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19. The Italian equivalents of *I don't like it* and *he doesn't like it* are, respectively, *non mi piace* and *non gli piace*. Fatma's *no piaci* is a combination of the invariable negative adverb *no* with what in Italian would be the verb 'like' in the second person singular of the present tense, but probably is her rendering of *piace* (Arabic does not discriminate between *fi/* and *le/*). So, *no piaci* is equally ambiguous in Italian as the English *no like*.
20. 'Head' in Italian is *testa*. Fatma says [testra] instead, to which Walter's objections are directed. In the English translation *HEAD will stand for mispronounced tokens of *testa*.
21. Calleri (1996) notes a similar development in two Chinese children acquiring Italian as a second language, whose repetitions tended to become increasingly "enlarged" with respect to the model utterances.
22. Fatma's gradual approximations to an intelligible, complex sentence resemble Scollon's (1979) "vertical constructions". Vertical constructions are propositions developed step-by-step over several utterances and often constructed by different speakers, one of whom is usually more competent than the other, so that the learner provides bits of talk that the 'expert' integrates into a coherent construction. These vertical constructions, however, are to a great extent a by-product of a particular communicative environment, with few interactants (usually two) fully available to each other. In the nursery school speech economy, the multiple competing vectors of activity and the difficulty of being accepted into them often induce participants to make vertical constructions by themselves, as they cannot hope that their bits and fragments of sentences will be picked up, amended and recast by other, more competent speakers.

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2. An "encounter" consists of "two or more persons in a social situation [who] jointly ratify one another as authorized co-sustainers of a single, albeit moving, focus of visual and cognitive attention" (Goffman 1964: 134).
3. After Goffman's pioneering article, the literature on multi-party conversations has grown considerably, and cannot be fully reviewed here (see e.g. Clark 1992; Egbert 1997; Goodwin and Goodwin 1990; M. H. Goodwin 1991; Kerbrat-Orecchioni and Plantin 1995; Linell and Korolija 1997; Müller 1995; Parker 1984 among many others). Goffman's framework, however, remains a fundamental reference for most of these works.
4. In this paper I will primarily be concerned with linguistic interactions (i.e. conversations). The analytic framework, however, is designed to account for both linguistic and non-linguistic interactions.
5. These actions can be very subtle, consisting of small movements of the eye, smiles, nonverbal sounds. On the other hand, in our data even verbal behaviors cannot always be regarded as only being directed at co-constructing a vector of activity with others, as children often play with language with no clear intention of involving others. Therefore the distinction between active and potential participants, like that between addressees and non-addressees, is sometimes problematic, and it should be conceived of as a continuum rather than as a dichotomy (Goodwin 1981; Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1990).
6. Analysis has been carried out only on a part of the data, those taken from meal times and in which Fatma was present (approximately 25 hours) and the whole first month of school (approximately 20 hours). The remaining data await further investigation.
7. A joint research project coordinated by Elinor Ochs and Clotilde Pontecorvo focusses on family interactions at meals in Italy and the United States (see e.g. Ochs, Pontecorvo and Fasulo 1996; Ochs and Taylor 1992; Sterponi and Pontecorvo 1996 and references therein). Although there are interesting similarities and differences between these settings, a systematic comparison of meals at home and in the nursery would go far beyond the scope of this paper.
8. In Italy the standard meal consists of a first course (usually pasta), a second course (meat/fish and vegetables) and a dessert, usually fruit.
9. This communicative situation is thus quite different from that described in other studies, for example by Kleifgen and Saville-Troike (1992), in which children were observed interacting in school events in which the teacher strove to elicit as much talk as possible. Lunches at a nursery differ from those settings in which an adult researcher explicitly interacts with a child for the purposes of a scientific investigation (e. g. Calleri 1996; Keller-Cohen 1979; Wagner-Gough and Hatch 1975).
10. To use Wolfgang Klein's (1986) terms, Fatma had to solve the two problems of "analysis" (understanding what was being said) and "synthesis" (producing some intelligible utterance) in a few tenths of a second.
11. Psychological considerations are outside the main scope of this paper, so I will not go into a discussion of the role of the words appropriated by Fatma as 'primers' for activating the girl's representations of those words. Let me just note two things about this issue. The first is that more than 75 % of Fatma's appropriations concerned words that the girl could already produce spontaneously. This means that when she repeated words uttered by

- others she normally knew what she was doing, she was not just parroting. Secondly, according to Paradis' (1993) "activation threshold hypothesis", it is easier for bilinguals to activate a linguistic item in working memory upon hearing it than to self-activate it in a spontaneous production. Thus it is easily possible that the words repeated by Fatma were "primed" (Bohannon and Stanowicz 1989) by their models in the native speakers' speech, making their production easier and faster (for a psychological treatment of repetition in language acquisition see the papers in Speidel and Nelson 1989, for a treatment of repetition in interlinguistic conversations focussing on its role facilitating comprehension and production, see Ciliberti 1996).
12. Calleri (1996) also notes that the number of repetitions tends to decrease when learners move from the very initial stages.
 13. Transcription conventions are those used in conversation analysis (c.f. Atkinson and Heritage 1984). Fatma's turns are boldfaced. Transcription is broadly orthographic, marking only the most evident differences between Fatma's pronunciation and standard Italian. § is a pharyngeal fricative. Dates preceding examples indicate day and month (e.g. 27/4 = 27 April). Participants are identified by the following symbols: F = Fatma. T1, T2 = teachers. A1 = aide. GP = Gabriele Pallotti. ID, WA, FR etc. = children.
 14. For example, water and bread were distributed only after children had finished their first course; fruit was served only to those children who had eaten a substantial part of their second course, or after all the others had done so. Water was poured by an adult, bread was distributed by a particular child wearing an apron (the 'water'); finally, fruit in the central fruit bowl could never be taken directly by children, but had to be requested from an adult.
 15. An examination of Fatma's interlanguage is clearly beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say that the girl used (for many months) particles like [ki], [ke] and [di] in a pleonastic, unsystematic way, probably 'miming' the actual use of free grammatical morphemes in Italian. They will therefore be transcribed phonetically so as not to imply a command of complementizers, prepositions etc.
 16. Small capitals are used to represent the content or meaning of a word or sentence; its form is expressed by the use of italics.
 17. Although considerations regarding Fatma's interlanguage are outside the scope of this paper, it is undeniable that her initial approach to the new linguistic code has been essentially based on the acquisition of lexical or quasi-lexical forms and that at this stage it was difficult for Fatma to understand the relationships expressed by grammatical morphemes. Thus, while the other children were discussing with the adults about *going to sleep* in the big bed *with* their parents, Fatma, who probably had not understood this completely, states that she *has* a big bed *like* her mommy. Aide A1's interpretation is clearly driven by what was said before Fatma's turn, which is 'normalized' as 'you too go to the big bed with mommy'. It is hard to tell what Fatma understood of A1's rephrasing, although she twice reiterates her 'I've got it', which might display that she perceived some discrepancy with what she had said (probably the lack of the verb *have* or of the preposition *like*) in A1's reformulation.
 18. For a fuller (although still quite sketchy) discussion of Fatma's "sentence producing tactics" (Wong-Fillmore 1976), see Pallotti (1996).

simultaneously socialized through language and socialized to use language (Schieffelin and Ochs 1986b). As Schieffelin and Ochs have shown for first language acquisition, and Kieffgen and Saville-Troike (1992) for second language acquisition, the problems of acquiring culture and language go together. By learning the language one can better understand and learn the culture, and learning the culture — what others do, when, and why — helps one understand what people say.

In this respect Fatma's case is particularly interesting, as she was observed from her very first contacts with a completely new lingua-cultural milieu. Her acquisition and use of Italian took place in a well-determined context, a micro-culture with its own rules for participation and interaction. In this culture, for example, one-to-one, private conversations were the exception rather than the rule: if Fatma wanted to participate in conversations, she often had to do so on her own initiative by joining others who were already engaged in some vector of activity. Being ratified as a new participant in these vectors of activity was never guaranteed and seldom easy. Both adults and children often ignored even the most conspicuous requests for attention; adults, furthermore, could also explicitly deny access to conversations. Fatma thus had to learn how to enter conversations at the right time and in the right way, and appropriation helped her to achieve these fundamental goals.

As the study of intercultural communication has evolved in interpretive sociolinguistics, it has given us important insights into the way language, culture and interaction are tightly intertwined. The results of this paper suggest some directions for future research. A first obvious line of research would be to verify the extent to which the present analysis can be extended to adult speakers. Factors such as face and interaction management should be compared between adult and child speakers. Secondly, a crucial assumption of studies like this is that the communicative environment contributes to shaping the interactions that take place in it (Pallotti 1996): what happens in a (Italian) nursery is likely to differ quite markedly from what happens in a cafeteria or at a party where adults meet and interact. It is thus necessary to investigate the use of external appropriations by non-native speakers in different communicative environments.

This study also calls for more work on multi-party interactions: intercultural encounters in which more than two parties are involved deserve more systematic treatment than they have received so far. The field of intercultural communication should also include more longitudinal studies on how individu-

als gradually acquire the skills needed to conduct intercultural encounters.

More generally, closer contact between researchers in intercultural communication and second language acquisition is desirable. Much research on intercultural communication has dealt with understanding problems attributable to different cultural interpretation schemata, often ruling out limited linguistic proficiency as a factor. However, many intercultural interactions occur among people who, besides partially sharing their cultural schemata, also partially share a language code. We must find a way to conceptualize these two factors together, as there is a continuous interplay between them in actual intercultural encounters. What one does in interaction is a function of what one can do (Halliday 1978), and, as Gumperz notes, "only by looking at the whole range of linguistic phenomena that enter into conversational management can we understand what goes on in an interaction" (1982: 186). Gumperz wanted sociocultural knowledge to be included among the factors impacting on the outcomes of linguistic interactions and, as a result of his pioneering work, there was an increase in the number of studies which kept the linguistic knowledge factor constant in order to investigate the role of sociocultural elements. Now the time has come for a systematic analysis of how different levels of linguistic and cultural sharedness interact in determining the strategies that speakers adopt when faced with people from other linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In the examples that we have examined, Fatma's linguistic productions were a function of both her linguistic and sociocultural knowledge — of her knowledge of how to interpret and use language and of her knowledge of what is and can be done (and when, and how) in the nursery school culture. If we follow Gumperz's call to "abandon the existing views of communication which draw a basic distinction between cultural or social knowledge on the one hand and linguistic signalling processes on the other" (1982: 186), then a coherent view of linguistic and cultural acquisition should be on the agenda for intercultural communication research in the years to come.

Notes

1. I wish to thank William Corsaro, Aldo Di Luzio and Franca Orletti for their comments on a previous version of this paper. The responsibility for any shortcomings remains entirely mine.

greeting or chasing something or someone. This too is a form of participation, since Fatma showed that she was able to do what others were doing at the right moment. However, it is a very simple, basic form of 'doing together'. As time went by, Fatma appropriated this type of linguistic move less and less. Instead, she attempted to become a participant in activities constructed 'vertically', that is step-by-step by a group of people. This is especially true of conversations, which do not consist of three or four speakers doing the same thing simultaneously but of an ordered sequence of turns. In order to join these activities Fatma appropriated previously uttered words, but this time adding her own 'conversational brick' to a co-constructed course of action. This leads us to a second developmental path.

In the first period, Fatma usually added little of her own to the appropriated words. Instead she tended to subtract, to simplify the model sentences. Although this does not prevent joining in 'choral' activities because in this kind of activity nothing new needs to be added to the form of previous turns, if one wants to participate in an activity co-constructed by means of language something new has to be contributed. In the first period Fatma did this by adding minimal contributions to the appropriated expressions, like a negative expression or a polyfunctional particle [ki] or [ke], which allowed her turn to be 'original' with only minimal alterations. In the second, and even more so in the third period, when the girl appropriated words to participate in conversations, she took one or two items from previous discourse and added significant contributions of her own. In other words, the appropriated expression was a starting point for producing elaborate original constructions which, by virtue of the element borrowed from previous turns, had a good chance of being on-topic.

We now turn to the third developmental trend. In the seven months of observation, Fatma's productions gradually moved from almost constant reference to the immediate extralinguistic context to a more decontextualized range of topics. This is linked to her acquisition of a wider lexical repertoire, which allowed her to deal with areas other than those which she first tried to master in learning Italian, such as interaction-management or requesting essential commodities. After the linguistic means to achieve these basic goals had been acquired, Fatma developed the necessary skills for other forms of communication such as "just conversing" — one of the last and most complex verbal skills acquired by children and one of the most frequently practiced by adults. This is what Fatma was doing when she joined conversations about big

beds, people going to supermarkets and bus drivers: by giving an account of her experiences, she was joining a purely linguistic activity with a purely linguistic contribution.

The strategy of appropriation accompanies the child in this development too, from the repetition of words necessary for making comments about the on-going situation or for performing actions in it, to the repetition of words giving coherence to a purely linguistic exchange. In other words, over time appropriation helped to give a coherence which was based less on the extralinguistic context and more on the purely linguistic co-text.

Finally, Fatma developed other strategies — in addition to appropriation but interacting with it — that were necessary for her turns to be ratified. Turns with appropriated words satisfied some requirements, such as relevance and informativeness, thus responding to the "be interesting" maxim (Cathcart-Strong 1986). However, these features alone were often not sufficient to win the battle for ratification. Participants involved in already open vectors of activity might have been too preoccupied with them to display acceptance of a newcomer or simply to perceive that Fatma was trying to introduce herself. Fatma thus developed strategies to make ratification more likely (recall that ratification was never *due*). One of these was 'machine-gunning' particular words, like the repeated topic candidate or pragmatic fillers such as *I am* and *me too* at the beginning of the turn to produce a 'heavy', loud outburst that would attract attention. This strategy is similar to what Cathcart-Strong calls "be persistent". Another more sophisticated skill developed in the second and third period, namely the ability to place her turns in conversationally 'free' positions where they would be clearly audible even without increasing their volume, tempo or length.

Appropriation is one of the most basic ways to make one's turns cohere with those of others. However, the notion of cohesion between one turn and another always needs to be contextualized in a particular participation framework, since turns that are coherent with those of others are produced only for the purposes of participating in some shared course of action. Thus, we need to see linguistic cohesion and the strategies employed to achieve it as one of the means that interactants use to participate in co-constructed courses of action. The present approach has viewed appropriation as a strategy for achieving verbal interactional cohesion in a particular micro-culture, that of an Italian nursery school. Fatma's interactions in her first eight months in the nursery can be seen as part of a process of language socialization, in that she was

YOU'RE CHEEKY. HUH?

(ID): sì

YES

ID: *però, però l'autista ci ha detto () che ci mangia*

BUT, BUT THE DRIVER TOLD US () HE'S GOING TO EAT US.

A1: *fosse ve:ro, [ne mangiasse due o tre.]*

IF ONLY IT WERE TRUE, THAT HE EATS TWO OR THREE OF THEM.

F: *[ha detto (0.7)] [ha detto l'autobus .hhh=*

SAID (0.7) SAID THE BUS .HHH=

[hmm?

A1: =*ha detto §§ non fate non [fate, .hhh non fate i bravi [no=*

=SAID YOU'RE NOT YOU'RE NOT .HH YOU'RE NOT GOOD YOU DON'T=

[era uno grasso? ((turning to Mario))

WAS HE FAT?

MR-A1:

[sì

YES

A1: *[era tanto grosso () ci stan tre di bambini nella pancia]*

HE WAS SO BIG () THREE CHILDREN CAN FIT IN HIS BELLY

F: = *hh [no, non mangiate. .h h h] ha detto ha detto l'autobus .hhh non fate non*

fate i bravi no .hhh non mangiatehh

= HH DON'T, YOU DON'T EAT. HHH SAID SAID THE BUS .HHH YOU'RE

NOT YOU'RE NOT GOOD YOU .HHH DON'T EAT

A1-F: hm. ((nodding, towards Fatma))

(0.4)

ID: *no! sì, ha detto che mangiate, e non mangiate e mang- e- e- e fate i bravi.*

NO! YES, HE SAID THAT YOU EAT, AND DON'T EAT AND EAT- AND

AND AND YOU'RE GOOD

(0.8)

ID: *ha detto no non fai i bravi*

SAID YOU'RE NOT YOU'RE NOT GOOD

((Fatma starts eating again))

The conversation was about a past event with no direct connection to the immediate interactional context: everybody was "just conversing" about what happened in the morning. In the first period of the study, it would have been unthinkable for Fatma to participate adequately in such a conversation. Now she can introduce herself with her turn and be ratified by two participants, aide A1 with her *hm* and her nodding and Idina with her *No! Yes*, and ensuing sentences. But in her turn Fatma appears to do much more than she is actually capable of: in fact it is easy to see that virtually all of Fatma's turn is made up of words previously uttered by others. These appropriated words, however, are originally combined into a new construction, so that what Fatma says is strongly coherent with the conversation topic and at the same time original.

Other children were reporting what the bus-driver had said, namely that he would have eaten them if they had not behaved well. Fatma recognizes all the key words of this conversation (*said, bus driver, eat, be good*), which she inserts into her turn. This turn is constructed step by step by a gradual addition of elements repeated two or three times. The resulting proposition is glossable as THE BUS DRIVER SAID: IF YOU ARE NOT GOOD YOU DON'T EAT, a complex proposition, made up of three interdependent clauses. But its meaning is quite different from that of the turns previously produced by other children. While they were talking about the driver eating them, Fatma, more commonsensically, reports that the driver threatened them with not having lunch. It is thus evident that Fatma's knowledge of Italian was still limited essentially to the lexicon, with her grammatical knowledge lagging far behind. In all her friends' sentences she had recognized a good number of lexical items, but not the main relationships expressed by morphosyntax, for example between the act of eating and its subjects and objects. Nonetheless, her contribution is effective, as it introduces a new point of view in the discussion and gets ratified, although its position in the conversational sequence shows that it is problematic for the children to have a turn at talk even when introducing themselves with complex and original turns. In fact, Fatma has to repeat her sentence twice because the first attempt overlapped with a dialogue between aide A1 and Mario. Only the second emission was 'in the clear' and only after that did Fatma receive uptake.

5. Conclusions

This last example shows that Fatma still has a long way to go before being able to use Italian like her schoolmates. However, there has been a clear evolution in the way she participates in interactions, from the early introductions in choral activities like asking for water to the final examples in which she displayed an ability to engage in the complex, linguistic-only activity of "just conversing". External appropriations had a crucial role in helping her achieve the status of ratified participant in already open vectors of activity, and their form developed significantly in at least three different respects.

First of all, Fatma repeated other speakers' words in order to play different participant roles. Initially, most of her appropriations helped her join others in performing chorally, in parallel, a single activity like requesting,

3/5

[GP is talking with Siri (SR) and Mario (MR) about his meeting Mario's mother at the Coop supermarket]

GP: [Eravamo () incontrati,

WE MET

SR: [(avev-)

(SHE HAD-)

(0.4)

SR: aveva [detto [()

SHE HAD SAID ()

MR: [dove era?

WHERE WAS SHE?

GP: [era davanti al Coop che aveva le borse della spesa,
SHE WAS IN FRONT OF THE COOP WITH HER GROCERY

BAGS,

SR: aveva detto,

SHE HAD SAID,

GP: alla [Coop: era stata.

AT THE COOP, SHE HAD BEEN.

SR: [ah, come stai? ()

AH, HOW ARE YOU? ()

MR-GP: ()

GP-MR: hm?

F-GP: e io sono e io sono [ki] vado, h [[ki] vado alla Coop da sola.

AND I AM AND I AM [KI] GO, [KI] GO TO THE COOP ALONE

[GP turns to Fatma

GP-F: e:: ((= don't exaggerate!))

F: sì ((nodding with a smile))

YES

GP: e::

F: (io io, [hm] Coop, Coop, vicino Strasburgo. ((gesture of hand circumscribing))

((Fatma lives on Strasbourg street))

(I, HM) COOP, COOP, NEAR STRASBOURG.

MR-GP: [invece non ti ho visto, io.

BUT I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU, I.

(0.6)

GP-F: il Coop è vicino a Strasburgo, sì, [però la scuola no:

THE COOP IS NEAR STRASBOURG, YES, BUT THE SCHOOL ISN'T

[sì

YES

Fatma recognizes the word *Coop*, a supermarket in the neighborhood. The two children and GP were talking about the Coop and GP meeting Mario's mother there. Fatma's strategy here is quite similar to the one used in the previous example: she starts with a filler *and I am and I am*, then adds her original

contribution to the conversation about Coop, *I go to the Coop alone*, with self-repetitions and intakes of breath. These false starts, from a psychological point of view, may signal Fatma's painstaking attempts at constructing a sentence in Italian, given the starting point *Coop*. But as we have seen, from the point of view of conversation organization they make her contribution more audible and more perceptible as having communicative intent. This and the previous example, in fact, are constructed in a remarkably similar fashion: an initial rapid burst of 'background' words (in one case the repeated topic candidate, in the other the generic *I am*, introducing the fact that what follows will involve Fatma — analogous in this respect to *me too*), then some other self-repeated words and finally what could be termed the 'comment' (*I am Strasbourg and I go to Coop alone*).²²

The last episode to be analyzed is one of Fatma's most complex sentences produced in the period of observation, not only in terms of the length of the utterance, but also its structure, which consists of several subordinate clauses. In it, Fatma seems to have gone a long way towards solving the "problem of analysis" and the "problem of synthesis" (Klein 1986). What she says is not linked to the here-and-now context but is a mini-narration of a past event and part of a "just conversing" sequence in which the exchange of ideas through language is an end in itself.

27/4

[In the morning the children went to a public library on a bus. They are now discussing with aide A1 what the bus driver said to them]

MR-A1: l'autista del pulmino ha detto, hh se non facete i buoni, vi mangio ha detto.

THE BUS DRIVER SAID 'IF YOU'RE NOT GOOD I'M GOING TO EAT

YOU', HE SAID.

A1: vi mangio?!

I EAT YOU?!

SR: e poi ci ha sgridato.

AND THEN HE TOLD US OFF.

(0.5)

SR: Ha sgridato l'Idina. =

HE TOLD IDINA OFF.

A1: =non siete micca molto bravi, eh, a farvi sgridare anche dall'autista. Poi hai

detto che siete stat bravi, tu? ((looking at Idina))

YOU'RE NOT THAT GOOD, ARE YOU? BEING TOLD OFF BY THE BUS

DRIVER TOO! AND YOU SAID YOU WERE GOOD, YOU?

MR: sì, l'ha detto lei ((pointing to Idina))

YES, SHE SAID IT.

A1: c'hai un bel coraggio, eh? ((looking at Idina, then pointing at her))

toire and sufficient grammatical competence to express situations independent of the immediate here-and-now context. This is still a formidable task for a child like Fatma who, after seven months of exposure to Italian, could identify and produce a very limited subset of the sentences that children her age can produce in their mother tongue. The following episode shows the problems that she encountered in introducing herself in a conversation in a descriptive-narrative key. Appropriation, however, was an efficient means of achieving at least one of the goals, that of coherence. It is a very weak form of coherence, based on a single recognized and reproduced word, but it is still a way of ensuring that Fatma's turn is somehow tied to the preceding discourse.

2/3

T1-FR: *non mi hai neanche raccontato com'è la tua casa nuova. Gliel'hai detto a Gabriele che da venerdì abiti qua?*

YOU HAVEN'T EVEN TOLD ME WHAT YOUR NEW HOME LOOKS LIKE.
HAVE YOU TOLD GABRIELE THAT YOU HAVE BEEN LIVING HERE SINCE FRIDAY?

FR-GP: [*abito già nella casa nuova.*]

I ALREADY LIVE IN THE NEW HOUSE

[((Fatma smiles looking at GP smiling at Franco))]

FR: *abbiam già-abbiamo già rotto, abbiam già rotto l'armadio perché ()*
WE HAVE- WE'VE ALREADY BROKEN, WE'VE ALREADY BROKEN THE WARDROBE

T1: *rotto [l'armadio? ((surprised))*
BROKEN THE WARDROBE?

F: [*casa .hh casa .hh casa mia .hhh mia pochino, .hh pochino io sono io sono .hh Strasburgo.*]
HOME, HOME, MY HOME, MY TINY BIT, TINY BIT I AM I AM STRASBOURG.

T1: *Strasburgo, in via Strasburgo. Sì.*
STRASBOURG, IN STRASBOURG STREET. YES.

(0.6)

F: [*casà .hh [i] casà mia bia:nca, [h ba:mbole,*
[I] HOME, [I] MY HOME WHITE, DOLLS,

T1: [hm]

T1: ((swallows)) *hai molte bambole?*

HAVE YOU GOT MANY DOLLS?

[Conversation about Fatma's home follows]

Fatma identifies the word *home* (and probably nothing else except perhaps fragments too short to give her a clue as to what the others were saying about the home) and introduces herself into the conversation with a contribution about *her* home. Notice, however, how her turn is delivered. She repeats the

key word *home*, thus clearly establishing it as a "topic candidate" (Keenan 1977). She then adds, among numerous intakes of breath, the determiner *my*, the expression *tiny bit* (with no clear function, but perhaps an affect-marked way of holding the floor; Pallotti 1996), and finally the predicate *I am Strasbourg* (as Fatma lives on Strasbourg Street, it probably means I LIVE ON STRASBOURG STREET). In this and the following turn, Fatma is trying to tie everything possible to the topic candidate *home*; what she produces, however, is not readily interpretable, as is shown by the teacher's comprehension checks. Furthermore, the coherence that she achieves with the on-going conversation is of a very superficial type, granted only by the topic candidate HOME: the teacher and Franco were talking about Franco's new home and about moving while Fatma ends up saying where she lives. In short, for Fatma to join a conversation about *home* with a description of *her* home is still highly problematic. In the previously analyzed episode, the key words *big bed* were provided by others, and Fatma's turn consisted of simply adding *me too* to them. Here, much more is required to express something relevant and original about the home, and it is only thanks to T1's patience that the conversation continues.

This example is important in that it shows how Fatma can now add significant linguistic contributions to the words that she appropriates, as several predications (*my*, *Strasbourg street*, *white*, *dolls*) are attached to the appropriated topic *home*. From this point of view, the balance is reversed with respect to the first period, when she only often added a particle (*no*, or the polyfunctional [ke]) to the repeated expressions; now she only appropriates a word and uses it as a point of departure for complex linguistic elaborations.²¹ Furthermore, Fatma now often participates in conversations with little or no connection to the here-and-now context; she hooks up to dialogues about the home, about her past experiences, and not just about food, water and feeling cold.

Another episode from a few weeks later shows similar features. As in the last example, Fatma recognizes very little of what is being said but enough for her to have a turn of her own with the addition of some words from her stock. Again, the repetition ensures that her turn is somehow connected to the on-going conversation; but here too, as in the previous example, the weak coherence provided by the recognition and repetition of a single word produces an abrupt shift of focus.

F: (oggi) [() *la fe.sta.*] ((touching T1))
(TODAY) () THE PARTY.

T1: [*io me ne sono fatta una piena sabato, (0.5)*] (0.4) *dalle tre a mezzanotte.*
[*ire, alle sette di sera con i miei figli a scuola.*]
I HAD AN OVERDOSE SATURDAY, FROM THREE TO MIDNIGHT.
FROM THREE TO SEVEN IN THE EVENING WITH MY CHILDREN AT
SCHOOL,

F: [*una festa, (0.6) (molto arrivata).*] ((looking at T2))
A PARTY, (VERY ARRIVED)

T2: ah:

[Fatma turns to speaking to Adele]

This is one of the most sophisticated introductions analyzed so far. First, its lexical composition displays a knowledge of expressions ranging over semantic domains other than the simple, here-and-now notions of eating, feeling cold, requesting goods and services: Fatma tries to join a conversation about parties. Furthermore, she does not talk about herself but about her mother, which is another step towards more mature, decentered discourse. Thirdly, the girl places her introduction into the teachers' exchange in an appropriate sequential position: after a significant pause following a terminal intonation contour in both teachers' last turns. Finally, it is a "same topic — something new" turn, in which the appropriated word *party* ensures coherence while being framed in a construction with a new subject (Fatma's mommy). Despite all these features, Fatma's turn receives no uptake, even after a second more explicit try involving a non-verbal attention-seeking device such as touching, and a third try, directed at another interlocutor, T2.

Why this lack of ratification? Fatma's turn, though not particularly loud or 'heavy', is first placed 'in the clear' and then reiterated with additional non-verbal attention-getters. T1, in fact, does glance at Fatma but does not ratify her as participant. Furthermore, the exchange took place towards the end of lunch, when some distraction from eating was allowed. So we cannot blame Fatma for having carried out a faulty introduction; why then does she not get ratified? We see enacted here an obvious status asymmetry: one between adult and child overlapping with one between teacher and pupil. T1 noticed Fatma's attempt at contributing to the conversation: had she been an adult, T1 would very probably have taken up her contribution, as adults are "held accountable" (Garfinkel 1967) if they do not respond to conversational moves addressed to them by other adult speakers. In this case, however, the teacher is not held accountable for not answering Fatma, even though she has clearly shown that her turn *was* noticeable and *was* actually noticed. T1 chose not to include

Fatma in the vector of activity in which she and T2 were involved, and the social norms of the nursery school allowed her to do so. Children are held accountable if they do not respond to teachers, whereas the reverse does not hold: this is not an a priori assumption but is manifest in episodes such as this and the previous one. Being socialized in the nursery school means learning such rules and learning how to communicate within these constraints. It is no accident that Cathcart-Strong (1986), in a study of second language children's communicative strategies, adds the maxims "be interesting" and "be persistent" to Grice's (1975) four conversational maxims: a child in a nursery school has to learn that ratification is never owed — either by adults or other children — but has to be earned, and the means to earn it have to be learnt as well. Fatma's developing skills in appropriating words and inserting them in well constructed and well positioned turns were functional to achieving this goal, although success was not guaranteed.

Despite these failures, Fatma's introductions with external appropriations in the second period show a clear qualitative change: she can now participate more often in "just conversing" interactions; she has access to topics not necessarily centered around herself and the immediate situation; she can select adequate points of entry for her turns or, alternatively, she can make them linguistically conspicuous in order for them to be perceptible even in dense multi-party conversations. Her chances of becoming a ratified participant are thus increased, and they will increase even more in the third period when these means are further developed and refined.

4. Third period

After seven months in school, Fatma's Italian allowed her to produce more independent, complex turns in order to join already open conversations. In fact, in the last two months of the study, 57 % of her introductions contained appropriated words — a still high proportion, but lower than the 76 % of the first period. Furthermore, even when Fatma introduced herself by borrowing words, she added much of her own, constructing turns that were both coherent and original.

An important step in this period is Fatma's growing ability to participate in narrative sequences. Students of first and second language acquisition recognize that narrating is a complex activity, requiring a good lexical reper-

(0.2)

WA: *no, alla testa. Me l'ha detto la la- (0.4) la la maestra.*
NO, IN THE HEAD. TEACHER TOLD ME.

(2.5)

WA: *'testra, testra'.*

*HEAD, *HEAD.

F: *testra.*

*HEAD.

(0.3)

WA: *no, testa.*

NO, HEAD.

F: *ecco.*

HERE IT IS

T2-WA: *basta. Walter stai zitto, se no Fatma dopo parla. Tieni la bocca chiusa, me l'avevi promesso.*

THAT'S ENOUGH. WALTER KEEP QUIET, OTHERWISE FATMA SPEAKS. KEEP YOUR MOUTH CLOSED, YOU PROMISED ME.

Here Fatma recognizes the word *ill* and adds *head* to it to produce 'I ill the head', which is relevant, informative and 'interesting' given the teachers' ongoing preoccupation with children's illness. The selected addressee is clearly teacher T2, from whom Fatma took *ill* in the first place. Fatma is thus trying to use an external appropriation to introduce herself into the teacher's and aide's vector of activity; however they do not ratify her active participant status. The one who does is Walter, who does not respond to the gist of Fatma's utterances but to their form, correcting the way the word *head* is pronounced. This at least ratifies Fatma as a participant in the conversation which continues for some turns on pronunciation matters until it is abruptly interrupted by the teacher. Fatma's introduction was not produced at high volume and was not made 'heavy' with a rapid burst of repeated expressions. It was, however, placed in a pause and definitely relevant to the conversation at hand. T2's and A1's lack of response could be explained in several ways. On the one hand it might depend on their not having perceived Fatma's turn, which was not particularly attention-seeking, or else they might have perceived it but deliberately ignored it since they wanted the children to be quiet (the episode took place in the first few minutes of lunch in which particular emphasis was placed on children eating their first course quickly). A third possible explanation is a combination of the two. The adults might have perceived that Fatma was communicating something without grasping what she was saying; given the primary need at this stage of the lunch to get the children to eat without distractions, they might not have wished to encourage Fatma to give further

explanations.

Another failed attempt at participation is at the end of the second period, after Fatma had been in school for six months. Several features make her external appropriation a more sophisticated contribution than the previously analyzed ones; yet in this case too Fatma is unable to get ratification from the teacher from whom she had taken the words and whom she had selected as addressee.

24/2

[Teachers T1 and T2 are talking, sitting at Fatma's table]

T2: *sono andata a una festa in maschera (0.2) ieri sera, c'erano delle più fatte maschere,*

I WENT TO A FANCY DRESS PARTY YESTERDAY EVENING, THERE WERE SUCH FUNNY COSTUMES,

(0.5)

T2: *uno da lavatri:ce.*

ONE LIKE A WASHING-MACHINE

T1: *h h (giggles)*

T2: *col tu:bo, [(-)*

WITH THE PIPE

T1: *[con lo scatolone? Con uno scatolone l'aveva fatto?]*

WITH A PACKING CASE? WITH A PACKING CASE SHE MADE

IT?

T2: *[sissi. Sissi.*

YES. YES.

(0.5)

T2: *ma dei lavori da::*

SUCH FUNNY THINGS

(0.8)

T2: *dopo: uno da pavo:ne, (0.6) lo tirava su si apri:va: (gesture behind the back)*

THEN, ONE LIKE A PEACOCK, HE PULLED IT UP AND IT OPENED...

T1: *la c- la coda (gesture behind the back):. Pensa.*

THE TAIL. AMAZING.

T2: *proprio.*

RIGHT.

(1.8) (T2 brings a mouthful to her mouth, T1 wipes her lips. Fatma stares at T2 with head resting on hand)

F: *la mamma, ndata ndata [alla Jf:sta, ((looking at T1))*

MOMMY, WENT WENT TO THE PARTY

[hm. [(-) il pane, lo vuoi?]

HM. () THE BREAD, DO YOU WANT IT?

[(T1 looks at Fatma)]

(0.4)

- T2: =Gianni prova a sentirla.
GIANNI TRY AND TASTE IT
GI: *no*
(1.0)
F-T2: *no piaci* ((turning to T2))
NO LIKE
(0.5)
T2-F: *buono?*
GOOD?
(Fatma looks at Gianni)
F-T2: =e- o- ((looking to Gianni)) **m- Gijan-** ((looking at Gianni, quickly turning to T2 when she starts speaking))
T2: [a Gian-]
GIANNI
(.)
T2: [A Gianni] *non piace?* ((shaking head no))
GIANNI DOESN'T LIKE IT?
F: [Gi-]
F: **no** ((shaking head))
T2: [allora Gianni stai fermo [metti giù il bicchiere, che se lo rompi dopo non puoi bere
THEN GIANNI KEEP STILL PUT YOUR CUP DOWN, IF YOU BREAK IT
THEN YOU CAN'T DRINK
[[Fatma looks at T2]]
[[Fatma turns and starts eating again]]

Fatma recognizes Gianni's *I don't like* and the routine in which it is framed, that of a child refusing to eat and an adult trying to persuade him; by turning to the teacher T2 and repeating *no like* Fatma introduces herself into the conversation. Two things should be noted in this introduction. The first is that Fatma does not reiterate her *no like*, like her *me too* in the previous example. The reason is probably that when she utters *no like* the conversational rhythm is not as fast and dense as it was in the other lively, multi-party conversation about going to bed. Fatma thus has time to place her utterance in a relatively long gap between turns. *Relatively* long, it should be stressed: one second is a long gap in a conversation, but Fatma's sense of timing in inserting her turn in that one second gap is noteworthy, and it is a sign that her participation skills have developed considerably.

A second feature in this episode that shows a development in Fatma's participation strategies is the topic she appropriates. Unlike all the previous examples, Fatma does not talk about herself, but about Gianni. This too is a

novelty in her speech, as can be seen from T2's initial misunderstanding of her turn. Fatma's elliptical *no like* could in fact be interpreted both as I DON'T LIKE IT or as HE DOESN'T LIKE IT.¹⁹ T2, by asking Fatma *good?*, displays the former, speaker-centered interpretation. Fatma, turning to Gianni and trying to pronounce his name, shows instead that her *no like* should be interpreted as referring to Gianni; this is in fact how T2 reformulates the utterance. This shift is an important step in Fatma's evolving participation strategies. Now she not only appropriates words in order to say something about herself but tries to participate in conversations by producing turns referring to others. She is thus enlarging both the range of topics she can deal with and the types of contributions she can make to conversations.

Let us look now at a few examples of failed introductions. From a formal point of view, they do not differ sharply from the examples we have just examined. They are relatively intelligible, placed in 'free' conversational slots and contingent upon previous turns as a result of the appropriation of expressions. They are also original contributions because of the addition of new words.

- 8/1
[T2 and A1 are talking about some children possibly being ill]
T2-A1: *comunque anche lui è un po' strano. Stamattina era un po' - Cioè guarda che se si sono ammalati, sappiamo già il motivo eh,*
ANYWAY HE TOO IS A BIT STRANGE. THIS MORNING HE WAS A LITTLE- I MEAN, LOOK, IF THEY'VE FALLEN ILL, WE ALREADY KNOW THE REASON
(1.1)
F: *io malata la testa, io malata.* ((looking at T2 and resting head on her hand))
I ILL THE *HEAD, I ILL.²⁰
(1.0)
F: *malata la <testra>*
ILL THE *HEAD
(1.0)
WA: *non si dece la tresta, alla testa.*
YOU CAN'T SAY THE *HEAD, IN THE HEAD.
F: *alla tresta*
IN THE *HEAD
(0.3)
WA: *no, >alla testa<*
NO, IN THE HEAD
(2.2)
F: *no, lalla tresta*
NO, *IN THE *HEAD

certain predicate holds for another subject. A similar strategy is at work in the following example, in which other children before Fatma are engaged in the *me too* routine.

- 22/1
 T2-PA ((at another table)): *a casa tua cosa fai. Patrizio, vai a letto?*
 PATRIZIO, WHAT DO YOU DO AT HOME, DO YOU GO TO BED?
 PA: sì. () *dopo*,
 YES. () AFTER,
 T2: *da solo? O viene anche la mamma?*
 ALONE? OR MOMMY COMES TOO?
 (0.7)
 PA-T2: no.; () *da solo*,
 NO, () ALONE,
 T2-PA: *e:: che bravo, sei già grande*
 HEY! WHAT A GOOD BOY, YOU'RE ALREADY A BIG BOY
 DE ((at Fatma's table)): *anch'io sto da solo. U- Una volta, .hh quando (loro) dormono*
di là dormo subito con loro sul letto grande.
 ME TOO I SLEEP ALONE. ONCE, WHEN (THEY) SLEEP
 THERE I SLEEP WITH THEM AT ONCE IN THE BIG BED.
 A1: hm
 DE: sì
 YES
 GI: *anch'io () , letto gra[nde]*
 ME TOO () , BIG BED
 DE: () *] sulla poltrona.*
 [anch'io mi addormento, .hh pian piano, e dopo e dopo
 ME TOO I FALL
 ASLEEP, SLOW SLOW, AND THEN () ON THE ARMCHAIR
 [ANCH'IO
 ME TOO ME TOO
 F: ANCH'IO ANCH'IO CE L'HO IL LETTO GR:NDE.]
 ME TOO I'VE GOT IT THE BIG BED.
 (1.0) ((A1 looks at Fatma))
 F: *come mamma*
 LIKE MOMMY
 A1-F: hm?
 (0.5)
 A1-F: *Vai nel lettone con la mamma anche tu? e(h)e(h) dai.* ((taking a tissue out of her pocket))
 DO YOU GO INTO THE BIG BED WITH MOMMY TOO? AH AH C'M ON.
 (:) *anche io.*
 ME TOO
 F: (not) *ce l'ho,*
 I HAVEN'T GOT IT

- A1-F: =*iieni* ((handing her a tissue))
 TAKE THIS
 F: *ce l'ho ()*
 I'VE GOT IT ()
 ((Fatma takes tissue and blows her nose))

Here Fatma appropriates not only the words expressing the topic, *big bed*, but also the words for the activity of expressing-one's-point-of-view-on-the-same-topic, *me too*.¹⁷ With her elementary '*me too* + appropriation' turn she manages to introduce herself into a conversation and receive ratification from the adult. But what makes this a successful introduction? Fatma's turn was delivered at a higher volume than average, and it had a *con brio* tempo with fast machine-gunning of *me too* at the beginning. In fact, although it completely overlaps Derek's turn, it is Fatma's turn, not Derek's, that receives uptake from aide A1. So this mixture of volume, tempo, linguistic 'weight' (three *me toos* instead of one) and linguistic coherence (both on the level of the *me too* routine and on the level of the appropriated topic) can probably account for the ratification received by Fatma. *Probably*, it should be emphasized. There are cases, as we will see, in which these features are present and Fatma's turn nonetheless receives no ratification, although in the whole corpus it seems that the presence of *all* of these features is a good predictor of uptake.¹⁸

Another successful introduction from the second period shows a second conversation participatory skill that Fatma is gradually acquiring. It is the skill of recognizing the right slot in an on-going conversation to put her introduction into, and it is in a way complementary to the above described strategy of 'machine-gunning' a series of words to make a turn 'heavier' regardless of its position in the conversational sequence. With this skill Fatma learns to identify the right place in which her turn, though not loud or 'heavy', has a good chance of receiving ratification. In the following episode Fatma introduces herself in a typical lunch-time conversation between a teacher and a child who refuses to eat. By this time Fatma has acquired the basic lexicon for dealing with such situations, expressions like *eat, good, all, finished, (no) like*, and when she recognizes them in the conversational flow she seldom misses an opportunity to introduce herself.

- 22/1
 GI: *non mi piace questa=* ((whining))
 I DON'T LIKE THIS

attention so that the deictic *this* can be interpreted. A series of attention-getters such as touching and the word *teacher* are thus prefaced to the 'substantive' turn, delivered only after T2 is looking at Fatma. Here linguistic and non-linguistic means conspire to make Fatma's move an adequate introduction into a conversation she had recognized to be about COLD. The repetition of the key word allowed Fatma to participate in a step-by-step conversation in which everybody could add a linguistic contribution — a form of participation characteristic of mature, proficient speakers. However, Fatma's entry, though ingenious, was somehow ill-positioned. She started to try to get the teacher's attention when the conversation topic had already shifted from COLD to EATING. Using our terminology, Fatma's attempts to *introduce* herself into a conversation about COLD were in fact *intrusions* into a subsequent conversation about EATING.

From these first examples it is already evident how difficult it was for the child to hook up to on-going conversations: she had to recognize at least one content word, then produce a sentence representing a relevant and original contribution to what was being said, all this in the split seconds allowed by the rapid conversational flow among native speakers. Repeating a word she had understood was one of the safest ways for her to achieve some of these goals: the repeated word was readily available in working memory after acoustic priming and it ensured some coherence with the topic at hand. In the simplest forms of external appropriations — just doing what the others are doing — a *verbatim* or simplifying repetition was sufficient; in more complex introductions into conversations — attempts at becoming a participant in a prolonged, co-sustained course of action — it was necessary for the contribution to be original and informative. Fatma, at age five, knew that in mature conversations turns are linked in the way that Bloom et al. (1976) call "same topic — something new". The repeated expression ensured topic maintenance; the 'something new' added to it contributed to making the turn interesting and informative. But all these requirements — relevance, informativeness, and timeliness — were rarely satisfied together in Fatma's introductions in the first period. Within a few months the girl had made significant progress in this respect.

3. Second period

Table 1 shows that in the second period of the study, Fatma joined other speakers already involved in conversations by repeating three times out of four some portions of what they had said. External appropriations thus continued to play an important role in giving her contributions the necessary cohesion for getting her accepted as a ratified participant in on-going verbal interactions.

These moves, however, become more sophisticated. There are still appropriations of expressions like greeting or asking for fruit, water or bread that serve to perform an activity with other children 'chorally', but these decrease in number towards the end of the second period. Fatma does not need to wait for someone else to start one of these sequences and is often an autonomous initiator. Parallel to this is the increase in external appropriations used to join other children or adults who are "just conversing" (Garvey 1984). The term "just conversing" should not deceive. It refers to a complex activity that develops slowly in childhood and is highly practiced by adults; in it, speaking is not subsidiary to any other immediate goal but an end in itself. Participating in "just conversing" activities is thus a sign of linguistic proficiency and socio-cultural competence, and it is necessary in order to be considered a fully fledged member of a speech community.

Appropriation helped Fatma play this role of competent participant. In fact in the second period, by repeating words that she recognized and understood, the girl tried increasingly to become a ratified participant in 'vertical' sequences of turns around a common theme. She could thus show, with her minimal linguistic means, that she could participate in conversations growing out of the collective, sequential work of two or more participants, in which talk is an end in itself, and not just a means for achieving some other goal; furthermore, in such conversations language is the most important carrier of information, having little or no dependence on the immediate physical context.

Let us look at a few introductions from the second period. A useful participation device acquired in this period is the expression *me too*. It is used by many Italian native-speaking children, and it is one of the most basic ways of displaying the relevance of what is being said to the on-going conversation. Minimally, *me too* plus the appropriation of some expression satisfy the basic requirements for a "same topic — something new" turn: the repeated expression guarantees coherence while *me too* provides the new information that a

F-T1: [(ke)] *fre[ddo]*, °*Maura*° ((turning to T1))

(([KE]) COLD, MAURA

T1-A1: [*ah ma le tiro su anch'io, se voglio andar giù nè mica un problema, quando vado giù.*

AH, I CAN PULL THEM ((FOLDING BEDS)) DOWN TOO, IF I WANT TO GO DOWN IT'S NOT A PROBLEM, WHEN I GO DOWN

(0.6)

F-T1: *no* (è) *Fatma* [(ke)] *freddo*

NO (IS) FATMA, ([KE] COLD)

T1: [*andiamo fuori, bimbi?*

SHALL WE GO OUT, KIDS?

(0.6)

F-T1: *sì*. ((nodding))

YES

Here Fatma recognizes the word *cold* and by repeating it tries to become a participant in the conversation between the teachers T1 and T2 and the aide A1. None of them, however, takes up what she says, and she only has a chance to speak when T1 turns to all the children at her table asking whether they want to go out. Analyzing these turns' position and composition, we can see that Fatma repeats the key word *cold*, adding only an attention getter (*Maura*, T1's name) and the polyfunctional particle [ke].¹⁵ The first utterance is produced by Fatma looking away from the selected addressee (T1, Maura), who is visually addressed only in the second utterance. The third utterance, not clearly audible, is partially overlapped by T1 who was beginning to speak to all the children. In all these utterances Fatma speaks softly and does not react to T1's disattention; in other words, she does not display any clear communicative intention. Such behaviors were not rare in the first period, when Fatma repeated words from conversations without accompanying them with other moves designed for her message to be ratified. Often these external appropriations were not placed in adequate positions and they frequently interrupted the intended interlocutor(s) rather than introducing Fatma's turn into their vector of activity at an appropriate conversational slot. In looking at these examples, one gets the impression that Fatma was practicing with language and at the same time trying to enter conversations using words whose meaning she was not so sure of.

Another episode involving the same word, *cold*, but taking place a few weeks later, is quite different and is one of Fatma's most sophisticated introductions in this period. Here too the girl hears a teacher talking to a child about 'cold' and here too she wants to have her say about it. But notice the

differences: in this case Fatma employs all the means available to her to attract T2's attention, and does not give up until her goal is eventually reached. Furthermore, what she produces is a fully fledged conversational contribution, with a clear reference-and-predication structure. One thus gets the impression that here Fatma knows better what to do with the word *cold* — another way of saying that she knows its meaning (Wittgenstein 1953).

17/11

ID-T2: *ho fre:ddo.*

I'M COLD.

(0.3)

T2-ID: *hai freddo? In effetti è un po' freddo.*

YOU'RE COLD? IT'S A BIT COLD ACTUALLY.

T2-F: *mangia fatma. Tieni.* ((placing a bowl of custard before her))
EAT FATMA. TAKE IT.

(0.9)

T2-ID: [*è buo::na.* ((giving her custard))

IT'S GOOD.

[[Fatma turns to T2 and touches her]]

T2 doesn't turn, as she's turned to Idina

F-T2: *maestra.* ((still touching her))

TEACHER

(1.4)

F-T2: *maestra* ((still touching her)).

TEACHER

(2.4) T2 keeps looking at ID, then turns to Fatma.

F-T2: *no no io freddo, [ke] questa* ((pointing to her pullover's sleeve),
questa no freddo.

NO NO I COLD, [KE] THIS, THIS NO COLD.

(0.3) T2 looks at Fatma

T2-F: *non hai freddo?*

YOU'RE NOT COLD?

F: [*questo* ((pointing to arm)), *questo °(nono freddo)°*

THIS, THIS (NO COLD)

[[T2 throws a grape in front of Fatma]]

((Fatma picks up grape and eats it))

In this episode, Fatma is clearly trying to introduce herself into an already open conversation, and does not give up until she is fully ratified by the teacher. T2 and Idina have established a shared topic, the fact that it is cold; Fatma recognizes the key word *cold* and tries to participate with her 'no I cold, [ke] this no cold', glossable as I'M NOT COLD BECAUSE I'M WEARING A PULL-OVER.¹⁶ But to have her production understood by T2, she needs her visual

- (0.7)
T2(-): *Vuoi la mela?*
DO YOU WANT THE APPLE?
F-T2: *ga mella, la mela.* ((looking towards T2))
THE APPLE, THE APPLE
(2.0) ((T2 gives apple to Fatma))
F-T2: *<grassi, ga mella>*, ((taking apple))=
THANK YOU, THE APPLE
(1.8) ((Fatma bites the apple))
T2: ((swallows)) *prego.*
YOU'RE WELCOME

By repeating *the apple*, Fatma did what Idina was doing — asking for a particular kind of fruit. She could thus participate in on-going activities like any other child. Many external appropriations of the first period have this function of joining others in interactional activities. Thus we find Fatma asking for water or fruit, greeting a teacher and repeating words for chasing a wasp after other children had started these vectors of activity.

Repeating other children's words had another function besides that of performing something together: it ensured that Fatma was doing the right thing at the right time. In fact, there were particular moments when water or fruit could be requested and the rules specifying their occurrence were hard for Fatma to understand.¹⁴ Therefore, a safe strategy was to pay attention to what others were doing and intervene only after a teacher had offered or a native speaker child had requested the desired item. The following is a case in point, in which Fatma repeats the word *pear* after it was uttered at another table; although Fatma did not interact with the aide A1 who had pronounced the word, she took her utterance as a signal that fruit distribution had started.

- 23/10
[T1 and T2 are talking at Fatma's table]
A1: ((at other table)) *bimbi, cosa volete di frutta, pera?*
KIDS, WHAT DO YOU WANT FOR FRUIT, PEAR?
(0.6)
T2-T1 ((at Fatma's table)): ()
F: *maestra, [pera]*
TEACHER, PEAR
[non è venuto, [però:-
T1-T2: HE'S NOT COME, BUT
F: [Maestra: ((turning back)).
TEACHER
T2-T1: () *to l'ho visto.*
() I'VE SEEN HIM

- (0.3)
T1-T2: *aveva l'erpès, eh,*
HE HAD HERPES, AH

Hearing aide A1 say the word *pear* was a signal that the right moment for asking for fruit had come. From this point of view, Fatma's turn was adequately placed and was, in all its essentiality, clearly understandable as a request for fruit. Hearing the recognized word *pear* was a cue for interpreting what was going on and repetition of the same word was a display of Fatma's ability to act appropriately at the right time. Why, then, was her request not taken up by the two teachers at her table, T1 and T2? It is clear that they were engaged in a vector of activity, a conversation about another child, and that Fatma's turn was an intrusion into it; in fact Fatma abandons her attempts after a few tries. We thus have a clear example of how difficult it is for children to have their conversational contributions ratified by others; for a child in a nursery school, the status of ratified participant is never a given, but has to be earned. Strategies such as external appropriations increase the likelihood that one's turn will be taken up but, as we shall see again in the following pages, such an outcome is never guaranteed.

Although most of Fatma's external appropriations in the first period are of the 'doing the same thing' type, there are also some early attempts at achieving coherence at the level of 'talking about the same thing'. In these episodes, the girl tries to co-construct a 'vertical' course of action, contributing one or more turns to an on-going conversation. But, again, this is not an easy thing to do in a communicative environment like the nursery school, as can be seen in the following example, from the second recorded lunch.

- 28/10
[Teacher T1 is talking with aide A1 and teacher T2 about taking children out to the playground after lunch]
T1-A1: *no, non- sono indecisa, ero qua che pensavo, te cosa dici?*
NO, NOT, I HAVEN'T MADE UP MY MIND, I WAS HERE THINKING,
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
A1-T1: *perchè (sotto), fuori è freddo?*
BECAUSE (BELOW), IS IT COLD OUTSIDE?
T1-A1: *moh, non è freddo.*
DUNNO, IT'S NOT COLD.
T2-T1: *Non è freddo. E' un po' umido.*
IT'S NOT COLD. IT'S A BIT DAMP.
F: [ke] *freddo, Maura, [ke] freddo.* ((without looking T1)).
[KE] COLD, MAURA, [KE] COLD
(0.4)

always clear when speaking was allowed; furthermore, she had the additional problem of not understanding what the others were talking about. If she did not want to be just a spectator to conversations but an active participant in them, she had two options. She could start a new course of talk, with a new topic or focus of interest. This was problematic because she would have to do it with her very limited linguistic means and, as a consequence, her production was very likely to turn out unintelligible or uninteresting. The advantage, however, was that she could choose what to talk about, picking up one of the very few topics that she could linguistically deal with. Alternatively, Fatma could try to become a ratified participant in an already open conversation. An advantage was that the conversation focus had already been established by other, more proficient speakers; however, she would have to adapt herself to conversational topics chosen by others, which might have been too difficult for her. Furthermore, even when the conversation was on a topic about which Fatma had something to say, she would have to speak at the right moment, which might be only a split second, due to the fast pace of conversations among natives.¹⁰ Given Fatma's limited understanding, satisfying all these requirements was not easy, especially when *nobody had selected her as an addressee*, that is when nobody had explicitly invited her to participate in the conversation.

External appropriations are an efficient way of solving some of these problems. Repeating words uttered by others ensures that one's turn will be somehow coherent with what they are talking about; furthermore, the words to be used are already there and can be immediately recycled in the few tenths of a second that occur between turns, without time-consuming word searches.¹¹ It is thus not surprising that the majority of Fatma's introductions included words repeated from previous turns, as can be seen from Table 1. In the first two periods of study (from the second to the sixth month of exposure to Italian), three introductions out of four contained appropriated words. This figure decreased in the third period (seventh and eighth month), but even then, more than half the number of times Fatma entered already open conversations, she did so by repeating expressions previously uttered by others.¹²

These repetitions of linguistic expressions uttered by others *who were not talking to Fatma* were an efficient way to become an active, ratified participant even with very limited linguistic resources. Their form and function developed over time, and the remainder of this paper will consist in an analysis of this development.

Table 1. Verbal introductions in verbal activities with and without appropriations

Period	Verbal Introductions	With app.	W/out app.	?
I	38	29 (76%)	8 (21%)	1 (3%)
II	32	23 (72%)	8 (25%)	1 (3%)
III	44	25 (57%)	17 (39%)	2 (4%)

2. First period

Fatma used appropriations from the very first days of school. Most of these were external, involving words taken from conversations in which she was not a ratified participant. For example, in the first recorded lunch, after six weeks of school, four out of seven appropriations were external: their function was not to provide coherence in a conversation in which Fatma was already engaged, to respond to a participant who had selected her as addressee, but to join other speakers in what they were already doing independently of her.

One striking feature of many external appropriations during the first period was that they were not the type one would expect, that is contributions to a conversation like 'having one's own say' about the current topic. Most of Fatma's early introductions in on-going activities were of a simpler kind; they consisted simply of aligning herself with what others were doing. To use a visual metaphor, she was not so much adding her turn to a vertical construction which had gradually grown out of a sequence of contributions as putting her contribution beside those of others in a horizontal, parallel fashion. Thus, Fatma's earliest appropriations helped her not so much do something *together* with others as do *the same thing* as others. The following is a typical example:¹³

23/10

[Idina (ID) approaches the table and looks at T1 and T2 talking.
Idina gets closer to T2]

T2-(ID): *pera o mela?*
PEAR OR APPLE?

(0.8)

T2-(): *mela?*
APPLE?

(1.0)

T2-(): *questa?*
THIS?

should thus bring together the linguistic notion of cohesion with the socio-anthropological one of participation. It is therefore necessary, before turning to Fatma's external appropriations, to provide a description of the micro-cultural setting in which her second language socialization took place.

1. The setting

Fatma is a Moroccan girl born in France, where she lived until she was five. She and her family then moved to Italy where, after a few months, she was enrolled in a local nursery school. She had never attended any other caregiving institution in France, so the only language she could speak was Moroccan Arabic. She was videotaped from her very first days of school for a period of eight months. Videotaping took place approximately three mornings a week, from 9.00 a.m. to 1.00–2.00 p.m., producing an average of three hours of tape per day. Fatma was not the only Moroccan child in the nursery, and the research project included another child, Rashid. A wireless microphone was placed in the vicinity of Fatma and Rashid, and five other fake wireless microphones (indistinguishable from the real one as they were all in small cloth bags) were scattered all around the room — the children knew they were being recorded, but they were not made aware of the interest in those two particular children. A total of 150 hours of tape were recorded.⁶

The nursery school had 25 children enrolled, aged three to five; half of them were three year olds. There were two full-time teachers, one working from 7.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m., the other from 12.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. They sometimes overlapped at lunch time, which was from noon to 12.30. A part-time teacher, who paid special attention to language minority children, was in the school four mornings a week, from 9.00 to 12.00 a.m. A full time aide was present from 9.30 to 2.00 and another from 4.00 to 5.30 p.m.

Except for Fatma and Rashid, all the children spoke Italian, although not all of them were monolingual — four other children spoke different languages, their proficiency in Italian ranging from good to native-like.

The data discussed in this paper come from a particular moment of the day, lunchtime. The reason for this choice is that lunches are a well defined speech event, with clear boundaries and a recurrent structure. Furthermore, their participation structure allows for different types of interaction, from long two-party dialogues to choral performances of jokes, greetings and requests.

There can also be long stretches of "continuous states of incipient talk" (Schegloff and Sacks 1973), when nobody speaks but anybody might start from one moment to the next. During lunch adults interact freely with children (that is, adult-child talk is not part of structured activities), but there are also times when no adult is present and conversations develop among children. Last but not least, the audio quality of lunches, when children sit at the same place in front of the wireless microphone for a prolonged period of time, is generally good.⁷

Lunch in a nursery school differs in many ways from one with adult participants, especially with respect to its participation framework. Adult participants at lunch, at least in Italy, have two main goals — consuming their food and sustaining social activity. Seven or eight adults having lunch together may consider the social side more important than the physiological act of food ingestion. Sitting at a table communicating with others but eating almost nothing is not considered as impolite as just eating all the time without uttering a single word. In nursery school the priorities are reversed — eating comes first. Children are praised according to how much and how quickly they eat. Communication is permitted insofar as it does not interfere with eating but it is rarely encouraged; if it does interfere, it is immediately suppressed by the adult.

Since conversations are not always allowed, children who wish to get a turn at talk have to seize their chance at the right moment. However, it is not often clear when talking is allowed and when it is not. In general, the first fifteen minutes of lunch are more constrained — conversations are often blocked at their start or after a few turns. Later, while the second course is being consumed, longer communicative encounters are allowed, and even more so during the fruit course.⁸ However, it is completely within the adult's power to stop a conversation at any time. When the adult is absent, freer interactions may take place, sometimes quite noisily, which are sooner or later interrupted by adults, even if they are not sitting at the table.⁹

Let us now look at this communicative environment from the point of view of a child who understands very little of what is being said, and who can express herself with only a handful of words, connected by pragmatic principles of discourse organization, a very rudimentary syntax and virtually no morphology (in other words, Fatma is a speaker of the "basic variety" described by Klein & Perdue 1997). This was the case with Fatma for most of the time she was recorded. For her, more than for the other children, it was not

the right to participate is *always* at issue: the repetition of other people's words can be seen as a way of winning the battle for participation, and this is how it will be seen in the present paper. But before turning to an analysis of Fatma's appropriations, it is necessary to build a framework for describing participation in the nursery school.

Goffman (1979) provides a useful preliminary characterization of participant roles. He distinguishes between "ratified" (or "official") participants and "bystanders": the former are engaged in a "social encounter",² the latter are "persons who are not ratified participants and whose access to the encounter, however minimal, is itself perceivable by the official participants" (Goffman 1979: 8). Goffman notes that the distinction between ratified participants and bystanders is not always clear-cut: there may be for example "open states of talk" in which "participants [have] the right but not the obligation to initiate a little flurry of talk, then relapse back into silence, all this with no apparent ritual marking [...] [This] is neither ratified participation nor bystanding, but a peculiar condition between" (Goffman 1979: 10). A lunch in a nursery school can be characterized as an "open state of talk" (or a "continuous state of incipient talk", Schegloff and Sacks 1973): given its multi-party character, there may be two or three people engaged in an encounter, for example a conversation, with two or three others who are not, but who can legitimately become involved in it without any particular ritual marker. In this situation too we have a "peculiar condition between" ratified participation and bystanding.³

Another useful notion for extending Goffman's terminology to account for such situations is that of *vector of activity*, introduced by Marilyn Merritt (1982a, 1982b). Merritt notes that in a classroom there are several activities going on at the same time and that participating in them is by no means easy. The way children act in isolation or with others can be seen as a series of moves along different "vectors of activity" in a "matrix of activity". This conceptualization, Merritt argues, is more apt to describe what goes on in classroom multi-party interactions than notions such as "becoming participants" or "getting the floor".

Taking Goffman's and Merritt's analyses as a starting point, I will now introduce some terms to analyze participation in nursery school interactions.⁴ The term *participant* will be used in a general, neutral sense, simply meaning 'one who is there' as opposed to 'absent'. Participants will be said to be *active* when they perform actions directed at co-constructing a common focus of attention with someone else.⁵ In other cases, when participants are absorbed in

solitary, non-social activities, they will be defined *potential* participants. Being active, however, is not equivalent to being "ratified" in Goffman's sense. A participant is *ratified* only when another participant ratifies, i.e. takes some course of action that displays recognition of the activated participant's invitation to do something together; in a nursery school, children often become active participants without anybody ratifying their attempts. A final category is that of *addressee*. As one cannot by oneself become a ratified participant, so one cannot be considered an addressee independently of some other participant's actions — the status of addressee can only be achieved if someone else involves us in activities directed at co-constructing a common course of action.

Turning now to how participants move from potential to active, entries into conversation in a multi-party encounter can be divided into three main categories. First, one can open a conversation with others who are not engaged in any other interaction; I call this an *opening*. Alternatively, one can try to involve others who are already engaged in some vector of activity. In this case, I distinguish between *introductions* (trying to join others in their vector of activity) and *intrusions* (trying to open a new, different vector of activity; that is, trying to pull the addressee(s) out of their already established vector). This paper will deal only with introductions and a particular strategy for performing them — the appropriation of other people's words.

It is also useful to distinguish between two types of appropriations (Palloiti 1994): *internal appropriations* are those in which a speaker repeats words of which s/he was the addressee; this is the most studied type and it is the only one allowed in dyadic interactions. In *external appropriations*, on the other hand, the speaker repeats words that were directed to some third party: when such words were uttered, the speaker's role was not that of addressee, but of potential participant. By using external appropriations a limited proficient speaker like Fatma can hook up to a vector of activity opened by others — she can introduce herself into it — *without anybody having invited her*: a common condition in this nursery school, where participation rights are rarely bestowed by others and have to be actively earned.

External appropriations are both a linguistic and a socio-anthropological object of study. In order to introduce oneself into an open vector of activity, one has to be coherent with it, and if the activity is linguistic, linguistic cohesion will be at issue. On the other hand, linguistic cohesion across turns can be seen as a way of doing something together, that is as a form of participation in the same activity. An analysis of external appropriations

This is in line with Gumperz's call to "abandon the existing view of communication which draws a basic distinction between cultural and social knowledge on the one hand and linguistic signaling processes on the other" (1982: 186). Furthermore, both the sociolinguistic/ethnographic and applied linguistic approach have rarely taken developmental aspects, i.e. how individuals gradually learn the linguistic and cultural means for achieving mutual understanding in interactions, into consideration.

From this developmental perspective, linguistic and sociocultural knowledge must also be seen as tightly intertwined, extending the "language socialization" approach of Schieffelin & Ochs (1986a, 1986b) to situations of second language and second culture acquisition. Studies of language socialization have stressed the culturally bound nature of language acquisition and use by children and their interlocutors, paying attention to the interactional contexts in which children are socialized "through language" and socialized "to use language" (Schieffelin & Ochs 1986b: 163). The same ethnographic attention should be directed to the acquisition and use of a second language which, especially in naturalistic contexts, involves socialization and acculturation processes as well (Pallotti 1996, 1999; Pease-Alvarez & Vasquez 1994; Poole 1992; for an earlier, though somewhat different, approach, see Schumann 1978).

This paper attempts to provide such an analysis. It focuses on the ways in which a Moroccan five year old girl, Fatma, learned to participate in interactions in an Italian nursery school by acquiring the linguistic means and the sociocultural knowledge necessary for being accepted as a competent member of the school's micro-culture. Her language acquisition will not be seen simply as a matter of reconstructing a code, but as a process functional to, and dependent upon, the development of sociocultural competence. More specifically, the longitudinal analysis will follow the evolution of a very basic device for achieving textual cohesion in the multi-party conversations typical of a nursery school: the repetition of other speakers' expressions. These allo-repetitions, which I call 'appropriations' in order to stress their function of producing words originally uttered by others, can be seen both as a linguistic device for achieving textual coherence and as a social strategy for participating in interactions. Their number, form and function depend on the particular sociocultural context in which Fatma learned and used Italian; by examining this basic device it will be possible to see how the girl gradually developed her social and linguistic competence in a given context.

Previous work has focused on the interplay between child second language acquisition and socialization. For example, Wong-Fillmore (1976) analyzed the "social strategies" used by young second language learners interacting with their peers; her account, however, was based on observations of children artificially isolated from their ordinary school context and it is only inferentially that one can reconstruct the everyday contexts in which second language children were linguistically socialized. Saville-Troike and Kleifgen's research, on the other hand, observed children learning their second language in kindergartens and primary schools and purported to describe how linguistic and cultural integration go hand in hand (e.g. Saville-Troike & Kleifgen 1986; Kleifgen & Saville-Troike 1992). A fundamental notion in this research is that of "script": children rely on their general background knowledge of what is expected to happen in school in order to interpret the language being spoken around them; if the appropriate non-linguistic "cues" are identified, children can participate successfully in many activities even though they understand virtually nothing of what is being said. Kleifgen and Saville-Troike explicitly link their notion of "cues" to Gumperz's (1982) "contextualization cues", and agree with his call to override the traditional separation between sociocultural and linguistic knowledge. However, whereas the interpretation of nonlinguistic cues is often seen in studies of intercultural communication to be responsible for communication failure, other studies, like those by Saville-Troike and Kleifgen, emphasize the usefulness of nonlinguistic cues for achieving understanding. These cues, in other words, can be more or less shared by members of different cultures, and ascertaining which of them are a help and which are a hindrance in interlinguistic and intercultural communication remains an empirical question, which also needs to take the different stages of language and culture acquisition into consideration.

The issue of repetition in interlinguistic conversations has also received attention in previous research. Several authors have stressed its importance in providing cohesion when other more elaborate cohesive devices are not available (Keller-Cohen 1979; Vion & Mittner 1986; Wagner-Gough & Hatch 1975). Mittner (1984) goes a step further in suggesting that repetition may serve as a kind of "phatic confirmation", reassuring the speakers that they are still together, that despite the partial sharing of the linguistic code the conversation has not broken down. These studies, however, are all based on dyadic conversations, in which the question of who has the right to speak to whom is not at issue. In an environment such as the nursery school, on the other hand,

External Appropriations as a Strategy for Participating in Intercultural Multi-Party Conversations¹

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The rapidly growing field of intercultural communication studies has provided many insights into how people interact when their cultural backgrounds are not completely shared or attuned. We are now aware that linguistic understanding is not enough to ensure that interlocutors will achieve their interactional goals smoothly and satisfactorily. There are background assumptions, interpretation cues and interactional scripts that vary from culture to culture and that are likely to condition the ways in which speakers conduct and interpret interactions. A number of studies have pointed to the misunderstandings that may and do arise when cultural backgrounds are not shared. In order to isolate the 'cultural' factors responsible for the misunderstandings, these studies were often based on encounters in which speakers had a good command of the language, which was then ruled out as a possible problematic source (e.g. Gumperz 1982, 1992; Scollon & Scollon 1981; Tannen 1984).

Work in applied linguistics, on the other hand, has stressed the consequences for interaction of speakers' limited command of a second language. A number of studies have been carried out on the conversational strategies employed by native and non-native speakers to overcome the difficulties posed by limited language proficiency. However, learners' cultural background, and the general socio-cultural context in which learning and observed interactions take place (e.g. Gass & Varonis 1985, 1989; Long 1981, 1983, 1996) has seldom been taken into consideration.

What is needed is a convergence of the two fields in order to produce analyses which are sensitive to both intercultural and interlinguistic aspects.