franca in Asia, not surprisingly the major topics of conversation and discussion have become Asian. This Asian cultural content offers a further reason why the multilingual can be a more appropriate English teacher in today’s
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post-Anglocultural world, in that they are much more likely to be able to lead and stimulate discussion topics of topical interest to the learners than most native speakers, especially native speakers of the type likely to be attracted by the advertisements in the preceding section.

In addition, therefore, to including a component on Asian cultures in the sense of Asian cultural and pragmatic norms, the curriculum can also enhance the development of intercultural competence by introducing the notion of cultural conceptualizations and topics of interest and concern to Asian multilinguals. Sharifi an explains “cultural conceptualizations” as being an “integral part of a cultural group’s collective cognition” and, in the context of Australian Aboriginal culture, they illustrate how “the use of English words and phrases by Aboriginal Australians may instantiate schemas and categories that are rooted in Aboriginal people’s view of the world” (2010, 3375), although he stresses that not all members of a cultural group necessarily share these cultural conceptualizations. This notion of cultural conceptualizations complements the notion of “schematic narrative templates” (Kramsch, this volume) and the importance of understanding that different cultures present and understand historical events from different points of view. Thus the development of intercultural competence requires this understanding. The aim is to develop intercultural competence among the learners (Byram, Nichols, and Stevens 2001). This will include developing critical cultural awareness. Critical cultural awareness has been defined as “an ability to evaluate critically, and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one’s own cultures and countries” (Byram 1997, 53). English-language teachers need to have developed this and be able to inculcate it into their students. In the examples that follow, the participants share Asian-based cultural knowledge that enables them to engage in successful intercultural communication. The point to be stressed is that, although these interactions take place in English, the cultural content is Asian. In other words, English as a lingua franca is here acting as a conduit for the expression of Asian cultural values. Only people who themselves are familiar with these values are likely to be successful English-language teachers in these contexts.

The first two extracts from the ACE corpus comprise three participants: a Burmese female (S1), a Vietnamese male (S2), and a Thai female (S3). All three were living in Malaysia at the time of the recording. In the first they use the metaphor of the relative heat of the local chilies when discussing the likelihood of the local women being jealous. In the second, they are discussing the qualities of different brands of Thai rice.

The transcription conventions featured in the following passage illustrate a pause with a dot or number in brackets. Laughter is represented by the @ symbol. A detailed explanation of the transcription protocols is listed in Appendix 14.1.
Chili and Jealousy

S2: good (8) be careful wa:h h (.) when: this country the: the chili
S1: @@
S2: the chili very hot
S3: hm
S2: so women very jealous (.) right? right or not
S1: @@
S2: huh?
S3: hot hot
S1: he say (.) if the country chili is so hot
S3: hm
S1: the woman are very jealous=
S3: =@@=
S1: =so he say like this
S3: @@@ (4) i think this is the [place5] chili (.) if the [place3] or
[place2] chili ooh VERY hot
S1: VERY hot=
S3: =<@>very hot</@> small but hot huh=
S1: =yeah=
S3: =small small=
S1: =TOO small and too hot
S3: ha too small too hot
S1: so he say that's mean a- our peo- our <3>woman are very very
jealous</3>
S3: <3>@@<3/3> @@
S2: right or not
S3: @@@ (.) not necessary ah doctor
S5: @@@
S1: <4><@>not necessary</@></4>
S3: <4><@><@></4> @@
S1: doctor you say woman are jealous you think m- men are not
jealous?
S3: @
S2: not very
S1: ah?
S3: @@@@
S5: @@
S2: not very (.) you got a well woman mm go go with her husband
S1: mm
S3: mm
S2: husband take a land to the other girl
S5: mm
S2: she jealous: mm
S1: <5>@@</5>
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(2) Rice

Rice

S2:  you know when first time i: i bought the thai rice
S1:  mhm
S2:  er royal umbrella
S1:  uh huh
S2:  <fast>very good ( )</fast> but they still don't have the mix
S1:  no
S2:  and bird paradise too
S3:  hm:
S2:  =ah=
S1:  =hm yes
S2:  second time they mix now they mix all thing
S1:  hm:
S2:  and not <5> like </5> original one=
S1:  <5> mix </5>
S3:  =yeah
S2:  so people hate people don't buy and now they eat er paradise bird paradise they eat mm too mm same same er smooth like this
S1:  a:h
S2:  ah
S3:  @@
S2:  but still then people don't buy because they mix a lot
S3:  hm
S1:  a lot of mix
S2:  mm ( ) so not good
S3:  mix mix er=
S2:  =but now only er=
S3:  =local rice?
S1:  <6> yeah </6>
S3:  <6> local </6> rice=?
S1:  =local rice=
The importance of rice as a staple diet for people in the region is the topic of the third extract. The participants are four women, a Bruneian (S1), a Malaysian (S2), a Thai (S3), and a Vietnamese (S4).

(3) The Importance of Rice

S1: <2>guess from<un>xxxx</un></2>
S4: <2>i know that the rice in thailand </2> is very very good is it
S3: yes
S4: rice in thailand
S5: hm
S1: yes we we import most of the rice <3>from thailand</3>
SX-f: <3>rice from thailand</3>
S3: oh i’m glad
S1: yeah <un>xx</un> rice yeah the <4>favourite rice</4>
S2: <4>we are the <un>xx</un></4> planters you know kedah is called the rice bowl of malaysia p- if you go to kedah you can see paddy fields all around you
S5: yeah
S2: because that’s why kedah people if they do not take rice it’s it’s like we do not eat @@
S3: rice is our main meal
SX-f: yeah
S2: i think for all asian countries
S1: <6>yeah i think most of</6>
S3: <6>yes asian contries</6>
S2: rice is a staple food
S5: <7>mhm</7>
S4: <7>rice</7>
S2: <8>in vietnam</8>
S4: <8>it is very very</8> important to Vietnamese

The preceding three extracts assume the participants are familiar with the crucial role that rice plays in not just Asian diets, but Asian culture as a
whole. There is also the assumption that the participants are familiar with the importance of chilies as a supplier of spice to Asian cooking and are thus able to use this idea as a metaphor for jealousy.

In the fourth extract, four participants are discussing the advantages and disadvantages of the private and the public sectors in different Asian countries. This assumes a familiarity with issues connected with the possibility of restrictions being placed on private enterprise being placed in some Muslim countries. The four participants are a Korean female (S1) and three Malaysian males, all of whom are Muslims (S2, S3, S4).

(4) Public or Private

S1: h private like what's your choice private or public sector (. ) you want
S3: private
S2: private
S1: private (. ) yeah for me as well more active <active> \( </pvc> \)
S3: more active
S1: more active <active> \( </pvc> \)
S3: but for security is better government
S1: yes but i think like for korea public sector is still still okay still active
S3: yeah
S1: yeah
S3: but (. ) have (. ) have er
S1: <2>but it’s like</2>
S3: <2>the arts</2> the arts that we’re making is what (fits) of the eyes of the government people
S1: ah
S3: so it feel like kind of still restricted
S1: it’s restricted mm
S3: it’s not <3>( )</3>
S1: <3>cannot fully</3> like express your <4>things</4>
S3: <4>yeah</4>
S1: especially like er er it’s like muslim countries or there there are a lot of er restrictions right tsk
S3: then when when when do what erm government show this er erm put in some one malaysia campaign lah whatever you know
S1: ah
S3: some some shows just
S1: ah
S3: erm cannot cannot fix fit in
S1: mm
S3: the one malaysia
In extract 5, the participants display some uncertainty about Taiwan’s political status. A Chinese female (S1) and a Korean female (S2) are discussing an impending trip to Taiwan by the Korean. She is worried that she is unable to speak Mandarin. They appear to be aware that Taiwan has a complex political identity, but are unsure of what it is, with the Chinese speaker, who comes from Guangzhou in Mainland China, saying that it is not a country but an island, and the Korean then saying that it’s like a city.

(5) Visiting Taiwan

S2: oh yeah but then even taiwan also i have to speak (.) mandarin right
S1: yeah
S2: wha- what if i cannot speak mandarin or anything
S1: e r h
S2: read in in english or
S1: tai (. ) i think it will be okay but if you are going alone tsk well
S2: very hard
S1: it’ll be a l- <8>little difficult</8>
S2: <8>but taiwan is</8> taiwan is very like small country right so
S1: it’s NOT country actually <9>it’s an island</9>
S2: <9>like a city</9> yeah=
S1: =yeah (. ) but you can go to many places taipei tai land the whole island mm you can go to the mountain the famous mountain <L1zh>yu ( ) shan <jade mountain></L1zh> and a lake there

The next four extracts all deal in some way with the issues of intercultural communication and language and identity. In extract 6, a Vietnamese female (S1) is talking to a Filipina (S2) about the problems they face when interacting with people from the Middle East. Their discussion about dealing with people from different cultural backgrounds continues in extract 7, where they talk about language and identity and the ability of identifying Filipinos from the way they speak English.

(6) Middle East Culture

S2: very difficult and we didn’t know h- how how is the culture there h so if we talk to them like er very: like very:: nice maybe they don’t they will er er shouting like that in fact we all feel like
S1: h the thing is if you are not familiar with talking to those people in middle east in general
(7) Recognizing Compatriots

S1: for those for e- tsk the chinese for those who study abroad to:
their accent is very different
S2: very different yeah but for me er when i heard someone speaking
filipinos speaking english i can i can identify even i did i don’t
look at them
S1: of course
S2: i can identify
S1: because every every non-native speakers h speak with an accent
S2: yeah
S1: i even myself if i’m in a train
S2: mm
S1: if some filipino: speaking english i can recognize about fifty or
sixty per cent ah okay they are from philippine
S2: wah is it like yesterday i went to a photo ce- photocopy center
S1: mm
S2: to photostat a book so the lady said the the owner said erm y-
give to the ser- servant there and she was like okay can i do i need
to copy the back cover something like that
S1: ah
S2: she’s from
S1: she sound so filipino @@
S2: yeah and then when she came to me to keep all the book sh- she
heard me talking to my husband in the back room
S1: uh huh
S2: she said excuse ma'am are you from philippines
S1: @@
S2: yes
S1: @
S2: h then i talk in tagalog
S1: ah
S2: then she’s very surprised because it’s been two years she haven’t
S1: haven’t <3>talked to any filipino in</3> <spel>k l</spel>
S2: <3>talked to filipino</3> yeah but she know how to (scout)
S1: o:h
Extracts 6 and 7 contrast the fear of dealing with the unknown (6) with the comfort of recognizing a familiar accent (7). Extract 8 deals with language loss at the expense of acquiring English. Here an Indonesian male (S1) is talking to a Chinese female (S2) about a mutual acquaintance who has been to England and who is now an English teacher. They agree that while she can now speak English “properly,” her Malay has deteriorated and that she now cannot speak Malay “fluently.”

(8) Plus English Minus Malay

S2: <fast>and she’s</fast> <4>she is</4> been:: er: england before or not (. ) she’s BEEN in england before or not
S1: <+4> yes: <+4> been
S2: yah BEEN SHE HAS BEEN in england before or not
S1: before yes (. ) she’s stu- er: she was study there
S2: uh-huh you sure
S1: yah:
S2: er i just (. ) last time we go to her room then i saw her daughter’s picture (. ) daugh<5>ter daughter’s</5>
S1: <+5> she graduated <+5> in england
S2: hh
S1: for the undergraduate
S2: o:h that’s <+6> why (. ) she’s: <+6>
S1: <+6> yah for the degree <+6> program that’s why=
S2: =yah <+7> she speaks <+7>
S1: <+7> she can speak <+7>
S2: a lot yah
S1: english properly
S2: mhm
S1: (. ) and then even (. ) she cannot speak malay @@
S2: she cannot
S1: she cannot er i mean she can but <+8> not fluently (. ) yah <+8>
S2: <+8> just a few o:h <+8>
S1: she cannot speak engli- er:: malay fluently
S2: she’s still here or she’<1> s: (. ) already <+1>
S1: <+1> <fast> she’s still here </fast> <+1> she (. ) she’s: she teaches the: english course

In the final extract, which deals with issues of language and identity, four participants are discussing how complex it can be to identify a multilingual
(9) What Is My First Language?

S2: my first language when I was a child was Chinese. The family members speak different dialects of Chinese. I speak to my father in a different dialect and to my mother in a different dialect. I am at the age of one to three and one to four.

S1: <growing>3</growing>

S2: so two dialects growing at the same time and at the same time our neighbours spoke Malay.

S4: mhm

S2: we live in an area where there were a lot of Chinese living in the area as well.

S1: <your mother's Chinese>5</your mother's Chinese>

S2: my father’s Chinese my mother is Chinese.

S4: mhm

S2: erm so but we spoke dialect Chinese.

S2: so i had so i grew up with a lot of languages around me.

S1: <that's interesting>2</that's interesting>

S2: <and i don't i don't>2</and i don't i don't> actually remember

S2: how i i <only knew>3</only knew> that i was drilled in grammar <but>4</but> erm i felt for a very long time that even when i was i can still think back and i was in kindergarten i could understand the teacher.

S4: <un>3</un><xxxxx>4</xxxxx>

S2: and she spoke erm English

S2: at that time so it wasn’t a major difficulty because i was so small and <so young>1</so young>

S1: <yeah yeah>2</yeah yeah> so what would you say is er what is your first language now.

S2: definitely English now i mean English has <become>3</become> i think in English i

S3: <english>2</english><english>3</english>
SX-f:    @@@
S4:    so you have so you have your mother tongue father tongue
SX-f:    @@@@@
S2:    in the language i use most
S1:    neighbourhood tongue

The preceding four extracts are particularly important in illustrating the complexity surrounding identity and language faced by many multilinguals (Gu 2011; Trent, Gao, and Gu, forthcoming). Again, therefore, we argue that only people who themselves are familiar with and have experienced these tensions themselves would be adequately able to convey these feelings in an English-language classroom.

In the next extract (10), a Malaysian male (S2) (an ethnic Indian and first-language speaker of Tamil) notices his interlocutor, a Vietnamese female (S2), is wearing different-colored slippers. The Vietnamese female explains this jokingly by using the Confucian metaphor of yin and yang. The assumption is that the metaphorical reference to yin and yang representing an unmatched pair will be understood.

(10) Yin and Yang Slippers

S2:    are you wearing different slippers
S1:    same lah i have only one slipper here in the office
S2:    but why are the colors different
S1:    it’s a style mah black and white yin and yang @@@@@
S2:    is that a new style for now
S1:    yeah i see (.) <4>no</4> you see the match between black and white
S2:    <4>this</4> uh huh
S1:    here right here the two this front pair right but this one pair i”s actually one pair
S2:    so you’re saying one of you wear only black
S1:    yes
S2:    okay

The stakes are significantly higher in the next extract, where the participants, three Thai females (S1, S2, S3) and a Burmese female (S4), are talking about people smuggling on the Thai–Burmese border and the mortal dangers associated with it.

(11) Death and People Smuggling

S1:    ah smuggler people ah ah who want to to come in in to thai right but it’s i-
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S3: illegal
S2: oh illegal
S1: ah so that they hide in the truck
S2: uh huh
S1: in the truck and there is a Thai people a Thai guy who drive right
S2: mhm
S1: and they they can’t breathe right because
S2: oh yeah yeah
S1: there’s no air
S2: uh huh
S1: inside there’s no air so they die
S3: how they
S1: how they die
S4: this this year Burmese people go to Thai like that
S3: die in in Burma
S4: no no no the border

The Muslim holiday following the fasting period of Ramadan is known as Hari Raya in Malaysia. In extract 12, a Burmese female (S1), a Malaysian female (S2), and a Sudanese male (S3) are discussing the pros and cons of cooking a cow, a goat, or a sheep for the festival. Again, this discussion assumes religious and culturally specific knowledge.

(12) Hari Raya

S1: (. ) yes (12) so you are so busy this <LNms> hari raya </LNms>
S2: @@ very busy ”m tired really tired <1> because </1>
S1: <1> yah </1> you you ( )=
S2: i cook <2> a lot of </2>
S1: <2> you do <un>xx</un> </2> or:
S2: huh
S1: <un> xx </un> or you do (. ) er: (. ) goat
S2: er:=
S1: =sheep sheep
S2 sheep yah normally we do sheep
S1: sheep huh hm:
S2: because cow need need seven person
S1: yes yes
S2: mhm sheep only one
S1: yeah
S3: (2) in <3> [place1] </3> do you use the goat
SX: <3> so </3>
S1: goat
S3: (. ) goat
S1: mhm cow also some others they do cow rich rich people but nor-
mally our family we only can do goat (1) hm
S2: goat not sheep
S2: mhm
S1: not sheep (. ) we we are not using much sheep we have sheep
S2: mhm
S1: many sheep but normally we eat goat (. ) goat meat
S2: hm: (2) because they said er: goat meat the cholesterol is much
more higher than sheep

The final two extracts were recorded in Hong Kong and both demand a
topical knowledge of the Hong Kong scene. In both extracts, the same ten
participants are taking part in a regular staff meeting of social workers in an
NGO that works with marginalized non-Chinese from mostly lower socio-
conomic backgrounds. The meeting has a dual role of discussing adminis-
trative issues as well as airing the concerns of case workers, their clients, and
interaction with the much larger ethnic Chinese community. S1 is a Hong
Kong male (Cantonese) and the most senior member of the group. The other
participants are a mixture of social workers and community assistants. S2 is
a Nepalese male (Nepali), S3 is an Indian (Hindi) female, S4 is a Hong Kong
male (Cantonese), S5 is a Hong Kong female (Cantonese), S6 is a Pakistani
male (Urdu), S7 is a Hong Kong male (Cantonese), S8 is a Filipina (Tagalog),
S9 is a Pakistani female (Urdu), and S10 is a Hong Kong female (Cantonese).
The first languages of the speakers are placed in the brackets.

In Extract 13, they are discussing the attitudes applicants for the Hong
Kong police had toward the death of a Nepalese, who was shot by a Hong
Kong policeman.

(13) The Shooting of a Nepalese

S1: yeah last year and er the Nepalese homeless Nepalaese was shot
by a policeman (. ) why i raised this question because Nepalese
half of them want to er apply for the: (. ) civil service in as a under
police department they want to become a policeman (. ) i thought
er: (. ) because whenever i talk about this people really show sym-
pathy to the <spel>e m</spel> victims and families hh or the the
poor practice of the policemen (. ) but er on that day i was very
surprised that er the the opinions was (. ) how should i say
<spel>L1zh</spel> ho yat zee</spel> anonymous not anonymous er very

S7: consistent
S5: consistent
S1: consistent yes
S6: mhm
S1: they they think this is quite reasonable to shoot (. ) er to open fire
i i was quite surprised so (. ) er when i explained (. ) the er: when i
share more about (.) er the insensible manners of that police then the they still think that erm somehow this is reasonable (.) any- way er somehow i have er some (.) discussion or open fire with them also yes

S6:  
SS:  
S1:  okay (.) anyway so i see that really this kind group people really have different mindset (.) so it gave me insight that er (.) sometimes it’s skills and knowledge is not most important i think the mindset are most important (.) you know erm (.) er that’s why sometimes when we do about the cultural sensitivity i think we have to use more (.) reflective exercise to know to challenge or to confront with their you know (.) mindset yeah or unwelcoming mindset (.) i think sometimes it also happens on some (.) er govern- ment officials as well

In extract 14, the same participants are discussing whether Islam approves of life insurance. The “senior” Muslim present, the Pakistani male (S6), attempts to provide an answer to S1’s query. S1, who is a Hong Kong male and the leader of the group, is a Christian.

(14) Islamic Insurance

S1:  do you think our members are interested in doing the insurance agents
S7:  well (.) actually there’s another way they can try
S1:  yeah i am just wondering because i i heard from some muslim friends that under islam they are not encouraged to (.) to serve some money (.) life insurance life insurance (.) erm from their koran say what they say is that (.) i don’t know whether it’s true because i cannot validate
S7:  yes <7>this is also</7> my concern just after right away i talked to this miss [last name3] i talked to mister [first name6]
S1:  <7><un>xxxx</un></7>(1)
S6:  actually er <clears throat> it’s really a sometime very hard to say (.) even something (.) even something we are really not quite sure about itslam in general market in general market erm <smacks lips> but you heard (.) that must be true because some some really say must be true hh but f- as a rule as a basic information (.) basic informa- tion i think er hh i will double check and clarify with er a <un>xx</un> big imam in hong kong (.) because why i why i will do this still some <spel>e m</spel> and still they’re muslims they are qualified insurance brokers and working in hong kong for longer time and in the different countries (.) even though in our own country (.) also this practices already being going on for decades and decades
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

These extracts from the ACE corpus illustrate a small sample of the wide range of topics that are being discussed when multilingual people use English as a lingua franca in Asian settings. It is important to note that the choice of English as a lingua franca allows participants to discuss topics and cultural issues that are important and interesting to them as multilingual Asians. The topics here range from the importance of rice, Islamic finance, chili as a metaphor for jealousy, yin and yang as a (joking) metaphor for matchless slippers, language and identity, intercultural communication, people smuggling across the Thai and Burmese borders, and the shooting death of a homeless Nepalese person by a Hong Kong policeman.

It is topics such as these that Asian multilingual users of English need to be able to talk about when using English as a lingua franca within ASEAN and East Asia. This has significant implications for the regional English-language curriculum. The curriculum needs to include information about the different cultures of peoples in the region, on the one hand, and, on the other, needs to allow people to be able to discuss cultural values that are important to them. The curriculum needs to encourage the development of intercultural communication and intercultural competence among the learners, with a major focus being on Asian cultures and values. This will require English language teachers who have such Asian intercultural competence and are trained to develop it in others. It follows, then, that trained multilingual and multicultural teachers who are themselves from the region are likely to be valuable as English language teachers because of their intercultural knowledge and skills. This is not to say that intercultural communication with native English speakers from places such as England, the United States, and Australia is unimportant. However, users of English are increasingly divorced from Anglo cultures. That is to say
that the development of English as a lingua franca in Asia means that English is increasingly a conduit for discussions of Asian cultures and values. The regional English-language curriculum needs to recognize this and the associated value of employing local multilingual and multicultural English-language teachers in order to develop appropriate intercultural competence among regional learners of English. This provides a further argument for employing local multilinguals as English-language teachers. The development of English as a lingua franca in East and Southeast Asia means that intercultural communication in the new era will mean an increasing need for people with intercultural competence and knowledge of Asian cultures and values, who are able to negotiate and discuss these through English. This also means that native speakers from the traditional sites of English, such as the United States and Britain, will themselves need to develop skills in Asian intercultural communication. Thus, regional, well-trained multilingual and multicultural English language teachers are likely to be the appropriate teachers, not only for the locals who are learning English to use it as a lingua franca in the region, but also for native speakers who need to operate successfully in the multilingual and multicultural settings of East and Southeast Asia.

REFERENCES


APPENDIX 14.1 NOTATION CONVENTIONS

The notation conventions used in the transcripts are from VoiceScribe, transcription software developed by the team collecting the Vienna Oxford Corpus of International English (VOICE). The full mark-up conventions can be downloaded from the following website: http://www.univie.ac.at/voice/documents/VOICE_mark-up_conventions_v2–1.pdf.

Here we provide only a selection of the conventions we have used in the transcripts that may not be clear to readers.

Syllables, words, or phrases written in capital letters signal EMPHASIS.

(1): brief pause;

(2): two second pause;

<1> <1>: overlaps (everything simultaneous gets the same number);

S1: Yes=
S2: = indeed (this marks immediate continuation);

A colon (:) signals a lengthened sound;

@ signals laughter; @@@ signals laughter over approximately three syllables;

utterances spoken laughingly are put between <@> tags;
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signals “invented” or unsure words (pronunciation variations and coinages)

<un> signals unintelligible speech;
Thus <un>xxx<un> signals unintelligible speech of approximately three syllables;

<L1> signals use of speaker’s first language;
<LN> signals use of a language other than English or the speaker’s first language;
<L1zh> signals the use of the speaker’s LI, in this case, Chinese (see extract 14);

<spel> signals the speaker spells out the word;
Thus, <spel> E M <spel> means that the speaker spelled out the initials EM ("ethnic minorities" in the context of extract 14).
15 Native or Intercultural Speakers?
An Examination of Dyadic Conversations Between Spanish- and English-Speaking Tandem Learners

Jane Woodin

INTRODUCTION

The origins of the study of intercultural communication as a discipline are often attributed in the West to the work of anthropologist E.T. Hall (e.g., Hall 1959) through his work with the US Foreign Services Institute. The institute adopted a largely cross-national approach (e.g., understanding other cultural groups’ linguistic and cultural behavior), focusing on the training needs of US personnel for overseas missions.

Within the field of applied linguistics, a focus on cross-national comparison is also evident, in particular in the fields of semantics and pragmatics. Examples include Wierzbicka and colleagues’ work on natural semantic metalanguage (NSM), revealing fundamental differences in meaning between everyday words in different languages (e.g., Wierzbicka 1992; Goddard and Wierzbicka 1994) and Agar’s (1994) term languaculture, which he uses as a reminder of the inseparability of language and culture:

whenever you hear the word language or the word culture, you might wonder about the missing half. . . . “Languaculture” is a reminder. (1994, 60)

Cross-cultural comparisons of speech acts by Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989) have shown how clashes in different interactional styles can lead to cultural miscommunication (see also Tannen 1981; House 1979; House and Kasper 1981; Gumperz 1982). Differences in interactive styles and cognitive representations of word meaning identified through the contrastive (cross-cultural) approaches have been assumed by some to provide evidence for how interlocutors from different speech communities might behave in interaction between speech communities, thereby using identified differences as a way of predicting interactional outcomes. This is perhaps seen at its extreme in the intercultural literature in the training field (e.g., Lewis 2006). The assumption that interaction can be predicted on the basis of observed cultural difference does not necessarily follow; interaction is a complex activity, which may or may not be influenced by cultural mis/understanding;
cultural difference cannot therefore be seen as a predictor for what happens in real (as opposed to imaginary textbook) encounters (see also Kecskes, this volume). Blum-Kulka herself (1982) recognizes the limitations of assuming that levels of directness in different languages have comparable illocutionary force; Sarangi (1994) reminds us that a cross-national comparative approach assumes a static notion of culture; Wierzbicka (2010) highlights the power implications of using the dominant “inner circle” English as a “default” language; and Risager (2006) argues that Agar’s term *languaculture* does not allow for the ideolectical nature of language(s) as developed through individual experience. In addition to the recognition of the complexity of culture, and a rejection of the culture/nation alignment, have come new opportunities for communicating across speech communities through the Internet and other forms of technological communication. We all now live in a globalized world, in which the Internet links people together internationally by a common interest that is not related to nationality (Stier 2002, drawing on others) or indeed language use.

Although there is clearly evidence for differences in semantic and pragmatic meaning and style across languages, there is also evidence for differences existing within national and/or speech communities (e.g., the work of Labov 1966 in New York). Indeed, Koole and ten Thije (2001) and later Verschueren (2008) go so far as to argue that from a theoretical perspective there is nothing inherently different about the nature of intercultural communication and communication itself.

Alongside such perspectives has come a recognition that intercultural research requires a focus on what it is that speakers actually do with culture in interaction (e.g., Scollon and Scollon 2001), with the aim of understanding what it is that is happening in “intercultural” encounters (see also Dervin, this volume; Angouri and Miglbauer, this volume). Nevertheless, this position is still predicated on an external notion of culture, in that a researcher would need to decide what can be taken as “culture” before identifying an interaction as “intercultural.” We therefore need to identify what might be deemed to be “culture” in any context when researching intercultural communication.

The intercultural context under consideration in this chapter is that of interaction between Spanish–English tandem learners, that is, real-time interaction in an educational setting between native and nonnative speakers and learners of each others’ language (Brammerts 1995). The definition of “culture” in this context is therefore predefined along language-speaker/linguistic lines, as determined by the activity in hand; however, the approach proposed by Scollon and Scollon described earlier is also adopted, thereby identifying how “culture” emerges as relevant to participants in the interaction itself. It is proposed that tandem learning is a useful site for exploration of the concept of the intercultural speaker as opposed to the native speaker. This chapter will offer evidence of these opportunities through discussions on word meaning. It is argued that even an activity such as tandem learning,
which is based on the “Old Era” of native-speaker–nonnative-speaker divisions, provides evidence of the complexities and multiplicities of identities and linguistic and cultural affiliations within intercultural interactions, which are identified more obviously with “New Era” intercultural communication, where the distinctions between native and nonnative speaker become “almost irrelevant” (see Chapter 1, this volume). It is proposed that in the context of foreign-language learning, the intercultural speaker model needs to be embraced in practice as well as in theory.

LANGUAGE LEARNING AND INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

Within the field of language learning and teaching, culture has for obvious reasons often been defined along linguistic lines; it therefore has concerned itself with comparative approaches relating to linguistic style, behaviors, norms, etc., in relation to the language/culture. Early frameworks for intercultural syllabi reflected this divide, covering lists of recommended behaviors and information (e.g., Brooks 1971) that could be learned much in the same way as language could be learned. The work of Kramsch, Byram, and Zarate (e.g., Kramsch 1993; Byram and Zarate 1994; Byram 1997), among others, reoriented the focus toward the developing of awareness; the understanding of perspectives and attitudes; the relativization of one’s own viewpoint; and the adoption of those of others (see also Anderson and Corbett, this volume).

While there are clearly some elements of intercultural competence (for example, psychological adaptation) that may be outside of the remit of language teachers, there is general consensus among those working in the intercultural/foreign languages field that there are indeed elements of intercultural competence that can be assessed within language learning. Kramsch has argued, as does Byram (1997), that language teachers need also to teach intercultural competence:

Language teachers are not called upon to be amateur psychoanalysts or social psychologists. As educators who teach language in the full sense of the word, their obligation is to confront students with the meanings associated with the specific uses of words, not with disembodied ideas and beliefs. (Kramsch 1998, 31)

The assessment of intercultural competence has been considered as a thorny issue in particular because of the process-oriented nature of the activity and the subjective and personal nature of intercultural competence. But since when has the issue of the native-speaker competence been straightforward? The rejection of the native-speaker model has gathered momentum in recent years, aided also by development of the study of English as a lingua franca (ELF).
Kramsch (1998, 23) identifies three privileges of the native speaker by birth, education, and by being a member of a native-speaker community, arguing that the real question is what prevents potentially bilingual speakers from becoming integrated into a group. Davies (2003) argues through reviews of research that the only theoretical and empirical definition of a native speaker can be one who acquires the language from birth or early childhood exposure; all other distinctions between nonnative and native speakers are based on myth. However, he argues that the reality is that through identification and membership with a speech community, “norms” and practices of the so-called “native-speaker” group serve as a goal for language learners to aim toward. The main issues apart from the early childhood issue are those of confidence and identity:

Even if I cannot define a native speaker, I can define a non-native speaker as someone who is not regarded by him/herself or by native speakers as a native speaker. It is in this sense only that the native speaker is not a myth, the sense that gives reality to feelings of confidence and identity. They are real enough even if on analysis the native speaker is seen to be an emperor without any clothes. (Davies 2003, 213)

Membership of the native-speaker community, then, is reserved for those who see themselves as belonging to it and are accepted as such. Davies accepts that in reality, few second-language learners will in practice become members of the native-speaking community.

Davies’s elements of attitude and identity are central themes for Jenkins (2007), who notes that teachers of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) recognize the invalidity of the native-speaker norm from a theoretical perspective. However, as individuals they may still aspire to an accent resembling that of an English native speaker and use the native-speaker role model in their teaching while still recognizing its theoretical impossibility. Work on World Englishes (e.g., Kirkpatrick 1997) has also contributed to the recognition of the validity of a number of varieties of Englishes.

It is clear then that the native speaker is not a real role model for the language learner. However, with no native-speaker-like role model, it is hard to conceive how one might expect language learners to learn to speak a language. This has led Davies (2003) to argue for the myth of the native speaker—while still recognizing it is a myth—as a useful concept in second-language acquisition, albeit with inherent deficiencies. This position in relation to the native speaker, combined with Risager’s (2006) timely reminder of the ideolectical nature of the language speaker’s identity, leads us clearly to the conclusion that the native speaker is not a straightforward role model for the language learner or teacher, and yet it is still used in the vast majority of language-learning curricula as an indicator of proficiency. A scrutiny of foreign-language assessment practices in pre- and post-16 institutions in the UK will confirm that the mythical
native-speaker model remains unchallenged, and there is little evidence as yet of change from elsewhere.

Byram (1997) proposes to replace the native-speaker model for language learners with that of the intercultural speaker, arguing that the native-speaker model creates an “impossible target,” and also that native-speaker-ness would develop the “wrong kind of competence” (1997, 9) in language learners. He states that language learners need to:

- see and manage the relationships between themselves and their own cultural beliefs, behaviours and meanings, as expressed in a foreign language, and those of their interlocutors, expressed in the same language—or even a combination of languages—which may be the interlocutor’s language or not. (2)

Kramsch (1999) argues that some approaches in foreign-language studies rely too heavily on the national/language/culture boundaries that have been criticized by many as leading to stereotyping and reductionism. There is, however, general consensus that the notions of curiosity, openness, flexibility, and empathy; the adoption of other’s perspective; the decentering from one’s own view; and the ability to articulate one’s position are important hallmarks of the intercultural speaker (Kramsch 1993, 1998; Morgan 1996; Byram 1997; Arasaratnam and Doerfel 2005). It is also recognized (see Kramsch 1998, 31) that not all of these aspects will be able to be developed in the language-learning context, but that there is also much that can be developed within a language-learning perspective, in particular in real-time face-to-face contact.

The New Era demands, then, the development of assessment tools for language speakers that incorporate aspects of the native-speaker mythical role model with a process-oriented and context-dependent approach for the becoming of an intercultural speaker (perhaps an intercultural speaker of a particular language, or more than one language). This might then involve, for example, using the language to find out about one’s interlocutor’s understanding of an event, or—as in the case presented here—a discussion on word meaning leading to understanding of perspectives of others.

**TANDEM LEARNERS’ DISCUSSION OF WORD MEANING**

The culture-dependent nature of words is recognized as one core element that could enable language learners to develop intercultural competence (Agar 1994; Wierzbicka 2010; Williams 1976). This was the focus of a semi-structured task for tandem learners (native speakers and learners of each others’ language). Learners were asked to discuss the meaning of a word for approximately ten minutes in one of their native languages. This was then repeated in a separate discussion of another word in the other language of the pair.
Elsewhere I have considered (Woodin 2007, 2010) how tandem learners draw upon cultural references (in this case defined as country/culture/individual categorization) when discussing word meaning and found that such categorization includes the following purposes:

- To understand/make understood perspectives on the conversation (own or partner’s), including asking one’s partner for their opinion/view (country/language; self/other)
- To mark difference/similarity in the meanings of the word
- To identify a need for help from one’s partner, e.g., help with vocabulary
- To identify with the “other” culture/country/language (i.e., that normally associated with their partner)
- To relativize one’s view of the word (e.g., where they state that something is just their opinion)
- To stick to one’s opinion and indicate no change in meaning
- To move the conversation on (for example, where it becomes evident that there is no development in the word meaning discussion)
- To refer forward or backward in time through the conversation—e.g., incorporating or comparing earlier perspectives on the word meaning (Woodin 2007, 2010)

The range for which cultural references are made is broad and sometimes seemingly contradictory (e.g., marking both similarity and difference), depending on the context. It can have the effect of bringing interlocutors into the same shared space as well as at other points distancing them. The first four actions described in the preceding tend to position interlocutors more clearly as native–nonnative speakers in the interaction. These elements are the focus of this chapter. Also considered here is the positioning of interlocutors in relation to what might be considered their native language/cultural frames in relation to the word meaning, and holding on to and letting go of perspectives on the word meaning.

Four examples from the corpus are given that are illustrative of a variety of issues of direct relevance to native/intercultural speaker. ³

Tandem learning is by nature defined as native–nonnative interaction on the basis of autonomous, reciprocal exchange of NS–NNS roles in bilingual conversation. Drawing on the approach proposed by Scollon and Scollon (2001), a discussion follows as to how interlocutors draw upon cultural references (as described earlier) that identify themselves or their partner as native/nonnative speakers (NS/NNS). Consideration will also be given to where interlocutors do not identify themselves as NS/NNS where they might have done. The examples given in the following are all extracts from the ten-minute conversations on word meaning. All participants were invited to use a supporting worksheet if they wished to do so.⁴
From a conversation-analytic perspective, of particular relevance here are instances of repair. The term “repair” in conversation analysis refers to “organised ways of dealing with various kinds of trouble in the interaction process” (ten Have 1999, 116). Much of the identification of oneself or one’s partner as NS or NNS appears to be marked by repair. In the vast majority of these cases, the instances of NS/NNS marking through repair are initiated by the NNS. In the data from the conversations, the most common examples of NS-NNS distinction are self-initiated repairs where the NNS asks for some linguistic help during a conversation.

Example 1 is from a conversation between Lily (NNS) and Maica (NS) discussing the word cooperar. This conversation contains numerous instances of repair that identify them as NNS/NS, respectively (see Appendix 15.1 for transcription conventions).

**Example 1: Sequence 4, Lily & Maica (cooperar)**

```
1. M: pero para ti cooperar significa (.) ayuda (.) o?
   *but does co-operar mean (.) help for you (.) or?*

2. L: um (.) no, no ayuda
   *um (.) no, not help*

3. M: ¿no?
   *no?*

4. L: hablar pero . . .
   *to speak but . . .*

5. M: para mí significa ayuda (L jeje) significa completamente distinto
   *for me it means to help (L laughs) it means completely different (.) it has a completely different meaning*

6. L: estos son las dos para mí (.) ayudar (.) y hablar
   *it's both for me(.) to help(.) and to speak*

7. M: pero hablar, cómo?
   *but to speak, in what way?*

8. L: hablar (.) si tú um (.) di dices a mí um vas a quiero que no
   *to speak if you um sa say to me you are I want you (.) are not co-operating with I*

9. M: conmigo
   *with me*

10 L: conmigo, Y (..) yo coopero? jeje
    *with me and (..) I co-operate? (laughs)*
```
Maica identifies herself as native speaker (NS) and Lily as non-native speaker (NNS) in turn 9 when she corrects Lily (conmigo), which Lily takes up immediately.

If the word meaning itself were considered by interlocutors to be an issue for repair along the lines of linguistic meaning, one might expect further instances of repair. Obvious opportunities for this are in turns 1 (Maica asks her partner what cooperar means to her, rather than position herself as NS), turn 6 (Lily puts her perspective on the meaning of the word as opposed to deferring to Maica), and turns 5 and 11 (Maica differentiates her and her partners’ understanding of the word and explains her position with no reference to ownership or native-speaker-ness).

With regard to word meaning, then, there is no explicit referencing to native or non-native speaker. Interlocutors clearly hold different meanings of the word, yet at this point in the conversation neither partner identifies this difference explicitly as related to the word meaning. Maica’s comment (T5) tiene un significado completamente diferente, could almost be taken as her stating that this is what the word means, as she rephrases twice and therefore distances the para mí from tiene un significado completamente diferente, but this is not explicit and neither is it taken up as so by her partner.

In this conversation, both partners have difficulty understanding each other’s perspective. This is not explicitly attributed by either partner to issues of foreign language/mother tongue (such as the meaning of the words cooperar/cooperate), although there would appear to be scope for this, if one assumes from the conversation that Lily is indeed thinking of the meaning of cooperate.

It is interesting that interlocutors appear to have no difficulty in adopting the NS–NNS stance with reference to linguistic-related repair, but when there is “trouble” related to joint understanding of word meaning, then they do not appear to consider possible differences in word meaning. This is typical of the body of conversations from which these are examples; the majority of markings of NS–NNS relationships are through linguistic (grammatical) repair as opposed to semantic (meaning-related) repair.

Indeed, would we want language learners to accept that the word meaning, because it is spoken in a foreign language, should be considered as the right and privilege of the native speaker alone? I would argue strongly not, and in the New Era evidence would also support this, as we become increasingly multilingual and multicultural in a linguistic sense. However, it remains that there are indeed differences across languages in relation to word meaning, and I am not suggesting that these are ignored. Rather I am...
proposing that the tension between linguistic differences in word meaning and ownership—or not—of word meaning offers an exciting opportunity for the development of intercultural competence. After the consideration of two more examples, I shall summarize the opportunities that it offers.

The second example is from the same conversation between Lily and Maica, responding to one of the questions on the support sheet (Your personal experience of this word in your life).

Example 2: Lily & Maica (cooperar), sequence 5

1. L tu experiencia personal de esta la palabra en mi vida um (..) mi experiencia de este palabra um ha hecho todo (.) en (.) las clases por ejemplo (.) en o (.) por ejemplo cuando penso de una frase con la palabra cooperar um penso
   your personal experience of this word in my life um (..) my experience of this word um has done all (.) in (.) the classes for example (.) of or (.) for example when I thinks of a phrase with the word cooperar um I thinks

2. M pienso
   I think

3. L pienso um (.) de una (..) no sé la palabra en español um penso de (..) un lugar con policías
   I think um(.) of a (..) I don’t know the word in Spanish um I think of (.) a place with police

4. M Sí?
   Yes?

5. L Sí qué es qué es un lugar donde hay muchos policías se llama qué en español?
   yes what is a place called where there are lots of police what is it called in Spanish?

6. M Eh, comis[aría
   police station

7. L, la casa], sí comisaría jeje
   the house, yes, police station(L laughs)

8. M que tiene que ver con
   what does that have to do with

9. [L sí como
   M ah ayudar a gente]
   yes, like
   ah helping people
10. I um (.) no si (.) si porque cuando (.) no puedo explicar en español porque mi español no es muy bien jeje
   um (.) I don't know if (.) because when (.) I can't explain in Spanish because my Spanish isn't very good (laughs)

11. M intenta intenta melo sí
   try try to do it for me go on

12. L porque la gente si (.) son en la comisaría tienen que cooperar porque es la ley?
   because the people if they are in the police station they have to cooperate with because it is the law?

13. M esto qué?
   What?

14. L the law
   the law

15. M de qué?
   what?

16. L No sé la palabra
   I don’t know the word

17. M Ah the ley the leyAh
   the law the law

18. L Sí
   yes

19. M Es que yo, yo no hubiera es que cooperar lo veo más como ayuda
   It's that I wouldn’t have its that cooperate I see it more like help

20. L sí?
   yes?

21. M sí para mí cooperar es igual que ayudar entonces cuando yo pienso en cooperar pienso a lo mejor en un grupo de trabajo que (.) cooperan el uno con otro, eh (.) de allí también la cooperativa, la socie (.) la fábrica cooperativa que son fábricas que tienen relaciones con otros allí en parte
   yes for me cooperate is the same as help. So when I think of cooperate I probably think of a group of work who, cooperate amongst themselves, eh also the cooperative, the cooperative factory which are factories which have relations with others there partly

22. L hablas más lento
   speak more slowly
Maica initiates a repair in turn 2, correcting Lily’s incorrect use of *pensó*, with the word *pienso*, which is taken up and used correctly by Lily immediately. It is Lily after that, however, who identifies herself very clearly as NNS when she says she does not know the word in Spanish (turn 3), and again in turn 5 when she asks directly for an item of vocabulary (*comisaría*) from Maica. She then offers the excuse *no puedo explicar en español, porque mi español no es muy bien* (sic) (turn 10). Maica recognizes this and proposes she try. Again in turn 12, Lily initiates a repair in order to find the word *law* in Spanish, which Maica offers in turn 11 after some negotiation of meaning.

There is clear contrast between Lily’s deferring to her partner on the use of language at the level of form, but not at the level of meaning, in both examples. This is typical in the corpus of conversations, although more marked in this conversation than in others, perhaps because of Lily’s level of linguistic proficiency in relation to making herself understood (see discussion later).

There are here again opportunities for Maica and Lily to take an NS-NNS stance with regard to the word meaning. Lily’s preference is to expend considerable energy in clarifying her perspective on the word, rather than defer to her partner’s understanding of the word. For example, as opposed to investing great effort into in attempting to explain the use of *cooperar* in relation to police (most probably a reference to the frequent collocation of *cooperate* with *police* in English), she could simply have opted to ask her partner more about why for her *cooperar* meant *ayudar* (to help) at the end of example 1. Similarly her partner, Maica, expresses interest in understanding Lily’s perspective.

It would seem from these examples that it is easier to mark oneself as native speaker when the issue is syntactic (grammatical “error”) as opposed to being semantic/meaning-based.

To offer a very different style of conversation, coincidentally based on the word *cooperate* in English, Gill (NS) and Eva (NNS) form one of the rare partnerships from the corpus that identifies differences in the word meaning as a possible factor in differences in perspectives on the meaning...
Example 3: Sequence 1, Gill and Eva: (*cooperate*)

| 6.  | G like um the people who have contact with do you generally co-operate well with them or |
| 7.  | E oh then I might not have a good understanding of the word um= |
| 8.  | G =what did you think, what did you say that you thought it meant co-operate |
| 9.  | E um for example um two countries that co-operate uh with uh fighting against terrorism [for example |
| 10. | G okay yeah what you use this word for uh States and Britain co-operating to to fight terrorism and |
| 11. | E yeah |
| 12. | G what in this case you mean it’s bad cooperation |
| 13. | E Well maybe it’s maybe they have a good co-operation but [for bad purposes= |
| 14. | G oh I see] sure |

of the word. Eva (NNS) initiates a repair (turn 7), which is more of a reflection than a direct request to Gill for repair.

It is interesting to note Gill’s response to Eva’s reflection on whether she understands the meaning of *cooperate*. Rather than claim ownership of the word meaning and explain what it means to her partner, Gill opts for better understanding of Eva’s perspective. Eva’s perspective is thus given validity by her partner, and she is not marked either as less powerful or deficient in some way because she does not have complete access to the word meaning in English. The opportunity for the NS to mark herself as NS has not been taken up (see earlier discussion on acceptance into communities).

It is also to be noted that very few moments exist in all of the conversations where an interlocutor recognizes that differences in understanding of the word meaning can be related to differences in the word meaning in Spanish and English.

Does it take both interlocutors to identify someone as NS or NNS? Elisa (NS, *público*, see example 4) corrects her partner’s linguistic usage of *sentir (se) importante*, but her partner, Hannah, does not legitimize this through appropriate reciprocal recognition of her NNS position. It would appear then that it does take both interlocutors to recognize NS–NNS positioning as a feature of the interaction; without this, it is not legitimized.
In turn 6, Elisa offers a correction to her partner's use of sentir (the grammatically correct version here being sentirse), thereby positioning herself as NS and her partner as NNS. This correction, however, is not taken up by Hannah, who chooses to continue with her story regardless of her partner's intervention. There is therefore in this sequence no joint recognition of the NS–NNS roles.

**Example 4: Hannah (NNS) and Elisa (NS), público**

**Sequence 2**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>H = sí mucha gente en Inglaterra es lo mismo pero yo no me gusta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(both jeje)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>E así es (1.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>yes, right(1.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>H pienso que es porque los ingleses le gustan a sentir importante</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>I think it is because English people like to feeling important</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>E sentirse importante</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>feel important</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>H y en el público hay mucha gente no importa (mm) una persona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>and within the public there are many people who don't care and</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>that's the difference</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DISCUSSION**

As explained earlier, tandem learning is defined along linguistic-cultural lines as interaction between native and nonnative speakers of a language who wish to exchange language learning with their partner. Based on the principles of autonomy and reciprocity, it is considered an equal relationship that helps to develop linguistic and cultural proficiency. A number of issues arise here that inform the discussion on native/intercultural speaker. Firstly, it appears that both externally imposed definition (NNS–NS conversation) and internal evidence coincide in recognizing the tandem relationship as a linguistic NS–NNS conversation, that is, deference to partner on linguistic grounds is evident in the case of Lily and Maica, where there is clearly more need for linguistic checking and correction because of the level...
of proficiency of Lily. This differentiation also reminds us of how difficult it is to remove entirely the native-speaker model from the language-learning framework. If someone is having difficulty in making themselves understood because of lack of linguistic knowledge and understanding, then it is likely that they will defer to norms of usage (as may be embodied in a native-speaker model, whether real or imagined) in order to help themselves to become better understood. There is a choice, however, as to whether one identifies oneself as NS or NNS, and for legitimization of the roles in terms of subsequent action it requires both interlocutors’ acceptance of each other as NS or NNS. Secondly, it does not appear that interlocutors consider word meaning as necessarily the property of the native speaker. Lily goes to considerable lengths to put forward her perspective on the word meaning, but defers immediately for help from her partner on linguistic issues. Gill rejects a native-speaker position on word meaning offered to her by her partner.

This raises a fundamental question in relation to the adoption of the intercultural speaker model. Would we as language educators really want language learners to adopt the meaning of the word, or, indeed, is it even possible? Lantolf (1999), drawing on work by Grabois (1997), argues that it is not at all easy for L1 speakers to adopt L2 meanings of a word. What is more interesting perhaps than to aim for the impossible native-speaker model is the recognition that, while we may still recognize the need for linguistic proficiency, there is also a need for the development of language learners’ awareness of possible differences in word meanings between languages.

The ability to move between perspectives is of importance for language learners in the New Era. In a later episode of Lily and Maica’s conversation, Lily proposes to Maica that they might both have different understandings of the word, after which the conversation moves from the fixed positions in relation to the word meaning, and there are then attempts to understand each other’s perspective. In a later episode of Gill and Eva’s conversation, Eva, as an NNS, uses the same example of cooperating with the police as did Lily. In these tandem conversations, word-level meaning cannot be defined solely along native-speaker linguistic lines; it is claimed as the domain of the nonnative speaker as much as the native speaker. I propose that this tension between language ownership and “native-speaker-ness” can be exploited for awareness-raising, decentering and adoption of perspectives of others.

In the New Era, these abilities are known to be urgent. With distinctions between native and nonnative speakers becoming increasingly fuzzy, language learners can no longer rely on an outmoded (although still useful) native-speaker-like model, but need to develop broader and deeper understanding and skills relating to ownership of meaning, decentering, perspective taking, and movement between perspectives.
NOTES

1. Earlier research has also recognized that not all language learners aspire to native-like competence. Janicki (1986) hypothesized that 100 percent accommodation is generally not welcome from the perspective of the native speaker, and House (2002) reminded us that many language learners would also not wish to be viewed as native speakers.

2. This formed part of a larger project (see Woodin 2007, 2010) where eleven pairs of conversations were scrutinized with a focus on identifying the intercultural nature of tandem conversations.

3. Two of these four examples are from the same conversation.

4. The worksheet included questions inviting them to consider the word meaning in linguistic and social contexts, through questions such as “What other words does this word make you think of?” Or “How is this word used by the media?”

5. The identification of oneself or one’s partner as native speaker/nonnative speaker is not necessarily the same as the identification of self and other or that of language/country. For example, a Spanish partner may say, “In Spain x happens.” This may mark them as Spanish (or at least as having some knowledge of Spain), but it does not necessarily mark them as an NS or NNS. However, if one partner says, “How do you say X in English?” they are clearly marking themselves out as the nonnative speaker (i.e., English foreign-language speaker) and their partner as the native speaker (i.e., English mother tongue speaker).

6. There are some differences in common meanings between the word co-operate and cooperate.

7. Grabois examined L1 and L2 conceptual frameworks, through which word meaning can be represented in the minds of speakers, and found L1 speakers draw on L1 frameworks even when speaking in the L2. This was found to be the case even with ten years’ residence in the L2 with everyday L2 usage.

REFERENCES


APPENDIX 15.1

Transcription conventions used in this chapter.

**Turn Taking:**
A turn is identified as when the other person takes the floor. Not considered to be markers of turn taking are backchannels such as *mmm* unless there is a break in the conversation.

**Overlapping:**

[for the point of overlap onset]

|] for the end of the overlapping

= indicates latching- that is no gap between the lines/turns

**Intonation:**

? indicates rising intonation (a question)

, indicates a continuing intonation as if reading items from a list

. indicates a stopping fall in tone or final tone

**Pausing:**

(.) micro pause

(. ) brief pause

(0.5) pause of indicated length

**Vocalizations:**

jeje—laugh
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Corbett, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), and the author of The Phraseology of Administrative French (Rodopi, 2006). She directs the AHRC-funded project, Mapping Metaphor with the Historical Thesaurus (www.glasgow.ac.uk/metaphor).

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