DISRUPTING LITERACY PRACTICES IN A LEARNING COMMUNITY: EMPOWERMENT THROUGH VOICING

WENDY CUMMING-POTVIN *Murdoch University*

ABSTRACT. This paper adopts a sociocultural perspective on learning (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986) to explore connections between the concept of voicing (Bakhtin 1981, 1986) and a Year four student's second language learning in Australia. Results are drawn from a qualitative study conducted in the Australian outback, through ethnographic research strategies, which involved implementing a Language and Culture Awareness Program in a Year 4 classroom. Analysis of selected data related to the learning and development of Jerry, a Year four student, is framed within a discourse of values and practice (Bourdieu, 1990, 1993; Cummins, 1996). The discussion relates Jerry's opportunities to explore French through purposeful tasks to the disruption of ritualized practices in a predominantly Anglo-Catholic community.

POUVOIR DIRE: L' INTERRUPTION PAR LA VOIX DE PRATIQUES DE LITTÉRATIE DANS UNE COMMUNAUTÉ D'APPRENTISSAGE

RÉSUMÉ. Cette étude emprunte une approche socioculturelle (Vygotsky1978,1986) à fin d'explorer les rapports entre le concept de la voix (Bakhtin 1981,1986) et l'apprentissage de langue seconde chez un étudiant de l'Année 4 en Australie. Par l'usage de stratégies de recherche éthnographique, on tire des résultats d'une étude qualitative menée dans le outback australien; étude qui comporte la mise en place dans une classe de l'Année 4, d'un programme de conscience de langue et de culture. L'analyse des donnés sélectionnées rélatifs à l'apprentissage et le développement de Jerry, un étudiant de l'Année 4, s'encadre à l'intérieur d'un discours de valeurs et de pratiques (Bourdieu, 1990,1993; Cummins, 1996). La discussion qui suit établit le rapport entre des occasions pour Jerry d'explorer le français par les taches intentionnelles et l'interruption de pratiques ritualisées dans une communauté de prédominance culturelle anglo-catholique .

Introduction

In contemporary societies characterized by globalisation and migration, a sociocultural approach to cognition (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986) has become increasingly pertinent for examining children's learning. Over the past

decade, sociocultural research in the area of language and literacy has generated explanations about knowledge acquisition as a process of being accepted into a community of practice, which is linked to the construction of identity (Beaumont, 1999; Dyson, 1999, 2001; Rogoff, 1990). Whilst there is increasing interest in how children construct their identity through mediated action, most researchers have focussed on issues relating to first language learning. According to Toohey (2000) some second language theorists have begun to conduct studies from a social-historical perspective (Norton, 2000; McKay & Wong, 1996), which takes account of learners' position in communities. Still, further research is needed to investigate progress in second language learning while considering aspects such as access to activities, obstacles to participation and negotiation of identities in communities.

This qualitative study aimed to understand how second language learners' identities were negotiated and literacy practices evolved as students engaged in a community of practice. From this perspective, literacy involves mastering the symbolic media and understanding how to manipulate words and concepts in an accepted cultural manner through daily social interaction (Reid, 1998; Rogoff,1990). Conducted in a context of geographical isolation in the Australian outback, the study tracked the literacy learning of three Year four students, particularly in relation to French as a second language, which was introduced in a Catholic primary school and the local community.

Based on selected results from the study, this paper focuses on Jerry (one of three Year four case study students) who engaged in a Language and Culture Awareness Program (LCAP) with a variety of partners in both formal and informal settings. The LCAP was designed to introduce French, which is described as a Language other than English (LOTE)[1] in the Australian school system. Jerry's learning and development in this predominantly Anglo-Catholic school are discussed and related to home literacy practices and cultural and linguistic background. Jerry's patterns of voicing are also analysed by exploring the connections between appropriation (Bakhtin, 1981, 1986; Sahni, 2001; Toohey, 2000), construction of identity and use and understanding of language. Here, the work of Rogoff (1990) widens the term appropriation to include not only speech patterns, but also cultural practices, which are often internalised through joint construction, such as children's guided participation in daily activities.

A sociocultural perspective: Cognition, voicing and identity

Many assumptions about cognition, such as the links between human cognition, communication and sociocultural contexts (Bakhtin, 1981, 1986) connect explicitly to the social constructivist view of identity (Toohey,

2000; Wertsch, 1991). In particular, the term voices, derived from Bakhtin's works, is pertinent for examining construction of identity as viewed through a process of mediated social interaction. Bakhtin (1981) argued that spoken texts originate through complex and multifaceted exchanges. Each word uttered can be viewed as a joint production between speakers and listeners, although the voices may be distant and unnamed (Toohey, 2000; Winch et al. 2001). Gilligan (1993) suggested that the concept of voice is simultaneously relational, cultural and deeply psychological, which lends to an examination of "the self" as a socially constructed entity located in a network of discourses. Fulwiler (1994) summarized voice as providing a view of personal identity largely determined according to where one lives, works, plays and with whom one interacts.

In addition, the socio-political forces which encourage individuals to adopt the voice of authority within a given community cannot be dismissed (Wertsch, 1991). With respect to diversity, the favoured voice of authority may influence the manner in which children appropriate and transfer information from a second language to a first language and vice versa. Cummins (1996) and Saunders (1991) investigated the influence of socio-political factors, such as official and unofficial language status on learners' linguistic competence. Bourdieu (1993) refers to these forces as linguistic capital and profits, implying that communication even between two people is dominated by overall political structures. For example, in Quebec or in French post-colonial Arab countries where political stakes are high, social situations are characterized by a clear relationship between linguistic status and political power.

In a longitudinal ethnographic study conducted in Canada, Toohey (2000) considered how non-English speaking background children appropriated voice as they learned English in kindergarten, Year 1 and Year 2. Conclusions indicated that second language learning from a Bakhtian perspective can be viewed as a struggle for learners to appropriate legitimized words in the community. From this viewpoint, learners' progression through the zone of proximal development represents more than the accumulation of knowledge (Bruner, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978) but also the construction of a social space through which individual identities are negotiated and communities are established. Particularly during primary school years, Dyson (1999) and Sahni (2001) observed, as children appropriate or transform material in formal and informal contexts they display competency and gain a sense of control over their lives.

Moreover, depending on the participatory culture of the classroom and peer relationships, literacy practices from children's informal worlds can be used to mediate and extend reflections on language in formal educational settings (Dyson, 2001). From this perspective, learning cannot be dissociated

from the process of constructing one's identity, which is perceived as becoming a member of a community by both adopting and rejecting attitudes and practices. This shift towards a dialogical rather than an individual construction of identity focuses on social practices which involve individuals' initiations, the responses of others to these actions and to surroundings.

Methodology and research context

The study was designed broadly to deepen understanding of how Australian educational institutions might adapt to and celebrate the richness of diverse student populations. The research context involved a diverse sociocultural and linguistic community in the outback of Queensland, with particular emphasis on a Year four classroom at Saint Gabrielle's Primary school (pseudonyms are used to protect the anonymity of participants). To understand the multiple relationships operating between space, objects and people within the school, a qualitative approach, which views reality as evolving (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) was adopted. Diverse tools such as videotaping, semi-structured interviews, participant observation, document analysis and a parent questionnaire, were used to triangulate data and assist in the creation of three case studies which focussed on the following Year 4 students: Tom, Sarah and Jerry.

To gain an holistic understanding of how these students' learning and development changed during activities conducted in LOTE and English, ethnographic strategies involving intense and prolonged field contact were utilized. For example, over a period of nine months, the principal researcher, who was also a member of the remote community and a parent of children at the school, adopted the dual role of teacher- researcher in Class 4O, which consisted of 29 students and Mr. O'Hara, the classroom teacher. All of the students had little or no previous experience with LOTE in formal classroom settings. However, in terms of language use at home, data from the parent questionnaire indicated that 17% of the 29 families spoke English and at least one minority language at home.

One of the major ethnographic strategies consisted of a 'teaching experiment' that focused on tracking student learning and development in relation to use and understanding of language and construction of identity. The term "teaching experiment" is based on an innovative research methodology introduced by Vygotsky (1978, 1986) and described by Davydov (1994) to examine children's development, particularly in relation to socio-cultural patterns established through upbringing and teaching. Because this type of experiment involves the researcher as an active participant in the psychological and cultural processes studied, it differs significantly from the verification method that aims to isolate and control independent variables. Cummins (1996) implemented a 'teaching experiment', which was con-

ducted with parents and students in a Californian school community char-
acterized by a high proportion of Spanish-speaking migrants. Positive out-
comes for Spanish speaking parents and children were reported, such as the
validation of their home linguistic experiences. Cummins' model was adapted
for the present study to allow for the design and implementation of a LCAP,
which aimed to challenge students to extend their current understandings
and literacy practices by exploring a diverse socio-cultural and linguistic
environment, which was centrally positioned in a Catholic setting.

Pedagogy involved the researcher's animation and observation of a series of
formal and informal literacy activities for students, which focused on bilin-
gual shared reading. These classroom experiences complemented the class-
room teacher's planning in other learning areas such as Social Studies and
English. Parents were encouraged to participate by animating shared read-
ing experiences in the classroom, with the option of introducing a LOTE
through story. As well, the city council librarian conducted bilingual story-
telling at the local library and informal bilingual literacy activities were
organized in home settings. Although the teaching of French was a focus of
the LCAP, languages such as Dutch and Danish were used to construct tasks
which were responsive to students' linguistic and cultural background.
English was also utilized due to its official status as the national language of
Australia and its predominant use in the local community.

History and physical environment of Saint Gabrielle's Primary School

In 1932, an Australian Catholic order of mainly Anglo-Celtic Sisters founded
the school, with the aim of providing a Catholic education for Catholic
children. Whilst enrolments were originally restricted to female students,
from 1985 onwards male students were also accepted. The school's close
association with the Order continued with the appointment of Sisters as
school principals until 1999. Despite the focus on teaching Catholicism to
Catholic children, the school population was characterized by socio-cul-
tural, linguistic and religious diversity. This was partially explained by the
predominance of the mining industry in the local community, which em-
ployed a workforce characterized by diversity, including numerous ex-patriots.

Whilst the physical surroundings were somewhat characteristic of many
state schools, close observation of the school environment revealed an
emphasis on acquiring a Catholic identity. Institutional icons placed through-
out the school exposed staff, students and visitors to symbols of Catholicism.
In all classrooms, "Holy corners" were used to display Catholic devotional
icons such as statues of Mary, crucifixes, candles and bibles, which were used
during religious celebrations. Crucifixes and pictures of Mary were displayed
in the school's front courtyard, staff room and administrative office. The
school emblem, which appeared on official school documents and on stu-

dent hats included the motto "know-love-serve" and the symbol "pax" for peace. Whilst many of these icons were representative of a Catholic herit- age, the physical environment also reflected the predominantly Anglo- Celtic heritage of the school's history. For example, the allocation of rooms accommodated several specialist subject areas and resources, which were taught exclusively in English, such as Singing, Learning Assistance, Behav- ioural Modification and Orchestral Tuition and Rehearsal. However, a school area reserved exclusively for LOTE was absent.

Practices at St Gabrielle's Primary School: Anglo-Catholic identity and diversity

A number of collective practices were associated with the expression of a Christian-Catholic identity through rituals including routine events, such as courtesy exchanges, prayers, assemblies and the distribution of newslet- ters. In such settings, students are centrally positioned through religious practices and norms that build literate identities (Lesko, 1988; Luke & Kapitzke, 1994). For example, the principal, staff and students integrated the phrase "Peace be with you" in daily greetings such as "Good morning" and "Good afternoon". During the weekly school assembly, students were asked to pray to God and to make the sign of the cross at appropriate moments, such as before the presentation of a class prayer, which was often structured using oral language, music and dance to symbolize Catholic values.

Practices that overtly promoted allegiance to the Commonwealth govern- ment of Australia or the British monarchy and/or reinforced the expression of an Anglo-Australian identity were also observed. For example, all prayers and religious ceremonies espousing Catholic values, such as Eucharistic celebrations and preparations for Easter were conducted in English. Weekly school assemblies also began with a display of the official version of the Australian flag (which was associated with an Anglo-Celtic version of Australian history and settlement), and the singing of the national anthem in English. This ritual was followed by a collective pledge during which students asked God to bless their Queen, their country and to make them good citizens. Finally, presentations performed at weekly school assemblies or during community-based festivals generally aimed to enhance students' English language skills. Such practices support the Commonwealth's posi- tion that 'English is our national language and it is critical – for the individual, for society and for our collective prosperity – that every Austral- ian be given the choice to master it.' (National Agenda for a multicultural Australia. . . Sharing our future. Commonwealth Government of Australia, Office of Multicultural Affairs, Canberra: Australian Government Publish- ing Service. 1989, p.37)

Collective practices designed to highlight the value of responding to diversity were observed infrequently. Such practices received a brief mention in the school newsletter and were often presented with a focus on song and dance. For example, during one week of the school year, Aboriginal culture was introduced to the students via art and craft activities, such as creating traditional Aboriginal dot paintings. In addition to these infrequent collective practices, a Japanese LOTE program was organized for students in Years 5, 6 and 7. The teacher of this program was a school staff member who previously completed some Japanese university courses, but had not trained as a LOTE specialist. Similar to LOTE instruction in many Australian primary schools, particularly in outback settings, this teacher taught as well as conditions allowed while travelling between several classrooms to conduct 30-minute lessons.

Ritualised practices and teaching strategies at Saint Gabrielle's Primary School

The school practice of reciting prayers was reminiscent of the predictable series of events used during school assemblies, which often reflected teacher-directed strategies requiring students to stand, sit, clap or salute the flag only when summoned. Bourdieu (1990, 1993) refers to such routine dispositions as "habitus" which are often used in situations where the authorized speaker is supported by an institution's all encompassing authority, the extreme example being Mass. Before the commencement of classes, before and after breaks and at the end of the school day, the recitation of prayers generally took place under the leadership of the class teacher. At the appropriate signal from the teacher, students stood, made the sign of the cross and recited prayers, which rarely varied and were not discussed.

Observations in Class 4O indicated that Mr. O'Hara's preferred teaching strategies during formal lessons were generally teacher-directed. These initiation, response, evaluation patterns have been described as the predominant mode in many classrooms where teachers present knowledge as a given body of facts (Baker & Campbell, 2000; Luke, 1994; Mehan, 1979). Mr. O'Hara generally stood on an elevated section of the floor near the blackboard to give instructions to students, who were expected to sit quietly at their desks. Frequently, he explained the nature of the task to the whole class prior to students individually working according to pre-determined criteria. Often students were expected to sit cross-legged on the carpeted area, with their hands placed on their heads, waiting for instructions.

Despite the teacher-directed emphasis in Class 4O, students sometimes exercised some control over their learning in formal group or informal social interactions. On most occasions, these activities were accompanied by a less predictable structure for acquiring knowledge. For example, when activities were conducted in groups, despite Mr. O'Hara's modeling of answers from

worksheets, students informally discussed procedures for completing work. They also sat or stood side-by-side or face-to-face while working on tasks, a seating arrangement which has been described as facilitating sharing, interaction and co-operation (Reid, Forrestal & Cook, 1989; Reid, 2002).

Background to Jerry's case study: Family literacy practices

Jerry's mother was born and raised in France. As a young adult, she relocated to the United States of America (U.S.A.), where she met her husband, who was raised in the U.S.A. Both Jerry and his older sister (Ellen), were born in the U.S.A. The Hogans migrated to Australia when Jerry and Ellen were approximately one and three years old respectively. A compilation of Class 4O's parent questionnaire responses and data gathered through semi-structured interviews and informal conversations indicated that the Hogan's present and past language use at home and in the community was characterised by bilingual and monolingual practices. Jerry's mother had used French as a child at home and received the majority of her primary and secondary studies in French. In contrast, at home, as a child, Jerry's father used English and received all of his education in English. Mrs. Hogan learned English as a young adult when she undertook tertiary education in the U.S.A. Whilst data from the parent questionnaire indicated the Hogans spoke English at home, Mrs. Hogan also stated that she still spoke "a few French words with the children", such as "pantoufles" (slippers). Mrs. Hogan also spoke only French during long distance telephone conversations with her mother, who lived in France. Data also indicated that whilst daily home-based shared reading experiences were generally conducted in English, Mrs. Hogan occasionally read French books to the children. Still, because Mr. Hogan was unable to speak or understand French, Mrs. Hogan attempted to speak only English in his presence. Mrs. Hogan described this practice as a means of preventing her husband's exclusion from family conversations. In addition, the children's practice of responding in English appeared to discourage Mrs. Hogan from speaking French.

The Hogan's language practices outside the home were also characterized by contending values related to monolingualism and bilingualism. Data gathered from the parent questionnaire indicated that the Hogans rarely used a LOTE outside the home. Mrs. Hogan's practice of using English with her children outside the home appeared to relate to values that equate being proficient in Australian English with effectively functioning in the community. During informal conversations, Mrs. Hogan stressed that competency in English was crucial to migrants' successful integration in Australia. She also stated that because she was presented with few occasions to speak French outside the home, she sometimes felt uncomfortable speaking French in the presence of monolingual English speakers. On the other hand, a

number of Mrs. Hogan's practices indicated that she still wished to facilitate her children's use and understanding of French.

In the 1970s, language shifts towards monolingual use of a majority group's official language were termed subtractive bilingualism (Lambert, 1977). More recently, this process has been studied in relation to social environment, including speakers' group loyalties and perceptions of relationships with interlocutors and of language status in the local and global community (Cummins, 1996; Lo Bianco, 2000; Saunders, 1991). In the Hogan's case, the shift towards English coincided with Jerry and Ellen's decreasing motivation and ability to speak French. Mrs. Hogan expressed regret that on the rare occasions when her monolingual French-speaking mother visited the family, she experienced only limited communication with her grandchildren. For Jerry also, the impact of this inter-generational isolation appeared to be one of frustration and isolation. During a Year 4 student group interview which took place at the beginning of the study, Jerry was presented with an hypothetical scenario about not understanding a LOTE conversation between a friend and their grandmother (see Appendix 1, Students' Group Interview Protocol). In a spontaneous manner, Jerry stated that when his grandmother from France stayed with his family and spoke French to his mother, he sometimes felt angry and went to his room.

Spaces for learning and development: The concept of voicing

Although Jerry was immersed in predominantly Anglo-Catholic school routines and a home environment characterized by a language shift towards English only, in particular contexts during the LCAP, learning spaces emerged to disrupt these literacy practices. To interpret Jerry's case study results in relation to use and understanding of language and construction of identity, the concept of voicing (Bakhtin, 1981, 1986) has been drawn upon. This discussion involves a micro-analysis taken from observations gathered during daily interaction during the LCAP, which complements the description of Jerry's background and home literacy practices. Focusing on the interplay between an individual's personal voice and a multitude of social voices, Bakhtin's concept of voicing facilitates the study of intermental and intramental cognition (Wertsch, 1991). This sociocultural perspective involves situating human action in its cultural, historical and institutional setting.

Three different patterns of revoicing (Bakhtin, 1981, 1986) have been adapted to explicate the heterogeneity of speech revealed in the teaching/learning spaces that emerged in Jerry's case study. In particular, Wertsch's notion of ventriloquation considers the dynamic relationship existing between various aspects of an individual's utterances, such as semantic context, the speaker's relationship to the utterances and the speaker's relation-

ship to the utterances of others. Directed ventriloquation is defined as students mastering the rules for a particular speech genre with direction from a more experienced partner. Questions are normally posed to direct students' attention and may involve mimicking or paraphrasing certain expressions. Ventriloquation is defined as mastering parts of a particular speech genre in the actual teaching situation without being prompted by a partner. Appropriation refers to direct ventriloquation of speech genres which occur at a later date or in a different context. The internalization of speech which accompanies the process of appropriation is viewed as being linked to the unplanned nature of the utterance or to an alteration of the original utterance. Whilst these three categories of ventriloquation provided a scheme for tracking the dynamic trajectory of students' language use and understanding, data presented here relate to Jerry's voicing pattern of appropriation.

Results from Jerry's case study indicated that as the research unfolded Jerry's learning and development were enhanced in non-traditional spaces characterised by appropriation. The broad term non-traditional spaces was deliberately chosen to capture the various physical transformations in learning settings as well as the social interaction whereby students are encouraged to be actively involved in the learning process. Such spaces are often viewed as student-centred; the controlling authority is more equally distributed between teacher and students, the social interaction between students is intensified and student talk is encouraged (Education Department of Western Australia, 1994; Green, 2000; Sahni, 2001). Of particular interest was how these spaces were created in informal school and home contexts as Jerry's speech and gestures were tracked.

Patterns of voicing: Appropriation in the classroom

Non-traditional spaces that linked home and school literacy practices provided Jerry with opportunities to reflect and build links across languages. During the LCAP, students were introduced to the song 'Il pleut, il mouille' through a variety of strategies, such as choral singing, repetition, gestures and visual aids. After discussing the differences between the French and English versions of the song, students engaged in tasks such as drawing the expressions 'il pleut' and 'il fait beau.' In the activity titled "Extension of weather code breaker,"[2] students referred to a large poster as necessary to complete the song in writing. For example:

> Il pleut, il mouille.
> C'est la _____ a la grènouille
> Il _____, il fait _____
> C'est la _____ au crapaud.

Students then shared their answers with a partner. In this activity, which involved French and English, Jerry adopted a proactive approach that facilitated his quest for knowledge about linguistic conventions. For example, during the LCAP activity "Extension of weather code breaker," which involved both English and French, Jerry adopted a pro-active approach that facilitated his quest for knowledge about linguistic conventions. As illustrated in the following transcript, in turn one, Jerry asked the researcher/teacher a general question. In turn three, Jerry extended the response by asking a more specific question related to the changing nature of accents in French. Here, it can be argued that the comparisons drawn between English and French pronunciation and conventions support Vygotsky's hypothesis that learning a second language equates to understanding scientific concepts in that it involves conscious and intentional reflection. In addition, Jerry approached the researcher/teacher after the recess bell sounded. In an informal context, this timing contrasted with the normalized pattern of students asking questions only whilst the teacher circulates amongst students who work individually at desks:

1. Jerry: "What's that for?"(points to the circumflex accent on the worksheet).

2. Researcher: It's a circumflex accent. It changes the pronunciation of the vowel (points to the "ê" in the word fête).

3. Jerry: How does it change?

4. Researcher: Can you think of a word in English that's like "fête"?

5. Jerry: Fete (pronounced fate)

6. Researcher: Right. Like St.Gabrielle's [school] fete (pronounced fate)

7. Jerry: The Christmas one.

8. Researcher: That's right. Now, can you hear the difference between fête and fete (pronounced fate)?

9. Jerry: Yea.

10. Researcher: Well that's how it [the accent] changes the sound of a word.

The objectives of the LCAP activity were consistent with Mrs. Hogan's desire to encourage the maintenance of French at home. In addition, the teaching strategies used during this activity involved reading French words and guiding Jerry's attention with examples that built on knowledge and practices established in the home.

Further analysis of Jerry's case study indicated that non-traditional spaces were also revealed as Jerry appropriated a voice as a user of French. During

the LCAP, Jerry was able to extend his use of French under particular conditions involving purposeful tasks, positive feedback and informal social interaction. In the classroom, this interpersonal space allowed for the integration of French into the curriculum, which disrupted school practices and teaching strategies that were predominantly implemented through the exclusive use of English. In addition, Jerry's motivation to re-utilize French language material in the home context was consistent with certain home literacy practices that connected to the value of promoting diversity.

In a classroom activity that occurred towards the end of the LCAP, Jerry began to adopt an active role in transferring his use of French pedagogical material. During the informal conversation "Jerry takes the game", which followed a formal class activity, the researcher/teacher explained to Jerry that she would return the French word game that Jerry's mother had provided for the class over the past term. Jerry spontaneously offered to take it home to his mother. When the teacher/researcher suggested the game might be too heavy, Jerry insisted on taking the game home himself. Here, Jerry's actions and utterances suggested not only a wish to return the game to its rightful owner, but also a desire to take an active role in determining the game's use. Once Jerry had placed the game into his school bag, he pronounced "I might play it [the game], with my Mom and my sister." It can be argued that as Jerry planned for this personalized use of the material, he proposed not only to consolidate his learning, but also to share his knowledge with others.

Jerry articulated similar intentions during the informal conversation titled "Rice Crispie Squares" when he proposed a personalized application of a bilingual recipe which had been used formally in the classroom. Once the researcher/teacher showed the recipes to Jerry, he took a copy of the hand out, asked questions about the differences between the French and English texts and requested a copy for his sister. Jerry stated "I might make some [Rice Crispie Squares], with my sister." Once again, Jerry's utterances suggested his intention of transferring pedagogical material to the home context and mobilizing a family member's interest in the bilingual activity.

Jerry's patterns of voicing: Appropriation in the community

During the LCAP, non-traditional spaces were also revealed in informal home settings as Jerry engaged in activities that allowed him to articulate his identity not only as a member of the dominant Anglo-Catholic group, but also of the French linguistic and cultural minority group. In a home-based activity during which Jerry chose to collaborate with peers of various ages to understand a French board game, he mobilized his partner's linguistic abilities to create bridges between French and English. When offered a choice of reading books published in English or French or playing a board

game designed in English or French, Jerry (along with Stan, Ellen and Jenny), chose to play "Robin des Bois," a board game which contained instructions written in French. As illustrated in the following extract taken from the activity "Robin des Bois," Jerry asked Stan to explain the rules to his sister (Ellen) and himself:

204. [Jerry looks at the instruction sheet, which is printed in French].

205. [Stan begins to set up the board game "Robin des Bois"].

206. Ellen: You can choose anyone? [referring to the various players].

207. Stan: Yea. Anyone.

208. Jerry: Stan, can you tell us how to play? [He places the instruction sheet on the carpet].

209. Stan: [He picks up the instruction sheet and looks at it briefly]. Sure. You're meant to. . . mmh. . . to push the card in. [He pushes the card into the plastic mountain]. If he goes on that side [points to the side of the board], he moves [moves the plastic player], towards the enemy zone. This is the enemy zone [gestures with the plastic player]. Like that one. If it's her [Ellen], like that, she would have to try and beat him, like that. You have to push it in and the person who gets the highest numbers wins. And if you win, you get one piece of gold.

210. Jenny: [She has been reading the magazine "Les Debrouillards," but obviously has been listening to Stan's instructions. She looks up momentarily from her reading]: Five. Five.

211. Stan: Yea. Five, and you need about five pieces of gold to get past there [points to a location on the game board].

212. [Jerry and Ellen pick up some of the game pieces and examine them].

213. Stan: And when you land on the leaves, there are leaves. I'll show you. . . [He picks up a card from the pile.] And I'll ask my Mom to read them. . .

214. [Jenny turns back to her reading. Ellen examines the cards. Jerry looks at Stan and listens intently.]

215. Jerry: I don't want to lose my gold.

216. [All members of the group laugh.]

217. Jerry: Well, what's this?

218. Stan: And those, over there [points to the pieces], those, make you go. . .

219. Ellen: Well, what's this?

220. Stan: That's the place where you end, and if you get five pieces of gold there, no ten pieces of gold here, and go back here [traces pathway along board with finger], or you can keep getting more.

This informal activity allowed Jerry to engage in literacy experiences with peers of differing ages and linguistic abilities in French. Stan and Jenny held membership in the Anglo-Catholic community of St. Gabrielle's School, yet were raised in a bilingual French-English home environment. In a number of ways, these children provided alternative voices from which Jerry could choose to express his membership in the community. For example, six-year old Stan initially attempted to translate the game instructions from French to English by referring to the written guide prior to explaining to Jerry and Ellen in English. When Stan met linguistic challenges, such as reading directions from the French cards, he asked for explanations in English. In addition, Jenny, as she spontaneously read a French magazine and simultaneously corrected her brother (Stan) in English, provided modeling for Jerry to engage successfully in bilingual learning contexts.

During another home-based activity "Literacy and computer," Jerry displayed patterns of appropriation as he used his previous knowledge of computer games when responding to instructions given by the prompting voice in a French CDRom. Jerry and Stan both resisted the researcher/ teacher's suggestion to work with a CDRom combining minimal use of French (with English language instructions). They insisted on playing a CDRom game which was designed for native speakers of French and involved exclusive use of French. Here, despite his younger age, Stan facilitated Jerry's linguistic comprehension of the CDRom by providing a voice that translated key passages from French to English. More particularly, Jerry responded to Stan's explanations through actions and utterances that extended the request for assistance; he carefully examined the board pieces, asked procedural questions and expressed personal preferences. As Stan shared his knowledge, the role-switching between speakers took place at a regular rhythm, which indicated engagement on the part of all group members

In contrast to the control often wielded over Jerry's use of repetition in class, in these informal and purposeful tasks, Jerry initiated the strategy of repetition to support his understanding of French. By repeating the question "What does this mean?" Jerry conveyed his desire to learn more about various procedural elements and interactive features of the of the CDRom. In addition, by repeating the statement "It went still," Jerry conveyed procedural information about the dysfunctional nature of the computer mouse to Stan.

When Stan appeared uncertain of the procedure to follow, Jerry manipulated the computer mouse, which solved technical problems faced by both partners. As illustrated in the following extract taken from "Literacy and computer," Jerry attempted to understand the procedures of the interactive

CDRom by using repetition to support learning embedded in purpose and a collaborative partnership:

72. Stan: See? You're making him go to the next land.

73. DRom music and sound effects.]

74. Jerry [points to the computer screen.] Can this one do anything? What does this mean? [He points to an image and clicks the computer mouse several times.]

75. [The sound of a bell rings from the CDRom.]

76. Jerry: What does this mean?

77. Stan: I don't know.

78. Jerry: This is the control. It went still.

79. Stan: What?

80. Jerry: It went still.

81. Stan: Ah, what can I do?

82. [Jerry clicks on an image and the character on the screen begins to move. He clicks again and the character begins to talk in French.]

As the sequence unfolded, Stan and Jerry continued to assist each other by using visual and aural cues while manipulating the French-speaking CDRom character through various landscapes on the screen.

Discussion

Results linked to Jerry's patterns of voicing affirm the conclusions of Dyson (1999, 2001) Rogoff (1990) and Sahni (2001) which described the process of children's learning as acceptance within a community, that cannot be dissociated from construction of identity. However, for Jerry, identity meant being accepted into a predominantly Anglo-Catholic school community as well a home environment generally characterized by a language shift (from French to English). More particularly, examples discussed in this paper begin to map uncharted waters linking the expression of Jerry's diverse voices to the disruption of a normalised habitus (Bourdieu, 1990) in a community.

Bourdieu (1993) pursued the analogy of 'habitus' by describing its nature as evolving and continually adjusting to new and unforeseen situations. This adaptability of the 'habitus' was viewed as being able to bring about limited, but durable transformations. As Jerry widened his repertoire of literacy practices by exploring a diverse socio-cultural and linguistic environment linking home and school, spaces for empowerment emerged from the resulting zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). Jerry began to construct and appropriate knowledge, display competency and gain a sense of

control over his actions. As his motivation to use and understand French increased, Jerry also began to construct a social space that allowed for the presence of French in the school community.

Appropriating multiple voices and knowledge through internalization were associated with two factors in non-traditional spaces observed during the study. First, Jerry's partners, of differing ages (ranging from younger and older peers to adults), and who modeled various degrees of bilingualism, provided encouragement and guidance as Jerry became interested in learning more about French. As suggested by Rogoff (1990) the dialogue surrounding guided participation is important for extending the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) through social interaction that is explicitly woven into the process of internalization. As Jerry and his younger aged peer Stan collaborated to jointly solve problems in a French game that challenged them both linguistically and technically, they frequently initiated and responded to questions and statements; they spontaneously used repetition as a learning strategy to reinforce and reflect on their utterances and gestures. When partners did make a mistake, it was viewed as a natural part of the learning process. For example, although Jenny spontaneously corrected her younger brother Stan's French pronunciation, the group of children continued to play the game without pausing. Gestures and utterances were used to play the French board game in English, a common goal which group members established without guidance from an adult, thus reflecting a sense of ownership.

Second, the French pedagogical material provided for Jerry ultimately mediated social interaction by linking home and school literacy practices. For example, Jerry's mother initially provided a French word game (that had been used often at home), for use in class. She then explained the rules of the game to the researcher/teacher, who in turn demonstrated and adapted its use for a learning centre. The game was then returned the home setting. Jerry's insistence on taking the game home and his possible intentions to share it with his family can be interpreted as a desire to mobilize the interest of others through his use and understanding of French. In addition, the opportunity to engage in a computer-based CDRom game that was published uniquely in French allowed Jerry to transfer knowledge acquired by using computers frequently at home, to enhance learning in this new informal setting. Finally, activities such as cooking and the use of French recipes in the classroom built on Jerry's interest in cooking, which he frequently engaged in at home, with his mother.

The LCAP provided opportunities for Jerry to explore French through purposeful tasks in both informal and formal settings and with a variety of partners. At school, however, Jerry's use and understanding of language remained framed largely within a discourse of values that promoted a

predominantly Anglo-Catholic identity. Whilst the aim was one of shaping Catholic citizens, practices that overtly encouraged allegiance to the Commonwealth government or the British monarchy also formed part of the weekly school rituals. In this context, the apprenticeship of a second language, which possesses a status deemed unofficial in a predominantly Anglo-Catholic learning community, can be viewed as precarious.

As suggested by Toohey (2000) appropriating personal voice through language that is validated in the community remains a struggle for second language learners. It would appear for Jerry that empowerment remains somewhat contingent on future progress from emergent to fluent use and understanding of French. Empowerment can also be viewed as a personal struggle that may necessitate sustained pedagogical intervention. On a wider scale, the status of English as the predominant and official language of Australia and the popularity of the 'tourist approach' to teaching LOTE in 30- minute lessons in primary schools (Cumming-Potvin, Renshaw & van Kraayenoord, 2003) highlight some of the challenges associated with this struggle for validation. In many Australian educational settings, empowerment in LOTE through the appropriation of personal voice remains fragile and dependent on language use at home, and in the community.

For first generation immigrants such as Jerry's family, a high degree of competency in Standard Australian English is often perceived as the key to successful integration and participation in the Australian community. These successful practices however do not negate the contending values embedded in inter-generational discourse when children, parents and grandparents cannot communicate adequately with each other in English, or a LOTE language. In the case of Jerry, when he spontaneously shared a family experience generated by a hypothetical scenario about not understanding a LOTE conversation, his discourse evoked images of frustration and disharmony. "Sometimes when my Grandma speaks French, she speaks it lots to my Mom and I get really mad and I go to my room", he stated, with conviction. This vivid example of Jerry's isolation in the extended family points to the urgent need for research investigating the long-term links between second language learning, inter-generational language use at home and school and perceived language status in the local and global community.

NOTE

1. The States, Territories and the Commonwealth of Australia use the term LOTE to describe all languages other than English, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, Australian Sign Language and classical languages (Curriculum Corporation, 1994). However, the author recognizes that in relation to Australia's community languages, the term LOTE may be interpreted as being defined from an Anglo-centred perspective.

2. The term "code breaker" has been taken from the Luke and Freebody reading model. (See Luke, A. & Freebody, P. [1999]. A Map of Possible Practices: Further notes on the four resources model. Practically Primary, 4(2), pp. 5-8).

REFERENCES

Baker, C. & Campbell, R. (2000). Children, language and power. In R. Campbell & D. Green (Eds.), *Literacies and learners: Current perspectives* (p. 15- 29). Hazlebrook, NSW: Pearson Education.

Bakhtin, M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays by M. M. Bakhtin*. M. Holquist, (Ed.), V.W. McGee (Trans.). Austin: University of Texas Press.

Bakhtin, M. (1986). *Speech genres and other late essays*. E. Emerson & M. Holquist (Eds.), V. McGee (Trans). Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Beaumont, C. (1999). Dilemmas of peer assistance in a bilingual full inclusion classroom. *The Elementary School Journal*, 99(13), 1-35.

Bourdieu, P. (1990). *Language and symbolic power*. J. Thompson (Ed.). Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1993) *Sociology in question*. London: Sage Publications

Bruner, J. (1986). *Actual minds, possible worlds*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Cummins, J. (1996). *Negotiating identities: Education for empowerment in a diverse society*. Ontario, CA: California Association for Bilingual Education.

Commonwealth of Australia (1989). *National agenda for a multicultural Australia...Sharing our future*. Office of Multicultural Affairs. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.

Cumming-Potvin, W., Renshaw, P., & van Kraayenoord, C. (2003). Scaffolding and bilingual shared reading experiences: Promoting primary school students' learning and development. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 26(2), 54-68.

Curriculum Corporation (1994). *A statement on languages other than English: A joint project of the States, Territories and the Commonwealth of Australia* initiated by the Australian Education Council. Carlton, Vic.: Curriculum Corporation.

Davydov, V. (1994). The influence of L.S. Vygotsky on education: Theory, research, and practice. *Educational Researcher*, 24(3), 12-21.

Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. (1994). *Educational handbook of qualitative research*, (pp ix-xii). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Dyson, A. (1999). Coach Bombay's kids learn to write: Children's appropriation of media material for school literacy. *Research in the teaching of English*, 33(4), 367-383.

Dyson, A. (2001). Relational sense and textual sense in a U.S. urban classroom: The contested case of Emily, girl friend of a Ninja. In B. Comber & A. Simpson (Eds.), *Negotiating critical literacies in classrooms* (pp 3-18), Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Education Department of Western Australia. (1994). *Supporting linguistic and cultural diversity through First Steps*. Perth, WA: Education Department of Western Australia.

Fulwiler, T. (1994). Claiming my voice. In K. Yancey (Ed.), *Voices on voice: Perspectives, definitions, inquiry*. Urbana, Ill: National Council of Teachers of English.

Gilligan, C. (1993). Why voice matters when talking about books. In C. Knoeller (Ed.), *Voicing ourselves. Whose words we use when we talk about books*, (pp. 1-31). Albany, NY: New York Press.

Green, D. (2000). The nature of language: The culture of texts. In R. Campbell & D. Green (Eds.), *Literacies and learners: Current perspectives*. Hazlebrook, NSW: Pearson Education.

Lambert, W. (1977). The effects of bilingualism on the individual: Cognitive and sociocultural consequences. In P.A. Hornby (Ed.), *Bilingualism: Psychological, social and educational implications*, (pp. 15-27). New York: Academic Press.

Lesko, N. (1988). *Symbolizing society: Stones, rites and structure in a Catholic high school*. Philadelphia: Falmer Press.

Lincoln, Y. & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Lo Bianco, J. (2000). Multiliteracies and multilingualism. In B. Cope & M. Kalantzis (Ed.), *Multiliteracies: Literacy learning and the design of social futures*, (pp 92-105). South Yarra: MacMillan.

Luke, A. (1994). *The social construction of literacy in the classroom*. Melbourne: MacMillan.

Luke, A. & Kapitzke, C. (1994). Pedagogy and paradox: Teaching interpretation in a religious community. In H. Parret (Ed.), *Pretending to communicate*. New York: Walter de Gruyter.

McKay, S. & Wong, S-L C. (1996). Multiple discourses, multiple identities: Investment and agency in second language learning among Chinese adolescent immigrant students. *Harvard Educational Review* 66, 577-606.

Mehan, H. (1979). *Learning lessons. Social organization in the classroom*. Cambridge, MS: Harvard University Press.

Norton, B. (2000). *Identity and language learning: Gender, ethnicity and educational change*. London: Longman.

Reid, J. (2002). *Managing small-group learning*. Newtown, NSW: Primary English Teaching Association.

Reid, J. (1998). 'Show me a child before s/he is…?' Prior-to-preschool literacy experience s of children in Australia. *The Australian Journal of Language and Literacy,21*(3), 234-247.

Reid, J., Forrestal, P. & Cook, J. (1989). *Small group learning in the classroom*. Newton, NSW: Primary English Teaching.

Rogoff, B. (1990). *Apprenticeship in thinking. Cognitive development in social context*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Sahni, U. 2001, Children appropriating literacy: Empowerment pedagogy from young children's perspective. In B. Comber & A. Simpson (Eds.), *Negotiating critical literacies in classrooms*, (pp 19-36). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Saunders, G. (1991). Sociolinguistic aspects of bilinguals: Bilingualism and society. In A. Liddicoat (Ed.), *Bilingualism and bilingual education*, (pp. 81-190). Melbourne: National Languages Institute of Australia.

Toohey, K. (2000). *Learning English at school: Identity, social relations and classroom practice*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters Ltd

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society*. Cambridge, MS: Harvard University Press.

Vygotsky, L. (1986). *Thought and language*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Wertsch, J. (1991). *Voices of the mind: A sociocultural approach to mediated action*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Winch, G., Johnston, R., Holliday, M., Ljungdahl, L., & March, P. (2001). *Literacy: Reading, writing and children's literature*. South Melbourne, VIC: Oxford University Press.

APPENDIX 1

Students' Group Interview Protocol

Questions

1. How do you think somebody learns how to read and write?

2a. If someone were trying become a better reader, what would you tell them to do?

2b. If someone were trying to become a better writer, what would you tell them to do?

3a. How do your parents help you to learn to read and write?

3b. How does your teacher help you to learn to read and write?

4a. Do your parents read to you at home?

4b. What do you do when your parents read to you at home? or What happens when you read to your parents?

5. What do you do when your teacher reads a story to the class?

6. Can you name some languages other than English?

7. Do you know anyone who speaks a language other than English?

8. What language are you learning at school?

9. If someone wanted to learn a language other than English, what would you tell them to do?

10. Do you think you learn another language in the same way as you learn English?

11. Scenario: Pretend that you have a new friend named Yolanda. (Antonio for male participants, as necessary). You are invited over to his/her house for the first time. On Friday afternoon, you and Yolanda walk home from school. When you arrive at Yolanda's house, Yolanda's grandmother opens the door and says hello to you. Yolanda's grandmother speaks to Yolanda in another language for a few minutes. Then you go into the lounge room to play.

    a. How do you feel about not understanding Yolanda and her grandmother when they speak in another language?

    b. What could you do to understand some of Yolanda and her grandmother's words?

12. Scenario: Pretend that there is a new boy named Tchai in your class. Tchai doesn't speak or understand English very well. At break time, Tchai eats alone and doesn't play with other children. One day at break time, you are playing on the fort with some friends. Nearby, Tchai is standing alone. He is watching you play.

    a. What would you do for the remainder of break time?

    b. How do you think Tchai feels?

    c. How do you think you can help Tchai learn English?

WENDY CUMMING-POTVIN lectures at Murdoch University's School of Education in Perth, Australia. Her research interests include a sociocultural approach to teaching and learning, with a particular emphasis on second languages, multiliteracies and social justice issues. In Canada and Australia, her work has focussed on the application of qualitative methods in urban, remote and socio-economically disadvantaged settings.

WENDY CUMMING-POTVIN enseigne à la Faculté d'Éducation de l'Université Murdoch à Perth, Australie. Sa recherche comporte une approche socioculturelle à l'enseignement et à l'apprentissage, avec un intérêt particulier pour les langues secondes, des littératies multiples et les questions de justice sociale. Au Canada et en Australie également, son travail vise l'application de méthodes qualitatives dans des miliieus urbains, éloignés ou désavantagés de point de vue socio-économiques.

MJE

McGILL JOURNAL OF EDUCATION

REVUE DES SCIENCES DE L'ÉDUCATION DE McGILL

I wish to subscribe / Je désire m'abonner

1 year/1 an Canada $37.50* – Foreign/Pays étrangers C$55**

*   Subscriptions mailed to a Canadian address, add GST $2.62 ($40.12)
   Subscriptions mailed to a Quebec address, add QST $3.01 ($43.13)

   Abonnements envoyez à une adresse canadienne, ajoutez la TPS de $2.62 ($40.12)
   Abonnements envoyez à une adresse au Québec, ajoutez la TVQ de $3.01 ($43.13)

** shipped by air / par avion

NAME
NOM   _____

STREET
RUE   _____

CITY
VILLE   _____

POSTAL CODE
CODE POSTAL   _____

Remittance enclosed/Paiement ci-inclus   Please send invoice
☐ Cheque   ☐ Visa/MasterCard   ☐ Envoyez la facture

Visa/MasterCard # _____ Exp _____

$ _____   Signature _____

Published 3 times yearly • Publié 3 fois par année

VISIT US / VISITEZ NOUS   http://mje.mcgill.ca