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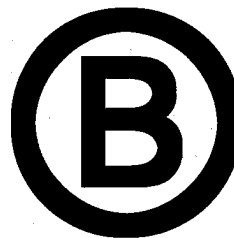
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VYGOTSKY
in 21st century
SOCIETY

*advances in cultural historical
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An Integrated Approach to the Study of Transitions as Learning Activity

Two Cases from Spanish
Immersion Classrooms

*Patricia Baquedano-López, Ariana Mangual Figueroa,
& Sera Jean Hernandez*

*[I]t was consistent with [Vygotsky's] general theoretical view
that his work should be carried out in a society that sought
the elimination of illiteracy and the founding of educational
programs to maximize the potential of individual children
(Cole & Scribner introduction to Vygotsky (1978), p. 9)*

School-based transitions are generally understood as activities that take place between identifiable school periods such as circle time, language arts, or recess. Transitions are useful units of analysis for understanding the general structure of activity and for exemplifying the fluid boundaries of what we conceive of as

“already completed” and “next activity.” Drawing theoretically and methodologically from the fields of language socialization and ethnomethodology to examine school-based transitions, we offer an analysis of transitions as learning activities that illustrates how language organizes and mediates learning.

We hope to further the dialogue that Vygotsky started by focusing on the social aspects of learning and by situating language as the site *par excellence* for studying learning. We organize our chapter as follows: First we describe the motivation for our work. We then examine the structure of transitions as learning activities, and we draw from two preschool Spanish immersion sites in northern California to illustrate how classroom exchanges in transition activity socialize young children to the norms and expectations of their classroom communities. We conclude with a discussion of the importance and relevance of considering transitions as learning activities.

Motivation for This Work

At a time when discriminatory policies disrupt decades of work that honors, teaches, and preserves linguistic and cultural diversity in the United States, educational researchers must channel their efforts to advocate for the educational rights of non-dominant communities. Clarifying our methods and theories strengthens our continued efforts to dispel myths about language use while asserting the social, political, and cultural legacies of multilingual children and families. We are concerned that recent mandates in Arizona that enforce linguistic purism by sorting out its multilingual teaching force on the misguided idea that “foreign accents” are detrimental to students’ education, legally sanction the racial profiling of students and parents perceived to be “illegal” immigrants and erase ethnic studies curricula from high schools. These harmful policies are proposed in a state where, in the year 2000, Latino students were the largest minority group and comprised 33% of the students enrolled in the school system (United States Department of Education, 2002). Important work has been advanced to counter deficit thinking about the learning potential of Latinos in the United States (Valencia, 2002). Numerous researchers have demonstrated that the disproportionate lack of academic achievement among Latinos and other racial and linguistic minorities is the result of structural inequalities (e.g., poverty, underfunded schools, elimination of language programs) and not a linguistic or cultural deficit inherent to minority groups (Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, & Asato, 1999; Gutiérrez, 2000; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & González, 1992; Orellana, 2009; Portes, 2005; Zentella, 2005).

This chapter, like the others in this volume, recognizes that Latino students participate in multiple learning experiences often mediated by more than one

language across educational settings, social spaces, and national borders. A growing body of ethnographic, discourse analytic studies of preschool experiences has deepened our understanding of children's linguistic and social worlds (cf. Cook-Gumperz, Corsaro, & Streeck, 1986; Field, 1999; Kyratzis, 2001; Rosenkoetter, 2001; Sheldon, 1992), but to provide a comprehensive analysis of the critical transition and socialization of young children into schools, we need to utilize methods and theories that more fully express the link between language and learning in context. Learning, mediated by language and social interaction, is both a local and historically encoded act (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000) through which participants discursively construct and perform multiple cultural and linguistic identities. In our ethnographic studies of Spanish-immersion preschool programs, we observed how the use of Spanish or English articulated histories and ideologies about each language and their speakers. At one school, the Mexican teachers' shared frame of reference led them to include a song in Spanish infusing the preschool curriculum with knowledge from past experience in Mexico. It is relevant that the participants in these programs included Spanish-speaking teachers and that the instructional practices that we documented took place at a time when bilingual education was, as it continues to be, restricted by educational policy in the state of California (Parrish, Linquanti, & Merickel, 2002). We present insights from Spanish language immersion programs because we consider these settings to be excellent examples of the confluence of diverse experiences mediated by a language that may be familiar to some, but not all, students. The fact that students in these classrooms learn a linguistic code and an orientation to language, in this case a minority language, opens up analytical spaces for understanding language ideologies and politics and their effects on learning, that is, when to use a language and for what purpose, as well as who has the freedom to learn and be proficient in two languages in the United States (Moran, in press).

Transitions in Educational Research

Educational transitions mark institutionally sanctioned changes that are temporal (e.g., recess at a specific time and duration), spatially organized (e.g., changes between classrooms within a school building), and developmental (e.g., early childhood, elementary or secondary education) (Hargreaves, Earl, & Ryan, 1996; Harter, Whitesell-Rumbaugh, & Kowalski, 1992; Kagan & Neuman, 1998; Solís, 2009). Educational research on transitions has primarily focused on shifts in time and space between home and school, within school, and from school to work. Within schools, transitions connect a number of instructional units and resources that often require a change in location or of material (Carta, Renauer, Schiefelbusch,

& Terry, 1998). Many preschool teachers and caregivers consider children's ability to make transitions between activities independently an essential skill and competency (Ostrosky, Jung, & Hemmeter, 2002). Transitions can be particularly significant given that they can take up to 25% of the school day in preschool and kindergarten classrooms (Carta et al., 1998). Transition activities for young students may involve moving from one area of the classroom to another or other routines such as cleaning up materials, washing up before taking a snack, or singing preparatory songs (songs that are usually about future activities).

A concern that surfaces in the review of the literature on transitions is that time spent orienting students to classroom procedures results in less instructional time. Transitions have even been conceived as periods of "wasted time" during the school day (see Davidson, 1982). While they provide us with a view of the instrumentality of transitions, these perspectives consider transitions to be predetermined or organized patterns of activity, and they do not account for the ways in which transitions are locally negotiated by participants. Recent studies address the temporal, spatial, and corporeal ordering of schooling practices, many of them transitions (Gordon, Holland, & Lahelma, 2000; Gordon & Lahelma, 1996; Lemke, 2000, 2002; McGregor, 2004; Orellana & Thorne, 1998; Solís, Kattan, & Baquedano-López, 2009a), yet there is still a need for studies to explain how transitions are ideologically configured, linguistically organized, and interactionally negotiated, and how they might contribute to the process of creating successful educational contexts.

Language as the Tool of Tools: Methodological Approaches

Vygotskian perspectives underscore the role that language plays as a semiotic tool in learning and problem solving. Vygotsky's (1978) discussion of Dewey's pragmatic rendering of "the tongue as the tool of tools" (p. 53) reminds us that the researcher's task is to uncover the real, not just figurative link, between behavior and auxiliary means (i.e., tools). To be sure, Dewey's conceptualization of tool underscored language as a mediational artifact and as social practice. In this respect, language was not just speech, but gesture, action and negotiated interaction (Dewey, 1925/1929, p. 184). As Garrison (1995) notes "tools have implications beyond themselves" (p. 97). In this sense, language is transcendent; it can facilitate, create, organize, and transform the social order.

To Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) researchers, Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) includes language use between novices and more expert others "as a tool for mediating misconceptions and consolidating misunderstandings" (Lee & Smagorinsky, 2000, p. 5). Language, in this sense,

is a tool to reason and of reason. Wertsch (2000) elaborates indicating that language use underlies meaning making and learning in two ways: first, in the referential relationships between signs and objects (both linguistic and nonlinguistic) and second, as the process of developing meaning through increased generalization and abstraction (p. 20). The ways language functions as a tool for development during actual learning interactions, however, has not always been made methodologically and theoretically explicit. We will elucidate the mediational nature of language in learning through an analysis of teacher and student practices during transition activity. To do so, we employ principles from two theoretical and methodological approaches which complement CHAT's view on the primacy of language in collaborative learning activity: the language socialization paradigm and the ethnomethodological approach.

The language socialization paradigm focuses on the language of routine interactions in everyday activities, attending to processes of socialization *through* language and socialization *to* language (Garrett, & Baquedano-López, 2002; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). Socialization activities are thus mediated through language, yet at the same time they teach forms of language. The language socialization paradigm shares many of the fundamental principles found in sociocultural perspectives on learning, including an understanding of tool-mediated learning activity. A language code, material object, or the interaction with more expert others can all be considered tools utilized in the learning process.

The process of language socialization involves participation by novices and experts within culturally meaningful activities (Jacoby & Gonzales, 1991). This view complements the longstanding sociocultural view that learning takes place whenever there is a change in participation over time (Rogoff, 1991) or when learners move from peripheral to central participation in the mastery of new skills (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This perspective on learning expands theories of assisted learning and is part of the shift to a more dynamic, iterative notion of learning as activity (Engeström, 2001). A number of language socialization studies in educational settings have examined the ways that the negotiation and organization of classroom learning are reflective (and constitutive) of broader sociocultural structures. These negotiations include teaching and learning national or ethnic affiliations (Baquedano-López, 1997; Duff, 1995; He, 2003; Lo, 2009; Mangual Figueroa, 2010); acquiring ideologies of language (Fader, 2009; Schieffelin, 2002), and developing and enacting identities of "successful" or "less successful" learners (Nielsen, 2002; Rymes & Pash, 2001; Talmy, 2008; Willett, 1995). These studies illustrate how language is at the core of learning and how it is important to the development of individual and collective identities.

Our second approach to language analysis draws from ethnomethodology, which considers the organization of social interactions to be anticipated and

managed by participants in everyday encounters (Garfinkel, 1967; Goffman, 1974, 1981; Goodwin, 1990; Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974). Interactional expectations and negotiations are realized at the turn-taking and the grammatical level (Schegloff, 1979), that is in micro-interaction, while also reflecting a view of the social order (Garfinkel, 2002; Goffman, 1974; Wetherell, 1998). The study of teaching and learning interactions offers opportunities to analyze power dynamics through examples of *breaches* (Garfinkel, 1967) or disruptions to normative classroom interaction. Such breaches to ongoing interaction illustrate the organization of learning and the adaptation of all participants, often invoking “a pull for coherence” even while holding conflicting positions stemming from diverse background knowledge (Ash, 2008; Baquedano-López, Solís, & Kattan, 2005). As “teachable moments,” breaches offer novices and experts possibilities of realignment or change as they socialize one another to the norms of appropriate behavior (Jacobs-Huey, 2007). Through the use of spoken language and paralinguistic cues such as tone, prosody, and body language, interlocutors demonstrate that they have learned both discrete skills and the social norms for behavior in a particular activity setting. When breaches occur, the social and cultural norms that underlie language use and interaction are rendered visible and become negotiable. These processes provide opportunities for researchers to learn about and document the sociocultural conventions shared by members of a particular group. As we will show in the examples of data from preschool classrooms, teachers and children in transitional activities use both speech and gesture to negotiate meanings, as well as innovate and resolve breaches. These moments of socialization provide us with opportunities to learn how educators and young bilingual students negotiate academic and social expectations.

The School Sites

Our analysis of transitions as learning activities draws on classroom data from two schools, Escuela Mundo and La Escuelita,¹ located in northern California. These schools are linguistically, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse, with subsidized, as well as unsubsidized, tuition fees. The school directors at both sites granted us access to record and analyze interactions during everyday instruction. Mangual Figueroa and Hernandez collected ethnographic data at the schools for the duration of two academic years as part of an initiative led by Baquedano-López to study bilingual language socialization during the first contact with school and the academic transition across the early grades. Our involvement at these sites, initiated by a common research interest between researchers and school leaders, included participation and mutual support at different academic levels. In addition to participant-observation in classrooms, we conducted pro-

fessional development sessions at the sites and presented a workshop with one of the directors at a prominent statewide conference on child development. We wrote collaborative grants with school leaders and participated in curricular and board discussions at each site. We also want to acknowledge that our participation in the schools as researchers and as Spanish-speaking Latinas, who shared a similar ethnic and linguistic background with many teachers, parents, and students, also entailed negotiating institutional boundaries and expectations between university researchers and school and community members (Delgado-Gaitán, 1993; Villenas, 1996). These experiences remind us of the importance of acknowledging that our work was influenced by, and had an influence on, what we observed.

Escuela Mundo

Located in an affluent area, Escuela Mundo is a private, alternative dual-immersion, pre-K to 8 school founded in 2006. According to the 2000 U.S. Census the racial/ethnic composition of this area was 35.4% White, 44.7% African American, 9.8% Latino, and 7.7% Asian. Residents rented their homes (72.6%), with only 27.4% owning the homes in which they lived. Among the residents, 19.6% spoke a language other than English within the home. During the period of data collection (fifteen months across two academic years, 2006–2007 and 2007–2008) the student population at Escuela Mundo was White, of mixed ethnicity, and Latino, and the school attracted students from over ten different cities, as some parents commuted 20-miles for their children to attend this school. Escuela Mundo's bilingual program adopted a Spanish immersion model in preschool, and lessons were conducted entirely in Spanish. While half of the student population came from a home with one Spanish-speaking parent, it was difficult for Escuela Mundo to recruit the Spanish-dominant students, largely because of the high cost of tuition, which ranged from \$10,000 to \$14,000 per year. While financial aid was available to some families, not enough funding was available to achieve the envisioned dual immersion model completely. Like many other small private schools, Escuela Mundo struggled with both financial sustainability and the integrity of its language program.

La Escuelita

La Escuelita started as a non-profit program in 1975, and it is now one of the oldest preschool bilingual programs in the area. La Escuelita offered a preschool program that used a Spanish immersion model, a bilingual after-school program, and a Spanish-language family literacy program held on Saturdays. In 2000,

according to the U.S. Census, the racial/ethnic composition of this area of the city was 37.4% White, 25.7% African American, and 23% Latino. Most residents rented their homes (66.7%), while fewer owned their homes (33.3%). A total of 41.7% of the residents reported speaking a language other than English at home. Data for this chapter came from observations recorded during a fifteen-month span across the academic years of 2005–2006 and 2006–2007. According to school records, 60% of enrolled students were Latino, and the remaining 40% percent were African American, Asian, Anglo, and biracial. La Escuelita thus served a culturally broad and economically diverse community of families where the majority was Latino.

Escuela Mundo and La Escuelita are rich sites to study language socialization interactions. Few language socialization studies have focused on bilingual programs. We note the emphasis on Spanish immersion in the preschool years at both schools, where bilingualism and biliteracy are the stated goals. While bilingual programs typically begin in kindergarten, Escuela Mundo and La Escuelita house several preschool classrooms for 3- and 4-year-old children. The opportunity to study the first socialization experiences of students at these sites was therefore unique. These settings are noteworthy because the study of language use in bilingual schools generally has focused on the education of poor linguistic minority students and their acquisition of English and/or the loss of the home language (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008). At Escuela Mundo, while many of the children were immigrants, the majority were from middle-class backgrounds who, in some cases, were acquiring a new language in addition to English. La Escuelita's commitment to community-building made it an ideal site to examine language socialization processes of a primarily Latino population in a community setting.

Transitions as Activities

A cornerstone idea in sociocultural perspectives on learning is that the child learns with the assistance of others. The concept of the ZPD, or "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86), has been taken up widely in the field of education. One of the challenges in defining and describing the ZPD is that the very process of learning from others and acquiring new ideas through interaction is difficult to observe and document empirically (Valsiner & van der Veer, 1999). The concept has been used to identify and design activities meant to support the cognitive development of learners, while overlooking Vygotsky's emphasis on the affective

dimension of learning inherent in social interaction (Gonzalez Rey, 2009). Ratner (this volume) also suggests that the ZPD may not only be a site for learning but also for the social reproduction of group experiences of oppression and marginalization. These interpretations of the ZPD suggest that individual cognitive development is not the only link between learning activities and that affect and relationships are generated in the ZPD and are carried from one activity to the next (Mahn & John-Steiner, 2000).

Despite differing interpretations of the ZPD, scholars agree on two key points: To begin, learning is embedded in social interaction and second, development suggests a temporal frame that relates retrospective action (what is known) to potential action (what can be learned). We have traditionally identified learning as the advancement from one academic task to the next (e.g., moving from alphabet mastery to decoding and reading) where the space in between these learning activities, the ZPD, is considered a provisional site for actions that drive development. However, the actual moments of this zone of interaction are an important source for the analysis of learning activity. In this regard, the ZPD is an activity itself, that is, it is not simply a bridge to future action or a transitory space.

Following this understanding of the ZPD as activity, we consider transitions also to be learning activities in their own right. Transitions embody the tension between continuity and change that is inherent in any learning activity. While an examination of formal learning activities may predispose us to focus on continuity and cohesion across activities, transitions provide opportunities to foreground change and dissonance as central features of human social behavior and integral aspects of development. We consider transitions to have the following properties: first, they are goal-oriented; second, they are spatio-temporal and sequentially sensitive; third, they include expert and novice participants; fourth, they are structurally organized as a human activity system. We discuss each of these properties in turn.

Goal Orientedness

During transition activities, participants orient toward a common goal and object often produced through requests, directives, or other discursive means. According to Engeström (1991), “[t]he central issues of activity theory remain the object—that is what connects my individual actions to the collective activity” (p. 31). In schools the object has traditionally been conceived as a formal academic task, for example, solving a mathematical problem or decoding a text. However, the object does not have to be limited to discreet academic tasks. The object of activity theory, situated collaboration among interlocutors, correlates with the language socialization perspective that everyday routine social events

are rich sites for studying learning and development. Participation in a routine event demonstrates an individual's commitment to joint activity, a precondition for much of social interaction (Garfinkel, 2002).

Expert and Novice Roles

Transition activities in schools provide the context for understanding the multiple roles that participants can take vis-à-vis the task at hand and each other. Vygotsky defined the ZPD as an interactional space of collaboration between individuals who lie on a continuum from more to less "capable," a collaboration which leads to learning. Like sociocultural theories of learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1991), language socialization research supports the notion that learning is a bidirectional process in which adults and children can shape unfolding interaction and take up expert or novice roles (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986; Whiting, 1980). This approach to the construction and potential shift in roles is based on the notion that participation in talk is action (Goodwin & Goodwin, 2004), and that the strategic coordination of talk and activity accomplishes tasks.

Spatio-Temporal and Sequential Organization

Studies of classroom learning have examined alternative spatial constructs of interaction such as the official (teacher/institution sanctioned), the unofficial (student based) scripts (Gutiérrez, Rymes, & Larson, 1995), and hybrid practices and third spaces of classroom interaction (Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, & Tejada, 1999; Leander, 2002). Recent work has problematized the *chronos* of learning, and the ways learning activity occurs and creates a broad terrain of temporalities (Bloome et al., 2009; Solís, Kattan, & Baquedano-López, 2009a). These studies are based on an understanding of learning as an inherently complex process that is not predictable or unproblematic. Face-to-face interactions are important sites for examining how novices' and experts' discursive practices and strategies reconfigure spatial and temporal parameters of instruction and learning. By focusing on interactions during transitions, we gain a deeper understanding of how participants manage or shift the course of learning activities.

Activity Theoretic Systems Structures

Transitions are comprised of the same structures as the human activity system. These structures include tools and signs, subjects, objects, rules, community, division of labor-mediating artifacts, sense, meaning, and outcomes. All transition activities contain accumulated knowledge of rules and tools of previ-

ous and next activity, yet they also project possibilities for novel understandings yet to be realized. As we noted earlier, transitions are goal oriented, sometimes in multiple and conflictive ways, responding to ongoing, as well as projected tasks.

Engeström's (2001) discussion of the three generations of activity theory is useful for explaining how the concept of transition activity fits within the scope of activity theory. Engeström notes that the first generation of activity theory research integrated cultural artifacts into learning through the concept of "mediation." In this formulation, learning was situated at the individual level and was portrayed through the triangle heuristic of subject—object—mediating artifact. The second generation shifted from a notion of individual learning to the collective and began to incorporate the idea of internal contradiction as central for change. In this approach there was still not much attention paid to cultural diversity despite other forms of inclusion accounting for learning sites ranging from young children and play to adults in the work place.

In the third generation, or the current stage of activity theory, Engeström highlights the continued need for attention to diversity of learners and settings, in his words, "The third generation of activity theory needs to develop conceptual tools to understand dialogue, multiple perspectives, and networks of interacting activity systems" (p. 135). This third generation of activity theory takes at a minimum "two interacting activity systems into account" (p. 136). Transition activity fits within this conceptual model as it necessarily engages more than one activity system given that it is structurally and pragmatically at the border of at least two activity systems, for example, between circle-time and play time or even a possible, emergent, other activity such as a discipline routine. Moreover, transitions may also include activity systems such as communicating in two languages, which may also create an alignment of code and activity, for example, alternating the use of a language during sets of activities. Such alignments are important to examine if we are to understand the diversity of learning experiences in schools.

The Exemplars: Transition Activities as Opportunities to Learn

In this section we discuss examples of transition activities from Escuela Mundo and La Escuelita to illustrate how multiple goals, actions, and talk are managed. We focus on activities that involve spatial and temporal movement; in one case from indoors (circle-time) to outdoors (recess), in the other from story time to naptime. To examine how language mediates learning, we discuss two analytical points to help us understand transition as learning activity. The first concerns the notion of signification, that is, how an utterance encodes different levels of meaning. The second point centers around the analysis of the spatio-temporal

sensitivity of transition activity. Earlier we discussed that structurally, transition activity involves at least two activity systems. We now explore how teachers and students use language to delimit the parameters of possible next-activity according to an evaluation of ongoing activity.

Levels of Signification in Transition Activity

The first example we analyze comes from data collected at Escuela Mundo. It illustrates the ways a teacher, Susana, and her students negotiate the range of acceptable behaviors for next-activity as they move from circle-time to recess. Circle-time serves multiple purposes during classroom instruction, ranging from learning content matter, to storytelling activities, to building a sense of classroom community, and providing a setting to discipline and review rules of behavior and plans for the day (Michaels, 1981; Poveda, 2001; Solís, Kattan, & Baquedano-López, 2009b). Our analytical focus here is on the talk and ongoing actions that indicated to all participants in circle-time that they were engaged in a new activity, a transition activity, as well as how they were negotiating this new activity.

Borrowing a helpful heuristic from Hanks (1996), we outline different levels of meaning of a sample expression made by Susana while she was addressing her students at the conclusion of circle-time. We focus on three levels that include signification, the literal content, and the conveyed sense or the intended meaning of the phrase. These levels illustrate the multiple ways that one expression carries and amplifies meaning that socializes preschool students not just to the meaning of words but also to outcomes for appropriate behavior, that is, to forms of cultural competence. On this day, the classroom participants included 22 children, Susana, and two female teacher assistants. The majority of the students in this classroom were native speakers of English and second-language learners of Spanish. Susana and her teaching assistants were Latinas and native Spanish speakers. The interaction was carried out in Spanish and consisted of reviewing the rules for leaving the classroom and the appropriate behavior outdoors during recess. As the students sat around at the end of circle time, the teacher told the class the following phrase:

“Acuérdense que afuera no jugamos a pelear”

Remember that outdoors we do not play fight/at fighting

At the first level of meaning, signification, the teacher's directive to the students was to remember what they were not supposed to do outside. While they were supposed to play, they were not supposed to fight or play as if they were fighting. We note here the property of transitions of goal orientation, in this case achieving a goal that involved physical relocation from the inside of the classroom activity of circle-time to the outdoor activity of recess.

The second level of meaning, literal content, included information about where and how the subsequent activity was to take place, in this example, outside, and not inside, and it was not supposed to involve fighting. We note here the spatio-temporal and sequential organization of the activity, not only true for the unfolding activity itself, but also for the cumulative body of knowledge that was indexed, knowledge which had been acquired and brought to bear on the activity at hand. The teacher's directive to remember, as an act of collective remembrance, presupposed a shared history that was necessary for appropriate participation in their next activity. Finally, the third layer of meaning, the intended meaning or moral valence (an admonition in this case), exemplified how language in activity became the locus of shared culture and history. We outline these levels of analysis of the teacher's statement, from signification to the moralizing conveyed sense as follows:

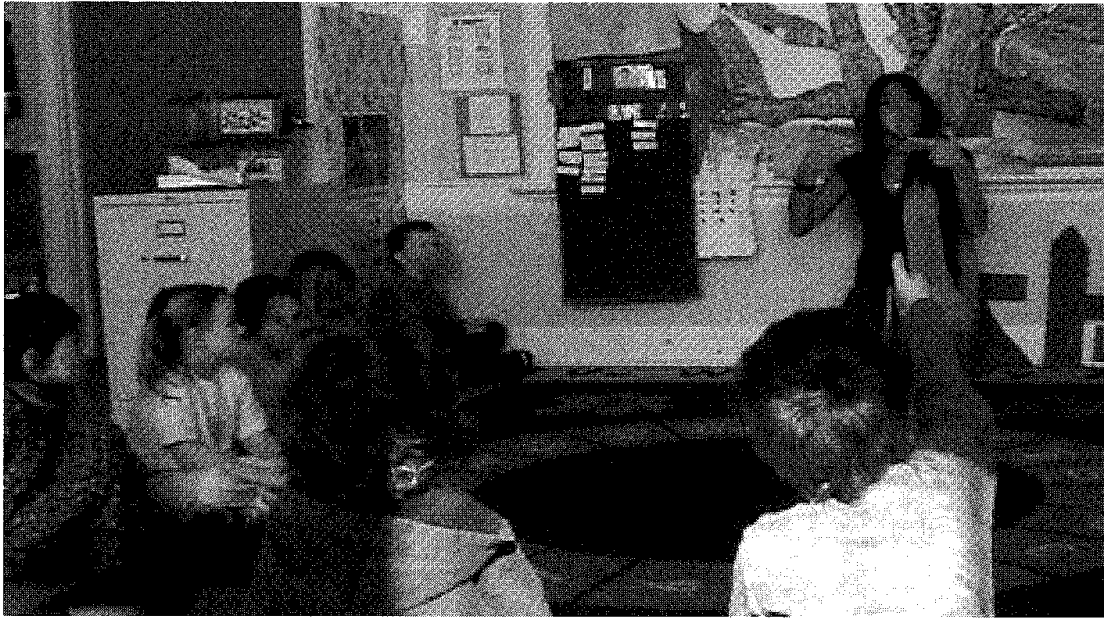
- Level 1: [Acordar-comm-pres-2pl-refx que [afuera-LOC neg jugar-pres-1pl a pelear INF]]²
Remember that outside no play to fight/at fighting
- Level 2: Remember now what we do not do outside
- Level 3: Recall the morally acceptable terms of behavior within the physical spaces of the school setting

The students' uptake illustrates how they were able to interpret behavior according to the expectations of their teacher and school and confirms that learning is occurring during this transitional activity. Excerpt 1 below is a transcript³ of the video-recorded exchange following the teacher's statement just examined, "Acuérdense que afuera no jugamos a pelear." In the video still (Figure 1), we observe Peter, a male student, offering a negative behavior, "no guns," by pointing at the teacher as if he were holding a gun. As we can see in the transcript, the teacher's response verbally and gesturally overlapped with the student's turn, using her two hands to mimic guns pointing at each other:

- Excerpt 1:
- 1 Tea: **Acuérdense que afuer::a (.5) no jugamos a pelear**
Remember that outside we don't play fight
- 2 Stu: **No [a:rmas.**
No weapons
- 3 Tea: **[No jugamos con a:rmas.**
We don't play with weapons.
 (Hands simulating guns)

As the excerpt illustrates, students can take up expert positions in learning activities. In this exchange, Peter displayed a competent, multilayered understanding of the teachers' utterance and provided an example of the inappropri-

FIGURE. 1 "No armas"



ate forms of play referenced by the teacher, in this case that the use of weapons, "armas," is a form of fighting. We note that the teacher framed next-activity in the negative—what they could not do outdoors. This framing highlighted, and invited, a listing of behaviors that were not acceptable. It also allowed for the possibility of recreating forbidden behavior as illustrated in the student's pointing of an imaginary gun towards the teacher. The enacted behavior, which would have constituted a breach to regular classroom behavior, was acceptable in this transition activity where rules were being negotiated. In this case, talk about and enactment of undesirable behaviors were not only possible, they were also defining features of this activity. We note, too, that the rest of the students physically oriented and visually attended to the exchange between the teacher and one of their peers. The language in this activity, through its multiple levels of significance, reaffirmed the values held in this classroom community and expanded the students' knowledge of language and of the rules of behavior in prior, ongoing, and next activity.

Spatio-Temporal Sensitivity in Transition Activities

As we have noted, while often discursively projecting other times and spaces, transition activity can take place between activity systems. In Excerpt 2 below we analyze an example of transition activity at La Escuelita, a transition at the margins of story and naptime, two recurrent and clearly defined activity systems

at the school that serve expected developmental goals. Here, the activities took place in more than one code, Spanish and English, illustrating how participants in an activity utilize linguistic resources available to them. In Excerpt 2, about ten three-year-old students were seated on the floor in the school's library area waiting to be read a story before naptime. The teacher, Alma, who was about to read the story, was seated in a wicker chair at the front of the room. On this day, the children behaved in ways interpreted by the teachers to be restless, and their lack of sufficient attention to Alma while she was reading the story led to a reconfiguration of classroom goals. In this exchange, three teachers spoke and several children's names were mentioned. As in the previous example, the children's uptake and participation in transitional activity followed and supported the goals of the activity. Eventually, through displays of language and gestures they joined their teachers in song intoning the lyrics of a popular Spanish song in the 1960s⁴ as they began to march out of the library:

Excerpt 2:

- 1 Alma: **¡Yo no sé porqué! Leemos una bien rápido solamente.**
I don't know why! We'll read one very quickly.
 (Shakes head)
- 2 T1: **Uh, you now what Alma?**
- 3: **Manuel, Emilio, and George were not listening to you not one bit.**
- 4 T2: **Los niños que no están escuchando ya se pueden ir a las camas.**
The children who are not listening can go to bed now
- 5: **porque las camas están listas.**
because the beds are ready.
- 6 T1: **Ve a la cama Carlos. Adiós. Vámonos Jorge. Vámonos.**
Go to bed Carlos. Goodbye. Let's go Jorge. Let's go.
 (Picks Carlos up and places him by the door)
- 7 T2: **Vamos chicos.**
Let's go kids.
- 8 All: **Vamos a la cama, hay que descansar.**
Let us go to bed, we have to rest.
 (Singing)
- 9 Lisa: (Orients to door and begins to march out)

This transitional activity has its own goal and structure, distinct from, and yet constituted by, the surrounding activities of story time and naptime. The teachers identified the children's inattentiveness as a breach in behavior that redefined the activity of story time into an activity of getting ready for naptime. The transition between story and naptime indicated by singing a song in line 8,

FIGURE. 2 "Vamos a la cama"



"vamos a la cama," cued children into physically moving from the library to their cots and shifting from being awake to projecting being asleep.

The language in this transitional activity emphasized the importance of listening and the consequences that failure to do so can have, in this case, an early shift to naptime. Movement towards a new goal, which now included socializing listening behavior and preparations to leave the room, was foregrounded in this interaction through Alma's explicit reference to not understanding the children's behavior "yo no sé porqué" (I don't know why) (line 1). This dynamic was further elaborated by the co-teachers noting that the students were not listening (lines 2 and 3), and by the collective of teachers framing "going to bed" as a consequence of not listening (lines 4 and 5). The disciplinary events that transpired during the transitional activity reframed the teachers' talk about naptime and their subsequent activity as a punishment, although naptime was not usually talked about in these terms. The construction of naptime as punishment was realized through the physical relocation of students when a teacher picked up Carlos and set him on the floor at the doorway between the library and classroom and through the issue of directives, including "go to bed" and "let's go" (line 6). When the teachers began to sing a song that accompanied transition activity to nap time (line 8), the children took up this cue, indicating that they understood the new goal of this transitional activity. This spatial quality of the transitional activity was also embodied through action.

This transition activity also opened up the possibility of reconfiguring participation frameworks and for expert and novice roles to be taken up. In this case, four major changes took place. First, the teachers, who usually worked

together on a unified stance towards the activity, demonstrated shifts in alignment when they took up different roles ranging from storyteller to disciplinarian (“we can read a story quickly” and “go to bed, goodbye”). Second, students took up expert roles; for example, Lisa began marching out of the room, thus leading the way for the other students who were still seated on the rug in the library (Figure 2). Third, transitional activity included a shift in participation frameworks from teacher-led (story-time activities) to student-oriented (encouraging singing and body movement of all participants in the class). Finally, we note that a teacher switched from Spanish to English (lines 2 and 3) to address the lead teacher and to report student behaviors while conceivably the students were overhearing the exchange.

Conclusion

Vygotsky is known for having articulated the relevance of the cultural and historical dimensions of learning and development. To elaborate on how history is made actual in learning, Leontiev (1981c) explained language as the object of activity of prior human generations, which is then appropriated by the child. Language is thus both preceded by the individual (that is, it is historical) and it is also appropriated by the individual in the present social learning context (that is, it is social and cultural). In this chapter we have supported a notion of language as the means through which children acquire competencies during transition activities. Children’s intellectual work in schools is not bounded by typical notions of activity. Our analyses of transition activities at two Spanish immersion programs in California illustrated how Latino and non-Latino students, led in both settings by Latina teachers, participated, negotiated, and appropriated the norms, behaviors, and language of their classroom communities.

Throughout this chapter we have argued that transitions are not simply in-between states of activity systems and that instead, they are activities in their own right. In the examples we analyzed, we noted the collaborative construction of rules of behavior and participation in both transition activity and next-activity. We also observed that participants discussed the consequences for not displaying appropriate behavior. In one case, playing with weapons (a potential breach) would have constituted negatively sanctioned behavior. In another case, not listening to a story (an actual breach) meant a reconfiguration of ongoing activity and an early exit to nap time. We also noted how students took up expert positions illustrating shifts in participation during ongoing activity. In the first example, Peter displayed knowledge of forms of fighting, a negative expectation, that included the use of weapons. In the second example, we saw that teachers negotiated next courses of action in a temporary suspension of ongoing activity. The teachers’ *keying*, in Goffman’s sense (1974, p. 45), allowed them to display

two different stances towards student inattention: in the midst of the activity of reading a story, the teachers disciplined the students *and* directed them to their cots using song to cue students transition to naptime.

Finally, we want to highlight the practice observed over time at La Escuelita concerning the use of English for disciplinary reasons. In the example of interaction we discussed, a teacher assistant's report to the lead teacher about misbehaving students was done in English. This suggests a form of domain-specificity where one language code is used for certain socialization exchanges (Garrett, 2005). A switch to English articulated a code of discipline in this preschool classroom. The teacher assistant's action also illustrates ideologies held about the power or status of languages (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994; Schieffelin, Woolard, & Kroskrity, 1998). In this regard, the use of language within particular activities gives us insights into the ideologies and valences indexed by particular language codes within educational settings.

It has long been acknowledged that children's first contact with schooling is formative of their future success as students. With nearly two-thirds of all four-year-olds attending pre-school in the year before they enter kindergarten (U.S. Department of Education, 2002), it is imperative to compare and integrate findings on the effects of different forms of early childhood educational programs serving diverse student populations and to illuminate what social, linguistic, and cognitive opportunities are afforded to students. These efforts need to also support a view of language, no longer just as a resource, but as central to learning.

Transitions as central units of analysis have much to offer educational and language researchers who seek to understand socialization and development in the early academic years. Transitions are unique activities that by their very fluid and complex nature provide opportunities to enact a range of actions, from opportunities to test the parameters of permissible action to learning about the consequences of breaches to ongoing interaction. We hope the findings we have presented here move us toward an integrated understanding of the learning that is afforded in transition activity and of the language that helps realize it.

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NOTES

- 1 We use pseudonyms for the names of the schools, teachers, and students.
- 2 Grammatical analysis abbreviations: COMM, command or directive; PRES, present tense; pl, plural; 1 or 2, first or second person; LOC, locative; INF, infinitive tense.
- 3 Transcription notations modified from Atkinson & Heritage (1984).

Bold	Actual Speech
<i>Italics</i>	English gloss
.	Falling tone (not necessarily the end of a sentence)
,	Slight rising inflection
?	Rising intonation (not necessarily a question)
!	Animated tone
:	Sound elongations; the use of more colons indicate longer elongation of sound
[]	Overlapped speech
<u>Under</u>	Speaker emphasis
(1.5)	Length of pause in tenths of seconds
((smile))	Non-verbal behavior
Video still	Video stills (Figures) illustrate gestures relevant to the data excerpts.

- 4 This was a popular theme song broadcast in the 1960s in Spain and Latin America that announced the end of the day's children's programming and the beginning of adult programming. It featured animated images of the six young children of La Familia Telerín who marched off to bed singing in single file (see Gasca, 1967; Guadarrama Rico, 1999).