Language Socialization Project
Group Project with 3-4 students

1. Goals
The main goal of the project is to examine language practices used to socialize newcomers into the culture of a particular community. Culture includes ways of knowing, seeing, hearing, and experiencing the world from a particular perspective.
We are interested in the development of analytic skills of observing, recording naturally occurring interaction, transcription, and analysis.

2. Background
One of the things that is distinctive of human beings is the ability to socialize new members into a community or group, to pass along cultural knowledge from old timers to newcomers. In this project you will analyze how this is accomplished by examining moment-to-moment interaction in particular sequences of talk. This project will allow you to examine culture as a system or practices and the forms of participation (See Duranti, Chapter 2).

3. Steps in the Project
Find a location where your group members can observe language socialization taking place. This can be any setting where there is interaction between experts and novices (bedtime stories, soccer instruction, archeological lab or field school, a newspaper office, a biology, physics, or chemistry lab, martial arts class, little league, learning to bake, various apprenticeship situations, catechism class, rock climbing, swim team, hair salon classes, dance, sculpture, or singing class, debate team), yoga, acting class, or peer group interaction (children at play).

Very important is obtaining permission from those you will study. In anthropology classes we always inform our subjects that they are being observed or recorded. Very important is selecting a setting where you can record good sound and feel comfortable recording. It’s important to stay away from noisy settings or settings where the tape recorder or video camera is too awkward. Your ability to write a good essay will suffer.

Talk to your TA if you’re having trouble thinking of a place to do your observations or you have a problem with recording interaction. How much time you spend at a location or how many occasions you visit depends entirely on the activity you are selecting.
Record with video or audio practices of language socialization in your setting. Provide transcriptions of language used to socialize new members.
Main Object of Paper

Discuss the types of embodied language practices that are used between participants in the activity (those who occupy the roles of expert and novice or perhaps as more co-equals if you are looking at peer socialization). Document how participants in the activity become competent in the activity you study.

Some issues you might address are listed below:

What are the role relationships (i.e., Expert/Novice) in the activity? How are roles differentiated?

What special terms are employed? (See readings on ethnoscience on taxonomy in the reader and in Bonvillain, chapter 3 "lexical and cultural categories").

Is metaphor used to assist in the novice's learning? (i.e., "Launch that note with directionality" in the midst of a singing lesson. or “Don't sound like a trapdoor.”) See Bonvillain, Chapter 3, on “metaphor.”

What types of speech acts (See Bonvillain ch. 4) or adjacency pairs (See web articles on conversation analysis.) or routines (Bonvillain, c. 4) are used to organize the activity?

Are directives used? (See Berko-Gleason (Web) and Bonvillain Chapter 5 on directives) (directive/response sequences would be forms of adjacency pairs)

If code switching occurs in the midst of a correction sequence, indicate this. (An instructor may wish to select a specific code at particular junctures in the activity, for example, to become more emphatic). (See Bonvillain on code switching)

What types of semiotic modalities or representations are used in the instruction sequence? (for example how are material artifacts, gestures, or space used in the process of instruction?) (See “Professional Vision” on how artifacts, practices of highlighting, coding, and the body are used in communication.)

How is gender relevant to the language practices you document?

You need not address all of these. However, you should document as carefully as possible the precise way in which the instruction occurs. On the class website see Duranti on Fieldwork and Transcription under the heading “Project Preparation Readings.” Under “Transcription Conventions” you will find a transcription system that I use, which is based on work in Conversation Analysis). You should include some transcript of the activity in your project. If you can provide photographs or diagrams, this could enhance your project. Any type of
innovative use of representations to explicate what you have observed is encouraged.

Your final project may be either a written paper or a PowerPoint Presentation. The paper should be 8-10 pages double-spaced. The PowerPoint Presentation should be equally as informative and theoretical as a paper. In section you can present your PowerPoint during the period of weeks 8-10.

In the first paragraph (or slide of PowerPoint) outline the activity you are concerned with and your procedure for doing the field research. We encourage you to relate what you observe to any of the concepts discussed in class or section in a concluding paragraph.

Page Length 8-10 pages MAXIMUM!
PowerPoint Presentations should be no more than 15 minutes.
You can have a more extensive PowerPoint than you actually present to turn in on a CD, as it’s often very difficult to summarize a study in only 15 minutes, and we want to see the video or hear the audio.

Structure of paper or presentation

A. Introduction, including a thesis statement that explains
   WHAT you are going to show in the analysis
   HOW you are going to show it
   WHY this is interesting

B. Background
   Situate your essay in terms of issues that are larger and more relevant than the particular situation you are analyzing

C. Methods
   Talk briefly about how you collected your data and began to analyze it.
   Describe the use of participant observation, audio or video recording and note taking. Explain how many observations you did, for how long you observed the interactions, and how you gained access to the site.

D. Analysis
   See “Main object of paper” above.

Make (at least) a one-page transcript of an exchange (or series of smaller exchanges) in your setting to illustrate how language is used for particular purposes. Provide translation if you are working in a language other than English.
Evaluation of paper or presentation

You will be evaluated according to the following criteria
  Your understanding of course materials
  Your clarity of expression
  Your ability to extend an analysis to your own data
  Your comprehension and precision of analysis
  Your originality in approaching the assignment
Language Socialization Assignment OUTLINE to be turned in Oct. 25.
One outline per group

The **project outline** should include a **paragraph**, which briefly discusses

1. What **activity** your group is investigating, including the particular site you are investigating. What types of **competencies** are being developed?
2. What are the **role relationships** in the activity?
3. Discuss **ANY** of the following that you have information on now. Give some examples of the **special terms, metaphors, speech acts, routines, or adjacency pairs** (directive/response pairs for example) are used to accomplish learning in the situation.
4. How is the **body** and how are **artifacts** used in the process of socializing new members?
5. Provide a preliminary transcript of interaction in the activity.
6. The more detailed your outline now, the more feedback we can provide for you; if you want to change the direction of your project during the course, this is not a problem.

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**ANTHRO M140/Ling M146/GROUP EVALUATION**
for Language Socialization assignment

The group evaluation is mandatory for all group members; it should be emailed to Steve Black or Sarah Downs (your TA) at the time you turn in the final paper.
This will be confidential. We want to make sure everyone in the group participated and contributed.

Your name
Your Project's Title
Your group members' names

1. Please give a general evaluation of your group's collaboration in the class project.
2. What did you like and/or did not like about working in this group?