

Rethinking Diversity: Hybridity and Hybrid Language Practices in the Third Space

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In this article we provide a perspective on hybridity both as a theoretical lens for understanding diversity and a method for organizing learning. We argue that the use of multiple, diverse, and even conflicting mediational tools promotes the emergence of *Third Spaces*, or zones of development, thus expanding learning. Using examples from our ethnographic study of the literacy practices of one dual immersion elementary school classroom, we illustrate through an analysis of the discourse and literacy practices of the teacher and students in this culture of collaboration, how hybrid activities, roles, and practices can lead to productive contexts of development.

Our long-term ethnographic work in formal and nonformal learning contexts has helped us see the changing and shifting nature of learning communities and their variant responses to these shifts. In this way, contexts for development are neither necessarily benign nor unproblematic, and, instead, can be characterized by their diverse, conflictual, and complex nature. Some learning communities try to ignore, resist, and suppress these changes, whereas others recognize these points of disruption as the building blocks for potential learning. In our earlier work, we have illustrated how points of tension and conflict in various learning activities can lead to a transformation in the activity and the participation and discourse practices therein. These transformations can lead to productive literacy learning.

We have conceptualized such particular discursive spaces as the third space in which alternative and competing discourses and positionings transform conflict and difference into rich zones

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of collaboration and learning (Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, & Turner, 1997; Gutiérrez, Rymes, & Larson, 1995). Thus, the construct of the Third Space has been productive in helping us understand the complexity of learning environments and their transformative potential. From the perspective of activity theory, the third space might also be considered an expanded activity (Engeström, 1999) in which the object of activity is extended and the activity itself reorganized, resulting in new opportunities for learning. Like Engeström, we also view these expanded activities, or third spaces, as zones of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). In contrast to the less problematic ways in which zo-peds are so often described, we want to highlight that zo-peds are also disharmonious and hybrid spaces. (See Griffin & Cole, 1984, for more discussion on zo-peds as sites of contestation.)

Our analysis of third spaces has shown that learning contexts are immanently hybrid, that is, polycontextual, multivoiced, and multiscritped. Thus, conflict, tension, and diversity are intrinsic to learning spaces. We have examined these tensions by studying the competing discourses and practices, the official scripts and counterscripts, of the various social spaces of learning communities.¹ By attending to the social, political, material, cognitive, and linguistic conflict, we also have documented these tensions as potential sites of rupture, innovation, and change that lead to learning (Baquedano-López, Alvarez, & Gutiérrez, 1998; Engeström, 1987, 1990, 1993; Newman, Griffin, & Cole, 1989). Here we define an *activity system* as social practice(s) that includes the norms, values, division of labor, the goals of a community, and its participants' enduring dispositions toward the social practice (Gutiérrez & Stone, in press). In this article, we provide a situated analysis of one classroom community, where a purposeful use of hybridity and diversity stimulates the transformation of activities into robust contexts of development. Diversity here not only includes racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and linguistic diversity, but also diversity in the mediational tools, roles, and the activity systems themselves. Hybridity and diversity, then, are not problematic but rather are viewed as important cultural resources in children's development (Cole, 1998). Hybridity and diversity serve as the building blocks of Third Spaces.

Our sustained presence as participant observers in urban schools contexts has helped us recognize the complexity of the networks of relations and activity systems that exist and emerge in classrooms. Using ethnographic and discourse analytic methods, we have studied the social practices of the teaching and learning of literacy, their microprocesses, and their relationship to other activity systems. This approach affords analyses across and within various levels of activity. These analyses also make visible the overlapping, interwoven, and hybrid nature of social phenomena.

Although hybridity in learning contexts is ubiquitous, a focus on the hybrid nature of activity systems and their language practices helps make visible developmental spaces that may have been ignored previously. For example, in many classroom communities, teachers may not recognize nor have the training necessary to see diversity and difference and the resulting hybridity as re-

¹ In our earlier work, we have illustrated how learning communities construct scripts, or normative patterns of talk and interaction over time. Moreover, learning communities construct multiple and often conflicting scripts in the various social spaces of the classroom. The normative script most often emerges in the official spaces of the classroom, where the teacher and the official curriculum reside. Counterscripts are constructed most often by students in various unofficial spaces. Although these scripts are often contradictory and competing, they are nevertheless interdependent. Although scripts have stable and predictable features, they simultaneously lend themselves to improvisation, and it is this improvisational quality that accounts for the potential for change and development (Gutiérrez, 1993). We have described how this interdependence can lead to the creation of new scripts and spaces, in what we termed the Third Space.

sources for creating new learning spaces. Although such an understanding can inform practice in any learning community, it can be particularly productive in ethnically, racially, and linguistically diverse learning communities where difference as a resource is not an organizing principle of instruction. Thus, we propose hybridity both as a useful lens, a theoretical tool for understanding the inherent diversity and heterogeneity of activity systems and learning events, as well as a principle for organizing learning. Utilizing multiple, diverse, and, even, conflicting mediational tools promotes the emergence of third spaces, or zones of development, and, thus, expands learning (Engeström, 1987).

HYBRIDITY

The concept of hybridity is not new; it already has become a useful term for problematizing identity, particularly in postcolonial work on borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987; Arteaga, 1994; Becquer & Gatti, 1991; Bhabha, 1994; Gómez-Peña, 1996; Lipsitz, 1994, 1998; Shohat & Stam, 1994; Valle & Torres, 1995). In particular, this body of work captures the struggle of translation and difference in contexts where cultural and linguistic practices, histories, and epistemologies collide. Such translation, in which people negotiate what is known, for example, local cultural knowledge and linguistic registers, occurs when people attempt to make sense of one's identity in relation to prevailing notions of self and cultural practices. This same complexity and struggle, as we have argued, is found in other contexts of cultural contact, particularly urban classroom settings. Here Anzaldúa's (1987) work on borderlands and identity formation is particularly useful in explaining hybridity. The description of her own learning experiences where difference, especially linguistic hybridity, was suppressed and devalued illustrates the normative practices that often still exist today.²

Our contribution here is to unpack the construct of hybridity as a new way of making sense of diversity in learning contexts. Hybridity exists at multiple levels of learning environments. The classroom, for example, is constitutive of multiple and connected activity systems, that is, it is polycontextual. We have termed these varied social spaces, or activity systems, the official and unofficial spaces of learning contexts. Although these spaces also are characterized by their various and often oppositional discourses and social practices, they are also mutually constitutive and transformative. In all cases, these tensions in activity rupture the normative practice, and new hybrid activities emerge. However, some classroom communities resist the transformation, whereas others opportunistically view these emergent activities as potentially fruitful contexts of development. We have conceptualized these improvisations as Third Spaces and argue that these learning zones are promoted and sustained by hybrid language and schooling practices that bridge home and school (Moll & Greenberg, 1990). Figure 1 illustrates how the mediating artifacts of hybrid language and home/school practices transform activity and literacy learning.

We will use one of our research sites to illustrate a hybrid activity system as represented in Figure 1. *Las Redes* (Networks), our afterschool computer club, is both a formal and nonformal learning context influenced by the cultural practices of the elementary school and community in which it is located and by the University that helps organize it. Moreover, unlike in most formal contexts

²The recent California initiative to eliminate bilingual education (Proposition 227) is one particularly salient example.

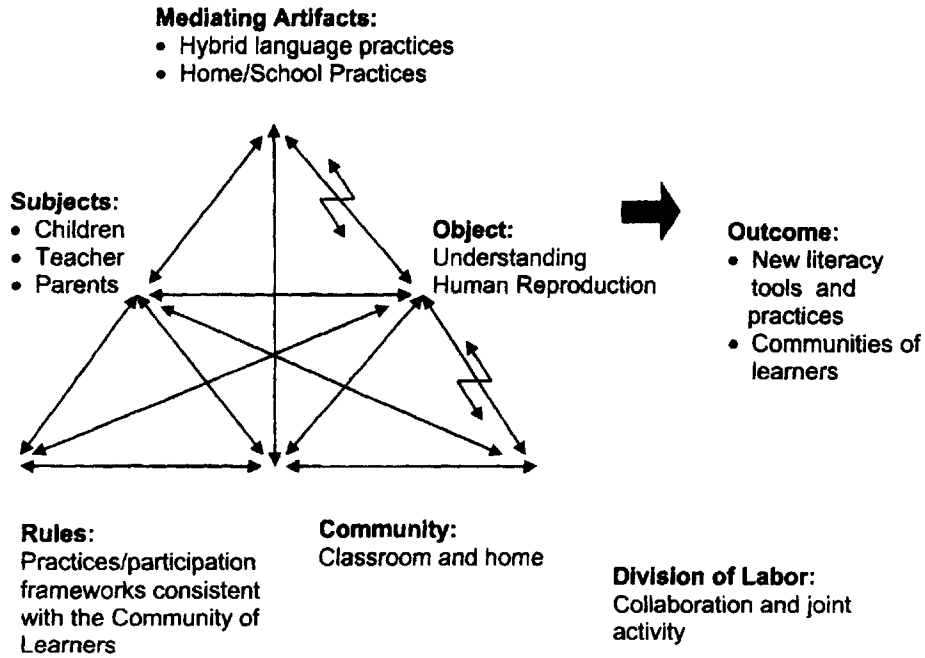


FIGURE 1 From *Learning by Expanding*, by Y. Engeström, 1987, Helsinki, Finland: Orienta-Konsultit Oy. Copyright 1987 by Author. Adapted with permission.

for learning, play and learning are built into the collaborative computer gaming activities in which adults and children participate. Further, hybridity at *Las Redes* is manifest in the coexistence, commingling of, and contradictions among different linguistic codes and registers in the course of everyday activity. Although these hybrid language practices are most visible in this setting, such language practices are always present, though not always legitimized and utilized, in formal learning contexts. The practices of this afterschool club, then, strategically incorporate the local knowledge of home and school and, in doing so, reorganize the roles, participation frameworks, and division of labor; in short, the social organization of learning in this setting results in new activities and outcomes (Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, & Alvarez, in press; Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, Alvarez, & Chiu, 1999; Vasquez, 1994).

Such transformation, however, is not limited to informal learning contexts like *Las Redes*. We will illustrate the ways in which hybrid activity and hybrid language practices serve as triggers of transformation or expansion for literacy learning in one dual immersion elementary school classroom. Using ethnographic data from our studies of the literacy practices in urban schools, we illustrate how productive cultures of collaboration can create hybrid activities, roles, and practices that lead to productive contexts of development (Gutiérrez, 1992, 1993, 1995; Gutiérrez et al., in press; Gutiérrez & Larson, 1994; Gutiérrez & Meyer, 1995). In the following sections, we provide an ethnographic portrait of the community, the classroom, and a focal activity that spans 6 weeks.

THE COMMUNITY

Bell Elementary School is a large elementary school located in the working-class sector of an economically and racially segregated section of an affluent, large West Coast city. This particular neighborhood is largely Latino, working poor, and immigrant. Bell, the neighborhood school, is a two-way Spanish immersion language magnet school created by the district in response to a mandate to desegregate its schools. The school and, thus, the classroom student population reflected this mandate and included many students from the surrounding neighborhood and a number of middle-class Anglo and African American children whose parents had elected to enroll them in this magnet school. There was a range of proficiency in Spanish and English among the children. Some native Spanish speakers were proficient in English, and, similarly, some native English speakers were Spanish proficient. The proficiency was due, in part, to the children's continued enrollment in the same school for 1 or more years and, in some cases, with the same teacher.

The teacher of this combined second- and third-grade class, the focus of this study, had been teaching for 2 years and was theoretically grounded in cultural-historical theories of learning and development and Freirian pedagogies. We had been documenting this teacher's development since her pre-service experience at our university. In particular, we had been examining how this teacher employed cultural-historical and Freirian theories to create communities of learners similar to those put forth by Rogoff (1994). In her own words, the teacher, Ms. Rivera, described her practice:

I guess you should know that I am a teacher that is guided by theory. My teaching is informed by my beliefs about learning, and I believe that learning is a social process. Therefore, I try to set up everything that happens in the classroom to occur socially. I am also guided by what I believe to be a critical pedagogy, a critical theory in which I don't want [interrupts herself] One of my goals is to give voice to the children, but not only voice, but to break the power structures of society, not to reproduce them; but to create a brand new structure in which they have the power so that not only does it create independence and self-esteem, but that they feel that they have what it takes to succeed in life, not only academically but in every area of their life. (A. Rivera, personal communication, February 1995)

Guided by these theories, the day-to-day practices of this classroom in this language magnet school provided multiple opportunities for students to have ongoing access to each other's linguistic, cultural, and cognitive resources, and these practices had consequences that extended beyond the classroom walls (Gutiérrez et al., 1997). Moreover, the teacher's bicultural knowledge facilitated these practices. The teacher, fully literate in both Spanish and English, was a native of Mexico but was educated primarily in the United States. Her ability to use a range of registers, including formal and colloquial Spanish with her students and their parents, served to link home and school effectively. The hybrid culture of this classroom community was thus a fertile ground for Third Spaces.

HYBRIDITY IN THE CLASSROOM

Ms. Rivera's Spanish immersion classroom is illustrative of a formal learning context in which hybridity is salient. We use representative data of sustained classroom activity in one particular elementary school classroom that we observed for over 3 years to explain how conflict and diversity become catalysts for curricular change, individual learning, and the larger activity system. In this

learning context, its hybrid culture was actively mined in the ways the teacher and children consciously and strategically utilized their own linguistic repertoires and created new contexts of development; these hybrid language practices fostered language and literacy development. These hybrid language practices, however, were neither disconnected nor random. Instead, these practices were intimately connected texts, strategically used, and were the outcome of a hybrid activity system in which home and school were consciously bridged. Similar to practices represented in the work on Funds of Knowledge (Moll, 1998), the local practices, knowledge, and beliefs of both the local community and of the classroom and school community were brought to bear in everyday classroom practices.

Acceptance and use of diverse, alternative texts and codes, ways of participating, sharing expertise, and mediating literacy learning were part of the normative practice of this community of learners (Rogoff, 1994). Diversity, in this context, was a resource. As we will illustrate shortly, even unauthorized side talk, movement, and spontaneous interaction and collaboration, were unproblematic and redefined as part of the normative practice in this community. In other words, this particular classroom community was flexible and open to student behaviors that in other learning contexts might be considered inappropriate or forms of counterscript. Talk, interaction, reading, writing, and sharing in a variety of codes and registers here were considered the means to productive learning. Moreover, the teacher and the children placed a high value on respecting the language, social practices, and beliefs of the classroom community and its individual members. Classroom learning activities included teacher mini-lectures, reading and writing texts, and classroom discussion of topics generated by both teacher and students.

THE HYBRID CULTURE PRODUCES A THIRD SPACE

To understand how hybrid cultures animate third spaces, let us look at the ontogenesis of an activity that stimulated a transformation in Ms. Rivera's classroom. We had observed that there were already multiple activity systems interacting in this learning context. Some children and the teacher participated regularly in the official space, in a sanctioned and legitimate curriculum; simultaneously, children often engaged in counterscript in the unofficial spaces of the classroom. In many classrooms, these resulting moments of conflict and tension would have been ignored or suppressed, with the children's attention redirected to the official curriculum. But in this classroom, such momentary friction among students or between students and teacher became the impetus for reorganizing classroom activity.

One particular morning, conflict, triggered by a student calling another student a "homo," challenged a principle rule of this community of practice, the expectation of mutual respect. In the course of addressing this conflict, a series of student questions about homosexuality and human reproduction erupted. Ms. Rivera recalls:

This unit was something that really happened out of a conversation with the children. Some children started calling others names. So we engaged in a conversation about why people use insults. And after discussing the reasons—it's to hurt people's feelings, and to make others feel bad, and to make yourself feel bigger than them, in whatever respect that may be—I told the children that in order for us to have the knowledge of what everybody knew, we were going to say, all of us, the worst word we knew to insult another person. And I started, to kill that anxiety of "This is my teacher I don't. . . ." And so one of the children said "homo" again. And immediately another child said, "What is that?" And another child

answered, "It's when a man loves another man instead of a woman." And something sparked that before I knew it they were talking about how a baby is made and how the sperm needs to reach the egg. So at that moment I realized I needed to do something, because the first thing in my mind was, "District! Parents!" and so the most important thing in my mind was, "How do I stop this conversation without stripping them of that power of that incredible spontaneity of this interest? [...] Before stopping the conversation I said, "You know what guys, I want you to know, I want you to understand, how comfortable you just made me feel, because you have proven to me that we are friends. But I want you to realize that what we are talking about right now is something that society at large, parents, that parents are not comfortable with, and in order for us to do this we need to have permission from your parents. And so I asked them, "Do you really want to do this?" and they said, "Yes." (A. Rivera, personal communication, February, 1995)

This multiaged class thus decided to learn about the human reproductive system. Given the age of the children and topic (a topic not part of the official primary school curriculum), the teacher and the children designed a sophisticated, yet age appropriate unit that involved 100% parental and district approval and participation. Conflict in this community became the catalyst for expanding learning in the Third Space.

This new activity was neither part of the normative practice of the school nor of the home. As Figure 2 shows, this became a hybrid activity that bridged the official and unofficial spaces of both home and school. Further, this new activity system invoked novel forms of participation that also required new resources for making sense of the classroom participants' new collective activity.

As this case demonstrates, this hybrid culture is constituted at multiple levels. The new unit on human reproduction broke new terrain both at home and school, after all these were second- and third-graders for whom human reproduction was not generally a topic of study. Moreover, the topic itself, and then the formal adoption of the topic into an official unit, merged official and unofficial classroom spaces.

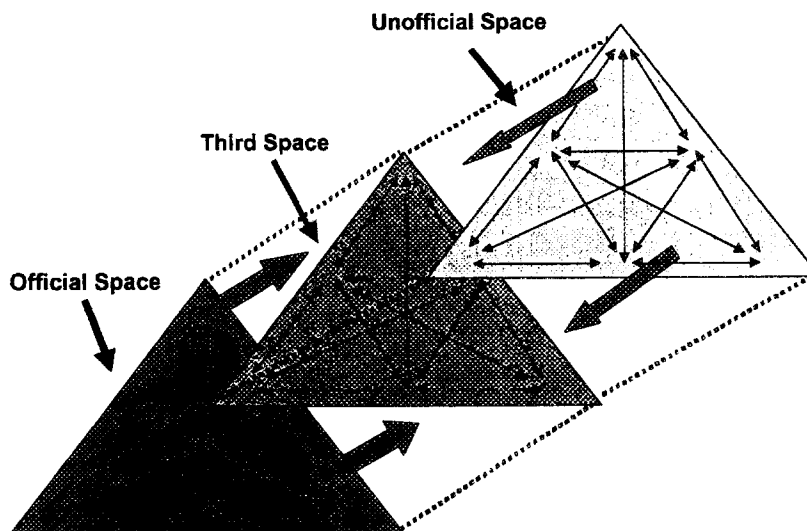


FIGURE 2 Hybrid activity.

Across this 6-week learning event, the children and teacher participated in a variety of learning activities. For example, one Monday morning, students wiggled through cardboard fallopian tubes—simulating sperm traveling through a vagina to fertilize an egg. In another activity, students curled up in a papier-mâché womb to recreate the experience of a fetus. On yet another day the teacher found herself sitting in the principal's office, having to explain that she was not using a banana to teach the students how to wear condoms, as rumor had it. These were moments in Ms. Rivera's classroom during an instructional unit resulting from sustained interaction in the third space. Although this unit resembled other instructional thematic units in many respects, its origin and content were different in other significant ways, especially in its ability to mediate home and school knowledge and language practices.

HYBRID LANGUAGE PRACTICES

In this learning context, no single language or register is privileged, and the larger linguistic repertoires of participants become tools for participating and making meaning in this new collaborative activity (Gutiérrez et al., 1999). In fact, these hybrid language practices became the central mediating tool. From a Bakhtinian (1981) perspective, hybridity increased the possibility of dialogue—and, thus, interpretation. Such practices built local interpretive communities and interpretive practices that included the use of humor, local knowledge, personal experience, and narrative. These creative strategies both challenged the normative scripts, practices, and participation frameworks of the official curriculum and became viable tools for meaning-making.

In the following transcripts of interaction³ in this new human reproduction unit, we discuss how hybrid language practices mediate students' learning. The following interaction captures the unfolding of a new activity. The teacher has just returned papers to the students in which they had generated a list of questions they wanted to discuss.

Reorganizing the Activity

1. ¿Podemos compartir? {{Can we share?}}

T: Entonces, quiero que leyendo su papel= {{So, reading your papers I want=}}

S1: =¿Podemos, podemos?= {{=Can we? Can we?=}}

T: =Vamos a agregar preguntas a lo que queremos saber. {{=We are going to add questions to what we want to know.}}

S1: ¿Podemos *share the*—las?— {{Can we share the—the?—}}

T: ¿Eso es lo que vamos a hacer no? {{That is what we are going to do, isn't it?}}

S2: Compartir— {{Share—}}

³The following are the transcript notations used to denote naturally occurring talk. In some of the data samples, we have represented talk according to the conceptual spaces that we have outlined and discussed throughout the article. Double brackets indicate English translations. Equal signs indicate talk that is latched, that is, talk that immediately follows an utterance without pausing. Commas indicate rising intonation. Dashes indicate cutoffs, often interruptions and self-corrections. Italics marks emphasis. Double parentheses indicate gestures. T = teacher; S1, S2 = individual or unidentified students; Ss = numerous students; J = Jorge. Colons indicate elongated sound, underlining indicates emphasis, and periods inside parentheses indicate pauses.

T: ¿O quieren compartirlo primero?={ {Or do you want to first share it?=} }

As the talk and interaction reveal, students in this community can negotiate the goals of tasks. For example, in this brief interaction, the teacher, speaking within the official curriculum, directs students to a predefined task, but the students interject with an alternative task to share their questions with their classmates first: “¿Podemos compartir?” The teacher readily uptakes one student’s suggestion and reorganizes the task. In this classroom, learning is organized so that ruptures are points of negotiation rather than disruption. This negotiation opens up the possibilities for alternative voices to become part of the official curriculum.

Incorporating Local Knowledge

Within the same lesson, a student-generated question, “¿Qué es esperma?” (What is sperm?), motivates Jorge, one of the students, to contribute his own verbal and nonverbal interpretation of the term *sperm*. The following discourse excerpt vividly exemplifies the possibility of drawing on alternatives codes (English/Spanish, verbal/nonverbal) and registers (formal and informal) to convey meaning.

2. Es como un tadpole {{It’s like a tadpole}}

Official Space	Third Space	Unofficial Space
S: ¿Qué es esperma? {{What is sperm?}}		Ss: ((Student rumblings and side discussions sprouting up.))
T: Como vamos—esa es una buena pregunta. ¿Qué es esperma? Ahorita la apunto. ¿Cómo: cre:ce:n lo:s esperma? {{Since we are—that is a good question. What is sperm? I’ll write it down right now. How: do the sperm gr:ow?}}		J: Es como un tadpole. {{It’s like a tadpole.}} ((Makes swimming tadpole motions with his hands))
T: ((Still writing on board, laughs silently at Jorge’s description))		
T: ((Chuckles at Jorge’s description.))	T: Jorge, parece como renacuajos ((Turns and faces Jorge, smiling)), pero no <u>son</u> renacuajos. {{Jorge, they look like tadpoles but they are not tadpoles.}}	
T: ¿Qué son (.) lo:s espe:rma? {{What are sperms?}} ((Writing on the board)) <u>Muy</u> buena pregunta. {{Very good question.}}	Anabel: ((Laughs out loud)) J: ((Grins widely))	

Jorge likens his image of sperm to tadpoles, while making a fishtail motion with his hand and arm. Jorge's contribution represents alternative ways to display knowledge through the use of different codes: English/Spanish and gestures. Here, Jorge draws from a larger linguistic repertoire, and he is validated by the teacher. The teacher allows code switching, "Es como un *tadpole*," as a viable practice for meaning-making. The teacher's reformulation, "Parece un renacuajo" (It looks like a tadpole), helps to both ensure the children's understanding of the concept of "esperma" and expand vocabulary in both languages. At this moment, the teacher and the student are in a new hybrid space, indeed in the third space, where student knowledge, including the use of alternative representations of meaning, become new tools for learning. Showing expertise in this learning event requires students to draw from their wider linguistic and sociocultural toolkit. Moreover, Jorge's creative and rather amusing contribution is received by the teacher and students with approving chuckles and laughter. In this classroom, affective stances can not only be displayed, they are also welcomed additions to classroom ethos and official knowledge.

When Counterscript is not Counterscript

As the lesson progressed, students' questions were displayed on butcher paper posted on the chalkboard. We observed that the children were eager, although uncomfortable, about the content of the questions they were asking; nervousness and giggles accompanied both public and private exchanges among the students. Ms. Rivera's knowledge of the language and social practices of the local community allowed her to anticipate the children's anxiety and the responses to taboo topics. In the excerpt below, Ms. Rivera invited student participation in the discussion of human reproduction and noticed that several students were grinning and giggling. These behaviors would be considered counterscript in most classrooms. The teacher, instead, publicly reframed the students' feelings as legitimate: The topic is not something that is talked about in most homes and classrooms. She further reassured them that their anxiety was understandable, that the topic had been addressed in class previously, and that the anxiety was transitory.

3. Ya hablamos sobre este tema {{We already talked about this topic}}

Official Space	Third Space	Unofficial Space
<p>T: ¿O quieren compartirlo primero?={{Or do you want to first share it?}}</p>		<p><i>((Students have been smiling and giggling quietly about the nature of the questions about Human Reproduction))</i></p>
<p>T: Antes de={{Before=}}</p>	<p>T: <i>((To Marta))</i> Marta. ¿Porque no?— {{Why don't?—}} ¿Tu crees si lo escribes, es algo que vamos a aprender? No? {{You think if we write it, it'll be something we are going to learn? Right?}} Ya hablamos sobre este tema, es algo que a noso—</p>	<p>Marta: <i>((Whining a little))</i> No::</p>

a algunas personas—como a Jorge—lo hacen reír. Okay. Mientras aprendamos sobre esto se nos va a quitar esa ansiedad porque no es que nos de *risa*, es que estamos nerviosos porque es algo que no platicamos. {{We already talked about this topic, it is something that makes us—some persons—like Jorge—they make him laugh. Okay. While we learn about this we'll lose that anxiety, because it's not that we just laugh, it's that we are nervous because it's not something we talk about.}}
((Feigns nervousness and fear, playfully))
 Ss: *((Laughter all around))*

This tension between the local knowledge and the official curriculum reframed this interaction into a developmental space—one in which personal experience is negotiated into the institutional context. Ms. Rivera facilitated this negotiation through appropriation of students' anxiety and even simulated their nervousness. Their nervous giggles became playful laughter as they shared humor about their feelings of legitimate anxiety.

In the next example, the teacher again anticipated counterscript related to the topic of breasts, even though it was generated by the student question, “¿Por qué las mujeres tienen busto y el hombre no?” (Why do women have breasts and not men?) Here the teacher's linguistic and cultural knowledge of the Spanish vernacular for breasts, “chi-chis,” and her understanding that this term sometimes has sexual connotations prompted her to infuse the taboo language with positive affect (“Se le dice de cariño”/it's said with love). In doing so, she diffuses the need for counterscript:

4. ¿Cuál es el nombre que usamos de cariño? {{What is another name we use affectionately?}}

Official Space	Third Space	Unofficial Space
T: Okay, Andrea?		
A: ¿Por qué las mujeres tienen busto y el hombre no?		
{{Why do women have breasts and men don't?}}		

T: ¿Por qué: las mujeres
 {{Why do women}} ((Writing
 on board)) tienen bu:sto
 y el hombres— {{have
 breasts and men don't—}}
 S: U:M pecho? {{U:m
 chest?}}

T: ¿Cuál es otro nombre que
 usamos de cariño para
 busto? {{What is another
 name we use affectionately
 for chest?}}

S: Pecho. {{Chest.}}

S: No. Es esto. {{No. It is
 this.}}

T: ¿Pecho? {{Chest?}}

T: Pero el pecho tenemos
 los—las mujeres y
 también—¿Tu tienes
 pecho? {{But women have a
 chest and also—Do you
 have a chest?}} ((Pointing
 her chest as she looks at
 Jorge))

J: ((Nods))

T: También los hombres.
 {{Also men.}}

T: En algunas familias el busto se le dice de cariño se le dice 'chi-chis.' {{In some families the chest is affectionately called boobs.}}

Ss: ((Chuckles))

T: Okay, Piwi.

Ss: Uh huh. Sí.
 Ss: ((Testing it out))
 Chi-chis.

The teacher not only builds on the children's local knowledge and vocabulary, she also uses formal ("busto" and "pecho") and colloquial ("chi-chis") language to make explicit the range of registers that can be used to make meaning. As this example depicts, the use of hybrid language is not a random act; instead, it is the conscious use of both registers and forms of knowledge as mediating tools for language and content development.

Counterscript as Meaning-Making: An Active Underlife

Within the range of interpretive strategies that the children used throughout this learning event, counterscript can also become an occasion for meaning-making. Recall that here counterscript was redefined as effective sense-making practice. Indeed, this community of learners was generally characterized by its high tolerance for alternative sense-making practices that drew on personal experience; however, such practices were particularly salient in the Third Space.

The subsequent discourse segment illustrates how literacy learning can be imbued with meaning when one's personal life experiences are referenced. Of significance here is that this hybrid learning context expands the participation framework to include side talk as a means of interpretation and understanding. The side talk, a form of counterscript, is a response to a question about how many children a woman can have. Once again, the task was for students to share their questions, but they were not expected to answer them yet. Several students, however, redefined the task by first answering the question, and then making it personally relevant through the telling of a personal narrative. The students' collective answer forms a narrative constitutive of individual narratives that build on each other incrementally.

5. Mi abuelita tuvo diez {{My grandmother had ten}}

Official Space	Third Space	Unofficial Space
T: Natalia		
N: ¿Cuántos bebés pueden tener una mujer? {{How many babies can a woman have?}}		Ss: ((<i>Inaudible student discussions beginning to develop</i>))
T: O:h, muy buena pregunta. {{ Oh, very good question.}}		S: Mi abuelita tuvo diez. {{My grandmother had ten.}}
		S: ((<i>Impressed whistle</i>))
		A: Mi abuelita tuvo doce. {{My grandmother had twelve.}}
		J: Mi abuelita tuvo— {{My grandmother had—}}
		A: ¿Cinco? {{Five?}}
		J: Trece. {{Thirteen.}}

This counterscript has coherence—it is linked through a series of mini-narratives of each child's grandmother's birthing experiences. The distinct parallel structure of the narrative: "My abuelita tuvo ('diez, doce, y trece')"' illustrates the playful competition among the participants. We have previously documented that this tension between play and learning is characteristic of productive hybrid learning communities (Gutiérrez et al., 1999). These playful narratives contribute to the changing nature of meaning-making and collaboration in this learning activity. This interpretive strategy, then, was not simply a social occasion; it was linked to the official topic and activity at hand.

Counterscript as a Cognitive Building Activity

As the previous examples have illustrated, in this classroom students are allowed to take alternative paths to understanding. In the following example, the teacher has begun to read to the

children from a book on the development of a fetus, more specifically about the development of fetus' spine. Simultaneously, Jorge, who is also known for his prankishness, has constructed an alternative narrative about the spine, namely his. Jorge makes a cognitive connection to the subject of development by constructing a narrative about the origin of his nickname, "Huesudo" (Bony). His recognition of his own boniness and this link to the nickname his uncles have bestowed on him, "huesudo/bony," helps him relate to the official text of the class, the book on the development of the fetus.

6a. Huesudo {{Bony}}

T: *((Reading from book describing the early development of a fetus, bending over to touch her own vertebrae))*

Ella ya tiene una espina vertebral. {{She already has a spine.}} *((Puts book down and touches her vertebrae with both hands))* Tóquense su espina vertebral. {{Touch your spine.}}

Ss: *((Touch their spines as the teacher does))*

T: Con punto. Aquí. {{With a period. Here.}} Hasta {{Up to}} *((Touches the bottom and top of her spine))* Ella ya tiene una espina vertebral. {{She already has a spine.}}

J: *((raises his hand for a full 70 seconds))*

J: *((Touching his spine, talking to himself))* Con razón me llaman "huesudo." {{No wonder they call me "bony."}}

J: *((Looks around, smiles))*

The permeability of this hybrid community allowed Jorge to share his text and to move from the periphery to the center by making his private ruminations available to the larger community (Rogoff, 1990). The teacher continued her lesson while conscious of Jorge's raised hand and talk. Eventually, she called on him to share his private musings, and even asked him to elaborate on them. "¿Por qué?" Jorge's story becomes part of the classroom text, even though the teacher's intent to ask a question is not diverted:

6b. Huesudo {{Bony}}

T: Jorge.

J: Con razón me llaman “huesudo.” {{No wonder they call me “boney”}}

T: ¿Por qué? {{Why?}}

J: Mis tíos. {{My uncles.}}

T: ¿Por qué? ¿Qué es lo más impor— {{Why? What is the most impor—}}

T: ¿Por qué? {{Why?}} ¿Qué es lo más impor— {{What is the most impor—}}

J: Y mis tíos, que tuvo muchos huesos. {{And my uncles, that I have a lot of bones.}}

T: ¿O::::h? {{¿O::::h?}}

J: Me siento como—que tuvo muchos huesos. {{I feel like if I had a lot of bones.}}

Mi—y mis tíos. {{My—and my uncles.}}

T: ¿Pero qué es lo más importante de su cuerpo? {{But what is the most important part of your body?}}

Jorge’s full participation in the community, however brief, has important consequences (Gutiérrez & Stone, 1997). Rather than being marginalized or silenced, Jorge, as shown in the following example, not only becomes a central part of the community but also reemerges as expert in the official space as he answers the question that the teacher had been so intent on asking. Storytelling becomes his ticket to the main event.

6c. Tu corazón {{Your heart}}

J: Tu corazón! {{Your heart!}}

T: ¿Por qué, Jorge? {{Why, Jorge?}}

J: Porque tu corazón te da vida. {{Because your heart gives you life.}}

T: ¿Por qué? {{Why?}}

J: Porque es el que hace la sangre—la sangre circular—tu cuerpo. {{Because it’s the one that makes the blood—the blood circulate—your body.}}

T: Ex-AC-taMEN-te, Jorge. {{Exactly, Jorge.}}

Jorge’s shift from peripheral to a more primary role in the activity had cognitive consequences. Jorge was now positioned to contribute to the central topic of the class discussion. His answer and the teacher’s enthusiastic assessment of his response co-constructs Jorge’s identity as a knowing contributor. He is not simply the comical contributor; he is also a resource in the classroom. Jorge’s interpretive journey from home to school was facilitated by his range of participation and talk.

CONCLUSION

The interpretive strategies used across and within the social spaces of the classroom help illustrate the range of linguistic and cultural resources available in this learning context. However, in this classroom, learning was organized so that the cultural and linguistic resources of the diverse participants were strategically combined to promote learning (Cole, 1998). Such varied experiences and knowledge provided the context for children’s development. Table 1 summarizes the recurring

TABLE 1
Hybrid Language Practices in the Third Space

<i>Official Space</i>	<i>Third Space</i>	<i>Unofficial Space</i>
Calling on students by name to provide questions.	Conflict leads to shared and negotiated understandings of human reproduction.	Name calling and/or colloquialisms (e.g., "homo"); Giggling about sensitive topics.
Introducing formal or academic lexicon and information (e.g., "busto" and "esperma").	Drawing parallels between home and academic lexicon (e.g., "busto" and "chi-chis").	Using home lexicon and local knowledge (e.g., "chi-chis" and abuelitas' stories).
Formal Spanish register (e.g., "renacuajo")	Hybrid language practices (using ethnic and standard language varieties, e.g., "renacuajos" and "tadpoles" as metaphors for sperm).	Range of Spanish and English dialects (e.g., "tadpoles," "chi-chis," "homo").
Teacher/adult speech genres, including humor.	Hybrid genres including cultural humor.	Student/children speech genres including joking, and playing.
Re-keying of student script as official knowledge.	Re-keying of either script as a resource for learning.	Re-keying of the teacher's script as unofficial knowledge.

patterns of language use across the different social spaces of activity during one classroom's cycle of learning and transformation.

Of particular interest is the narrower range of resources and language practices employed in either the official and unofficial spaces of the classroom. The potential power of hybrid language practices in the third space lies in the broader range of linguistic and sociocultural resources and experiences available to both individuals and the larger interpretive community. The use of these hybrid language practices had important social and cognitive consequences. First, they mediated the ways the students and teacher communicated and interacted with one another, and they helped mediate the participants' intellectual development (Cole, 1996; Scribner, 1990a, 1990b; Wertsch & Ramirez, 1994). Thus, instead of focusing on the children's language designation or fluency in either Spanish or English, the practices of this community facilitated movement across languages and registers toward particular learning goals.

We believe our long-term observation of classroom life has allowed us to see the evolution of activity and to observe movement through the developmental zone of the third space. The theoretical tool of hybridity has allowed us to document the potentiality of learning contexts where diversity is prominent. Of importance here is not simply the recognition of hybridity and diversity in the activity and in the language practices, but rather how hybridity and diversity can be used to promote learning. Finally, we believe the use of hybrid language practices can help educators negotiate or traverse the diverse and often conflictual urban classroom landscape.

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