

Invited Symposium [JSLS 2011]

**Reconsidering "communicative competence":
Findings and suggestions from fieldwork/empirical research**

June 25, 2011 (15:40-17:45), Kansai University

Presentations:

Competence, Communities, Audiences and Authenticity: Watching Indonesian Teledramas

Zane Goebel (Asian Studies, La Trobe University)

Abstract

One of Hymes' (1972) and Gumperz's (1982) cautions when documenting what makes up a person's communicative competence relates to the extent to which this competence is shared within a community and just how we can delineate a community. This concern over defining community is still ongoing, especially if we take into consideration the role of the media in the development of a person's communicative competence. Drawing on linguistic anthropological work on language ideologies, publics, semiotics, authenticity, stance and social identification (Agha, 2007; Bucholtz & Hall, 2004; Cody, 2009; Jaffe, 2009; Kroskrity, 2000; Wortham, 2006), this paper examines how television viewing can figure in both the re-circulation of ideologies about ethnic communities in Indonesia and the simultaneous construction of a situated community. My empirical focus is audio-video recorded interaction from organized teledrama viewing sessions and post-viewing interviews involving Indonesians studying in Japan. I examine how members of this group authenticate and denaturalize representations of ethnic social types through reference to their metasemiotic commentaries about represented signs and sign users. In doing so, I also show how this interactional work figures in the solidification of participants' own identities as either belonging to or being different from the imagined ethnic community being animated within these Indonesian teledramas.

References

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Explanation or Boxing Performance?: how coparticipants mutually monitor the organization of embodied activities while teaching and learning effective boxing punches

Misao Okada (Hokusei Gakuen University, Sapporo)

Abstract

By using video data of the naturally-occurring interaction during a boxing practice, this paper analyzes the ways a coach and boxer establish, develop and end an activity of teaching and learning how to punch effectively. Resonant with social-interactional approaches to learning, which conceptualize learning as social accomplishment (e.g. Firth and Wagner 2007), this paper focuses on the process of how a coach and boxer collaboratively make their teaching and learning activities relevant at each moment and construct their situated identities as a teacher, a learner, the boxer and/or the opponent boxer by skillfully coordinating their talk and body movements.

Based on the notion of ‘participation,’ which M. H. Goodwin (2001) defines as ‘forms of involvement’ toward an activity, this paper shows that in the boxing practice, the coach and boxer are mutually monitoring how the coparticipant is structuring the teaching and learning activity, e.g. talk alone, or talk and gestures of modeling a good boxing movement. They are collaboratively coordinating their behaviors so that they fit the particular embodiment of the activity proposed by the coparticipant at each moment. For instance, if the coach mimics punching the boxer’s body as if she were the boxer, the boxer is expected to perform the opponent’s body movements. If his response is incorrect in terms of what the coach is doing, he modifies his body movements.

Few studies examine precisely what kinds of behavior coordination might occur when establishing, maintaining and ending an activity of teaching and learning motor skills such as boxing. This paper fills the gap and concludes that teaching and learning

is not simply conveying information from a speaker to a hearer; rather, it includes a complex process of coparticipants' coordination of their behaviors vis-à-vis embodiments of action and activity, which shows to what extent and in what way coparticipants engage in the action and activity.

Sensing action sediments:

Some features of directive sequences in Japanese caregiver–child interactions

Akira Takada (Kyoto University / UCLA)

Abstract

Studies on communicative competence have examined how language and other semiotic resources are used in social settings. Instead of seeing children as immature, this line of research has indicated that even toddlers can employ sophisticated strategies to achieve their purposes in their everyday interactions. As part of larger efforts to develop an empirically grounded theory on the cultural formation of responsibility, which is considered an important facet of communicative competence, this paper examines how young Japanese children and their caregivers mold their interactions in the course of directive sequences. When a caregiver notes misconduct on the part of a child and asks for remedial actions such as an apology or account (Goffman, 1971/1997), the child often experiences difficulty responding directly to the caregiver's intentions and instead shifts the topic of conversation. In such situations, children often use sensory verbs (e.g., see, hear, and feel). Sensory verbs can evoke a common ground of experience and are effective in eliciting a response from the recipient. On the other hand, caregivers also develop a strategy to make the child act properly. For instance, instead of conveying the explicit intention of a directive, a caregiver sometimes uses reported speech, which introduces the voice of one or more others, such as a person, imaginary creature, or even an inanimate object, in a participation framework. Furthermore, such utterances often contain sensory verbs. Reported speech invites a response from the recipient (Goodwin, 1984) and can thus function as an indirect directive. The present analysis suggests that by evoking embodied experiences, both children and caregivers can flexibly shift their footing (Goffman, 1981) during the course of interactions to generate a context that induces the desired action on the part of the recipient. These strategies constitute distinctive types of communicative competence in Japanese caregiver–child interactions.

Discussant: Niko Besnier (Amsterdam University)

Chair: Kuniyoshi Kataoka (Aichi University) & Keiko Ikeda (Kansai University)