Read, C. N. 1975. Children's categorization of speech sounds in English. Research Report No. 17. Urbana, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English.
Sacks, H. 1972. On the analyzability of stories by children. In: Directions in sociolinguistics. Edited by J. J. Gumperz and D. Hymes. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
Scollon, R., and S. B. K. Scollon. 1983. Cooking it up and boiling it down: Athabascan story retellings. In: Coherence in spoken and written discourse. Edited by D. Tannen. Norwood, N. J.: Ablex.
Shatz, M. 1983. Communication. In: Cognitive development, vol. III. Edited by J. H. Flavell and E. M. Markman. Handbook of child psychology, 4th ed. Edited by P. H. Mussen. New York: John Wiley.
Shatz, M., and R. Gelman. 1973. The development of communication skills: Modifications in the speech of young children as a function of listener. Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development 38 (5, serial no. 152).
Stein, N. L., and C. G. Glenn. 1979. An analysis of story comprehension in elementary school children. In: New directions in discourse processing, vol. 2. Edited by R. Freedle. Norwood, N. J.: Ablex.

CLARIFICATION AND CULTURE

Elinor Ochs
University of Southern California

0. Introduction. For some time now, scholars from several fields have been grappling with the concept of the social event or social activity and its importance. A primary concern has been the ways in which the stream of behavior is divided and organized by members of a social group. This concern has been articulated by a long list of scholars, including Bateson (1972), Goffman (1974), and Minsky (1975), in their discussions of event frames; ethnosemanticists (cf. Frake 1961, 1969), in their discussions of event domains; Wittgenstein in his discussion of language games (1958); Prague school linguists (Jakobson 1960); and ethnographers of speaking (Hymes 1974, Bauman and Sherzer 1975, Gumperz 1983, Duranti in press), in their discussions of speech events; cognitive psychologists, in their discussions of event schemata (Piaget 1929, Flavell 1977), event scripts (Schank and Abelson 1975, Nelson 1981, Nelson and Greundel 1981), and the ecological validity of experimental tasks (Cole and Means 1981).

Certain discussions have been directed more specifically at the effects of mental representations of events (whether they be called frames, schemata, scripts, or domains) on the production and interpretation of behavior. Much of the work in artificial intelligence, for example, concerns the role of knowledge of event goals in the interpretations of particular behaviors (Grosz 1972). In another field, interpretive anthropologists such as Gumperz have indicated (Gumperz 1983) that interactions may break down when participants have vastly different conceptualizations of the event taking place. When speakers from different social groups interact, they may fail to understand how one another's actions relate to the overall goal of the interaction, creating what Gumperz has termed 'cross talk'. Phenomenologically oriented sociologists have been arguing for some time that even members of the same social group do not always concur on their understandings of what is going on between them. In the phenomenological perspective, participants of an interaction usually negotiate and cooperatively define and construct the events taking place.

Still another concern in the study of events has been the impact of participation in events on social, emotional, and cognitive development. We have learned from several decades of intense research that children bring biologically based capacities and dispositions to their interactions with the world. Most influential have been Freud's discussions of the role of instinct and impulse in emotional development (1960, 1965), and Piaget's argument that the child is an active agent in his intellectual development, constructing action schemata from reflexes and logic from action schemata. Of course, these same scholars have stressed the impact of experience. Freud emphasized that construction of one's ego and superego is influenced by life's experiences, and Piagetian research has emphasized that children construct knowledge through their interactions with objects and persons in their environment. Freud's concern with the impact of social experience on one's concept of self has been taken up by numerous social scientists, including George Herbert Mead (1956), who proposed that one's sense of self is influenced by the roles one habitually assumes in social interactions. That is, one's sense of self is to a large extent a social construction, constructed in and through participation in social activity. Currently, a number of developmental psychologists have combined Piagetian models of event schemata with cognitive science notions that knowledge is organized in terms of event representations (cf. Bretherton 1984, Nelson 1981). This work suggests that children's understanding of objects, persons, actions, states, and roles is a dimension of their understanding of events at any one point in developmental time. Children display their understanding of events through pretend activities, elicited retellings, and descriptions of events.

In addition to these approaches, the Vygotskian school of Soviet psychology, also called the sociohistorical or sociocultural approach, has developed the idea that intrapersonal psychological processes emerge not only in but through interpersonal ones, i.e. through social activities (Vygotsky 1978, Luria 1976, Leontyev 1981, Wertsch 1980, in press, LCHC 1981). In contrast to other approaches, this school has emphasized the role of knowledgeable persons in facilitating the acquisition of higher order cognitive functions. Leontyev wrote, for example, 'The individual, the child, is not simply thrown into the human world; it is introduced into this world by the people around it, and they guide it in that world' (1981:135). Further, the sociohistorical school has emphasized the role of society and culture in organizing activities. Vygotsky, Luria, and Leontyev have all stressed the point, first, that activities vary in content and structure across societies; and second, that this variation has impact on members' cognitive skills.

In Europe and the United States, the Soviet approach has influenced the work of scholars such as Bruner (1975), Cazden (1981), Cole (Cole and Griffin 1980, Scribner and Cole 1981), Goody (1977), Greenfield (Greenfield and Smith 1976), Griffin (Cole and Griffin 1980), Scribner (Scribner and Cole 1981), and Wertsch (1980). This orientation is evident in their research on the impact of literacy and schooling. The well-known research of Scribner and Cole (1981), for example, indicates that the development of cognitive skills within an individual is not so much the effect of literacy per se but rather the effect of participating in particular types of literacy activities. For example, participation in literacy activities characteristic of European schooling enhances the development of hypothetical reasoning, whereas participation in literacy activities characteristic of Koranic schooling does not. I have used the term 'enhances' rather than 'determines' in discussing the effects of participation, because we know that many factors influence participation in an activity. For example, individuals may involve themselves or direct their attention to the activity to varying extents (Wentworth 1980). Further, early life experiences in literacy events differ (Heath 1983, Scollon and Scollon 1981, Michaels 1981), and these differences affect children's participation in classroom literacy events at school. That is, primary socialization experiences influence secondary socialization experiences.

All of this research on activities and events has important consequences for understanding the relation between language, thought, and culture. The sociohistorical approach in particular implies that not only literacy activities but language activities in general have an impact on social, emotional, and cognitive development. Along with anthropological approaches (such as ethnography of communication, ethnosemantics, and interpretative sociolinguistics), the sociohistorical approach suggests that we need to examine closely the organization of language activities, including the verbal means used to achieve goals, the sequential organization of verbal means, and the contexts in which goals, means, and sequential orders are taken up by language users, and relate these organizational patterns to cognitive skills and to systems of belief and social order.

Further, this body of research calls for a reconsideration of the notion of linguistic relativity. Let us consider again Sapir's classic statement on this topic (quoted in Mandelbaum 1949:162).

> It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is that the 'real world' is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group...We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation.

Sapir here speaks of language habits. Whorf spoke of fashions of speaking. What is needed is to strip the linguistic relativity hypothesis of its undesirable deterministic elements and preserve Sapir's notion that language habits predispose certain choices of interpretation. The notion of predisposition is akin to phenomenological views that experiential frames influence construction of interpretations. It is also akin to the sociohistorical view that habitual participation in language activities enhances the emergence of certain psychological skills. We want to make certain that we allow for creativity and individual difference in our reconsidered theory of linguistic relativity. We want to say that persons are oriented to ways of viewing the world through habitual participation in language activities, but this process is open-ended. World views developed through verbal interactions can be transformed through further participation in language activities. The extent to which

such transformations occur depends on personal and social conditions, but for most, socialization is a lifespan process.

While many would accept this interpretation of linguistic relativity, opinions will vary concerning the scope of its application. Most accept the idea that there is variation in literacy and school language activities and that this variation has consequences for the acquisition of skills and conceptual orientations. But what about earlier verbal activities that infants and young children experience? What about just ordinary conversational activities in the child's social environment? Do these activities vary cross-culturally and does this variation have an impact on the child's understanding of the world?

These are important questions to pose. Everyday, nothing-special sort of conversational activity is the kind of social behavior that those in cognitive science would call unscripted. It is not represented in memory as a spatially or temporally bounded activity like going to the grocery store or eating out at a restaurant or going to the doctor. It is ubiquitous. Indeed, informal conversation is the most basic of verbal activities and as such, it is the critical sociolinguistic context for the socialization of knowledge and skills. If we want to know if language activities have an impact on psychological development, then a most reasonable place to look is the organization of everyday conversational discourse.

My own interest within this area is the relation between participating in routine everyday conversational activities and the acquisition of cultural knowledge. Over the past several years, Bambi Schieffelin and I have worked collaboratively and independently, comparing, across several societies, coversational interactions in which children participate. We have found that conversational activities involving small children vary in ways that systematically relate to beliefs, values, and social order (Ochs 1982, in press; Ochs and Schieffelin 1982, in press; Schieffelin and Ochs 1983; Schieffelin 1979, in press). We have suggested that children acquire sociocultural knowledge through exposure to and participation in everyday, run-of-the-mill verbal exchanges. As Bateson (1972) has noted, novices abstract from an event not only information specific to that event but more general information concerning roles, relationships, emotions, self, tasks, causality, temporal and spatial relationships, and other dimensions of the sociocultural environment. Our orientation is compatible with the sociohistorical approach and with phenomenological approaches to socialization such as those provided by Cicourel (1973), Giddens (1976), and Wentworth (1980).

1. Clarification

1.1 Clarification and epistemology. I would like now to turn to a type of conversational activity that is pervasive in the daily lives of all of us, namely, the activity of clarification. Making clear our own and others' behaviors is surely a universal endeavor, necessary for social order and survival. I would like to put forward several suggestions concerning the nature of clarification exchanges cross-culturally and their role in the socialization of world view.

First, I would like to suggest that while clarification is a universal activity, the manner in which clarification is accomplished varies cross-culturally. Preferences for accomplishing clarification are embedded in local principles of social order and local epistemologies. More specifically, I would like to suggest that both the conditions under which clarification takes place (what gets clarified, who participates in the activity of clarification, in which roles), and the discourse procedures speakers prefer to use, index members' views of knowledge, particularly members' views on the limits of knowledge (what can be known) and the paths to knowledge (how knowledge is acquired). Another way of looking at this is to say that when members engage in the activity of clarification, they display and construct tacit guidelines and principles for creating knowledge. These guidelines and principles in turn are tied as well to local theories of meaning, of learning, and of self. I am interested in those cases of clarification where the participants are caregivers and young children. As caregivers involve infants and small children in clarification exchanges, they are displaying and constructing with them more general, socially valued epistemologies. In Sapir's terms, the language habits of their communities predispose children to view knowledge in a certain light. In the following discussion, I examine patterns of clarification between children and caregivers and their relation to folk epistemologies in two societies: American White Middle Class (WMC) and Western Samoan.

1.2 Structure of clarification sequences. Let us now try to formulate a working definition of the activity of clarification. A clarification sequence contains a verbal or nonverbal behavior that is seen as unclear by at least one participant to an interaction. Unclarity may involve both surface expression and/or underlying meaning. An utterance, for example, may be unintelligible because it has been poorly articulated, because it has not been heard, and so on. On the other hand, even when the surface form of an utterance is intelligible, its meaning may not be clear.

Using the terminology of conversation analysis, we can say that the unclear behavior is a trouble source for some participant and that the clarification sequence attends to the work of repairing or attempting to resolve that trouble (Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks 1977). That is, clarification is a goal of at least one participant.

As a type of repair sequence, the clarification sequence has the structural options that have been noted for repair sequences generally. Clarification may be self-initiated (i.e. initiated by the party who produces the unclear behavior) or other-initiated. Attempts to clarify may also be carried out either by self or by other.

1.3 Other-initiated clarification in two societies. I would like now to turn to one of these structural varieties, namely, those clarification sequences in which clarification is other-initiated. This type of clarification sequence has received considerable attention in the language acquisition literature, because transcripts are laced with children's utterances and nonverbal behaviors that are followed by caregivers' initiations of clarification, as illustrated in examples (1) and (2).

(1) Jordan is a 14-month-old male infant, being served his lunch. (From Golinkoff 1983:58-59.)

1. Jordan: (Vocalizes repeatedly until his mother turns around.)
2. Mother: (Turns around to look at him.)
3. Jordan: (Points to one of the objects on the counter.)
4. → Mother: Do you want this? (Holds up milk container.)
5. Jordan: (Shakes his head 'no'.) (Vocalizes, continues to point.)
6. → Mother: Do you want this? (Holds up jelly jar.)
7. Jordan: (Shakes head 'no'.) (Continues to point.)
8, 9, 10, 11. (2 more offer-rejection pairs.)
12. → Mother: This? (Picks up sponge.)
13. Jordan: (Leans back in highchair, puts arms down, tension leaves body.)
14. Mother: (Hands Jordan sponge.)

(2) Allison is 16 months, 3 weeks old. (From Bloom 1973:152-53.)

1. Mother: What do you see?
2. Allison: (A leans forward; looking in bag) pig/ (A stands up)
3. → Mother: What?
4. Allison: pig/
5. → Mother: Play? Is that what you're saying? Play?
6. Allison: oh/ pig/ ---/

For some researchers, these caregiver responses have been taken as evidence that caregiver speech facilitates the acquisition of grammar (Cross 1977, 1981). For others, these responses have been treated as a means by which caregivers are able to sustain communication with a young baby or child (Brown 1977, Snow 1977).

Western Samoan and WMC caregivers both initiate clarification of children's verbal and nonverbal behavior. However, the set of procedures used by rural Western Samoan caregivers to initiate clarification is a subset of those used by WMC caregivers.

1.3.1 WMC clarification strategies. WMC caregivers rely heavily on two related strategies for initiating clarification. The first strategy is to exhibit minimal or no grasp of what the child has said or done and to rely primarily on the child to resay or redo the unintelligible utterance or gesture. Let us call this strategy the 'minimal grasp strategy'.[1] This may be accomplished indirectly by the caregiver expressing nonunderstanding through a quizzical expression or through a verbal statement such as I don't understand, I can't understand what you are saying, and the like. Or the caregiver may directly ask the child what he said or to supply a piece of what he said, using WH interrogatives such as What? Who? He went where?, and so on. This type of clarification request is illustrated in example (2), line 3. The caregiver may also request or order the child to resay or redo through utterances such as Say it again sweetie, Show me another time, Could you say it once more? and so on.

A second strategy of WMC caregivers is to articulate a guess at what the child's unclear utterance or gesture could be or could mean. Let us call this strategy the 'expressed guess strategy'.[2] In contrast to the minimal grasp strategy, here it is the caregiver who attempts a reformulation of the unclear act. The child is asked to validate or confirm the caregiver's guess. This strategy is illustrated in example (1), lines 4, 6, and 12, and in example (2), line 5. In the case of disconfirmation, the child may resay or redo his utterance or gesture and the caregiver may continue to supply alternate guesses, as illustrated in example (1).

The speech act of guessing covers a range of uncertain knowledge. A caregiver or any speaker may formulate a guess when she is not at all certain of her knowledge. In interactions with infants, this is often the case. Caregivers often find themselves articulating wild guesses at what the infant could be signalling. On the other end, caregivers and others may formulate guesses when they are fairly certain of what an infant is saying or doing. In these cases, the caregiver is using the guess to make sure of, or to double check, her understanding.

Not only WMC caregivers but WMC speakers generally prefer constructions that display the most of what they have understood of the problematic utterance. That is, speakers show a preference for using the strongest form they can in initiating repair of another's utterance (Schegloff, personal communication). For example, speakers prefer specific interrogative pronouns (Where? Who?, etc.) over the weaker construction Huh?, and prefer partial repetitions plus an interrogative pronoun (He went where?, etc.) over the interrogative pronoun on its own. Relevant to our concerns here, the preference of WMC speakers is for the expressed guess strategy over the minimal grasp strategy, where conditions of hearing and understanding permit.

1.3.2 Samoan clarification strategies

1.3.2.1 Caregiver strategies. In Western Samoan households, caregivers prefer strategy 1 (the minimal grasp strategy) but not strategy 2 (the expressed guess strategy) to initiate clarification. They use quizzical expressions, statements of nonunderstanding, WH questions, and other directives to elicit from the child a reformulation of all or part of the unclear utterance or gesture. An example of this strategy is provided in (3).

(3) Maselino (4 years) is with Sililo, (16 years), Olagi (5 years), and his mother's brother's wife, Atoa.

Mas (to Sil):	Mai Liaga le kusia sou igoa le kegi 'Uliana said they are not going to write your name (on the list of workers) for the gang.'
Sil:	E aa? 'What?'
Olagi:	// ((laughs))
Mas:	//mai Liaga le kusia e sau igoa le kegi e e. 'Uliana said that they are not going to write your name (on the list of workers) for the gang (warning particle).'

Atoa (to Sil): Mai e aa? ( )
'She said what?'
Sil: Mai le kusia so'u igoa le kegi.
'She said they are not going to write my name (on the list of workers) for the gang.'

In the corpus of interactions that we recorded, we did not find cases in which caregivers (either sib caregivers or adult caregivers) formulated an explicit guess at what an unclear utterance or gesture of the child may be. This dispreference was also manifest when members of the family or others would listen with me to recordings of children's unclear utterances. Almost everyone found my own enterprise of explicitly guessing at a garbled or telegraphic utterance of a child puzzling and not worth the time.

This does not mean that these caregivers and others listening to and watching children do not guess silently. However, silent guesses differ from expressed guesses. First, expressed guesses make explicit a possible proposition. Expressed hypotheses, conjectures, and speculations all commit their makers tentatively to the possibility that some state of affairs may hold. Second, expressed guesses elicit the involvement of the original speakers who produce the enigmatic utterances in the process of understanding, whereas the silent guess does not. In the case of caregiver-child interaction, the expressed guess of the caregiver gives the child a role in the assignment of meaning; the child is given veto power, so to speak, over the caregiver's understanding. In the expressed guess, then, meaning is negotiated before it is assigned. In the silent guess, any negotiation of meaning that may occur takes place after the caregiver's initial assignment of meaning.

The Samoan preference for repetition is manifested more generally in situations in which instruction is taking place. As in many societies, Samoans rely heavily on repeated, often passive, observation of behaviors as a means of transmitting and acquiring knowledge and skills. Dance practice, for example, consists of one person modelling entire dances over and over in front of novices, who imitate the dance movements or watch to one side. As Samoan caregivers engage young children in clarification sequences, they are then socializing them into broader, socially valued methods of education, namely, that the path to knowledge is through repeated exposure--through listening and watching over and over.

In WMC society, repetition of information is also an important strategy in the transmission and acquisition of new information. However, the tradition of clarifying thought through Socratic, dialogic methods is also strong in this society. In the Socratic method, knowledge is pursued through formulating and pursuing initial hypotheses, that is, through laying out for others explicit guesses. WMC caregivers who initiate clarification of children's utterances or gestures through yes-no interrogatives or other forms of guessing are socializing children into this socially valued procedure for gaining knowledge, just as when they elicit resayings or redoings, they are socializing them into the alternative procedure whereby knowledge is enhanced through repeated observations.

2. Social rank. Goody (1978) has noted that among the Gonja of Northern Ghana, the use of questions is socially constrained. In adult-child interactions, questions are appropriate speech acts of adults but not of young children. In Samoan society, the speech act of guessing is also affected by social status.

Samoan society is highly stratified. Rank is assessed in terms of political title (e.g. chief, orator, and positions within each of these statuses), church title (pastor, deacon, etc.), age, and generation, among other variables. Titled persons have higher rank than untitled persons and older, higher generation persons have higher rank than younger persons (Mead 1930, Shore 1982). Among the demeanors associated with distinctions in social rank is that of perspective-taking. Lower ranking persons are expected to assume the perspective of higher ranking persons more than higher ranking vis-à-vis lower ranking parties in a social situation. Lower ranking persons are expected to notice and anticipate the wishes of higher ranking persons. They stand in a service relation to those of higher status. As I have noted elsewhere (Ochs 1982), young Samoan children are socialized early in their lives to a sociocentric perspective. As infants, they are often held and fed facing outward toward others in a group. When they begin to speak, much time and effort is devoted to instructing the young child to notice others and to repeat their personal names. In Samoan society, sib and parental caregivers work hard to get children, even before the age of two years, to take the perspective of others. This demeanor is a fundamental component of showing respect, a most necessary competence in Samoan daily life.

The process of communication is affected by these social expectations concerning perspective-taking. It is obvious that communication requires degrees of perspective-taking by all participating parties, i.e. degrees of what has been called 'intersubjectivity' (Trevarthen 1979).

In Samoan interactions the extent to which parties are expected to assume the perpective of another in assigning a meaning to an utterance of another varies with social rank. In speaking to those of lower rank, higher ranking persons are not expected to do a great deal of perspective-taking to make sense out of their own utterances or to make sense of the utterance of a lower ranking interlocutor. Higher ranking persons, then, are not expected to clarify and simplify for lower ranking persons. For example, caregivers are not expected to simplify their speech in talking to young children (Ochs 1982). And exactly the reverse is expected of lower ranking persons. Lower ranking persons take on more of the burden of clarifying their own utterances and the utterances of higher ranking interlocutors.

Of the two clarification strategies discussed earlier, the 'expressed guess' strategy involves more perspective-taking than the 'minimal grasp' strategy. One reason why we do not see caregivers making explicit guesses at what their charges are saying is that such a response demands an orientation that is generally inappropriate to the social role of caregiver. Only in situations in which a small child is speaking on behalf of someone of high status (e.g. when the child is a messenger) is this degree of perspective-taking expected. Typically, when very small Samoan children produce unintelligible utterances, they are disregarded or addressed with a construction indicating noncomprehension and directed

to redesign their utterances to meet the communicative needs of others. Through such procedures, children develop early in life a sensitivity to the demands of their social environment and communicative skills to meet them.

Looking at transcripts of interactions across many contexts (adult-adult, adult-child, child-child), I have found few instances of explicit guessing. Of those instances located, most occur in interactions among peers and a few occur in interactions in which a higher ranking person has produced an unclear utterance. While guessing appears across several speech activities in peer interaction, when a lower ranking person directs a guess at a higher ranking person it is situationally constrained. As audience to personal narratives, gossip, or speeches of higher ranking persons, lower ranking persons do not typically guess explicitly at the meaning of their utterances. However, when a higher ranking person directs the lower ranking person to do something, then he may clarify by directing a guess to the speaker. I emphasize that this strategy is not very frequent. It is generally dispreferred for lower ranking persons to guess at the utterances of higher ranking persons. The expectation is that the lower ranking person should be attending (and therefore not need to clarify on grounds of not having heard the utterance) and should understand. In multiparty situations, lower ranking persons may get out of this bind by directing to a co-present peer a guess as to part or all of the utterance of the higher ranking person. This strategy is illustrated in example (4), in which a group of boys of differing ages are playing on the beach, pretending to be preparing a meal. In their play, the older boys direct the preparation and the younger boys carry out the directives (just as in daily life). The oldest boy (Boy 1) directs a younger one (Sesi, Boy 3) to make saka 'boiled taro'. The younger boy then turns to a boy close to his age and requests confirmation of his understanding of what was said.

(4) Boys Playing on Beach
Boy 1: Sole, alu Sesi fai saka ee!
'Mate, go Sesi to make saka (emph. particle)!'
Ke iloa fai--
'You know how (to make it)'
Boy 2: ((hums))...eli ma'a
((hums))...'dig stones.'
Boy 3: Fai mai 'Fai saka'?
'He said 'Make saka'?
Boy 1: Sole, alu oe e e (pause) koli mai ulu.
'Mate, you go to twist off and fetch down breadfruit.'

3. The trouble. In addition to social rank, the nature of the trouble or the object of clarification is an important variable constraining the use of explicit guessing in Samoan interactions. In the WMC caregiver-child interactions observed, the clarification sequences pursue at least two major goals. One is to clarify what the child has just said or done, that is, to obtain an output that is intelligible. A second goal is to assign a reading to that output that is compatible with the child's intended meaning. In all speech, but particularly in children's speech, utterances may have several meanings. In WMC caregiver-child interactions, a major

problem is to sort out which meaning is the 'correct' one, where correctness is based on the caregiver's assessment of the child's intentions (what Grice 1968 calls 'utterer's meaning'). So important is the understanding of the child's intentions that caregivers will check with the child if their understanding of the child's intended meaning is correct or not. This job is accomplished through the expressed guess. In guessing, the caregiver displays a tentative reading before a final interpretation. The child has an option, indeed is directed, to influence the caregiver's understanding of some particular utterance or action before a meaning is assigned.

In so doing, WMC caregivers are conforming to a cultural theory of communication in which speakers' personal intentions are critical to the interpretation of an utterance or action. Certain philosophical theories of meaning, such as that of Searle (1969) and Grice (1968) articulate the system of knowledge that underlies this folk theory. In the work of both Searle (following Austin 1962) and Grice, the issues taken up focus on the relation between convention and intention, locutionary and illocutionary meaning, sentence and utterer's meaning, evaluating the relative importance of each in a theory of meaning and language use.

Recently, several sociolinguists and anthropologists have discussed this orientation to meaning in relation to cultural beliefs and orientations (Duranti 1984, Kochman 1983, Ochs 1982, Rosaldo 1982, Shore 1977, 1982). All of these discussions have focused on the concept of person that emerges from language behavior and from folk and academic theories of meaning. The emphasis on personal intentions in Anglo society and scholarship is tied to a cultural ideology in which persons are viewed as individuals, i.e. coherent personalities, who have control over and are responsible for their utterances and actions.

Personal intentions are important in a vast range of situations. Members of Anglo WMC society seek to clarify an individual's personal intentions for a range of purposes. For example, members of this society usually base their assignments of responsibility and sanctions on the speaker/actor's particular intentions behind an utterance or action. This society distinguishes, for example, between inadvertent and planned behaviors, and between accidental and purposeful behaviors. In legal and other contexts, if it is established that a negatively valued behavior was consciously intended, then sanctions are usually more severe than if the speaker/actor 'didn't mean to do it' or could not help doing it or otherwise was not in control. Note that establishing intentionality is not always critical to sanctioning. In many situations, members of this society say 'It doesn't matter whether you meant it or not.' The important point is that in Anglo-American WMC society, what a person means or meant to do or say is an important cultural variable. For this social group, what a person means to do is distinguished from what he does. This orientation leads members to take seriously, and to pursue the establishing of, individual's motivations and psychological states.

This concern with and emphasis on personal intentions is not matched in other societies. In societies such as American Black working class (Kochman 1983), Ilongot (Rosaldo 1982), Ifaluk (Lutz 1982), and Samoan (Duranti 1984, Ochs 1982), the consequences of an utterance or action play an important role in assigning meaning.

In certain accounts, the emphasis on consequences takes the form of focusing on the social ramifications of a behavior (rather than on

speaker/actor's intentions). Lutz (1982), for example, notes that the Ifaluk focus on the 'wake' of an action. In Ochs (1982), I have discussed the primacy of consequences of an action in Samoan evaluations of actions. In Samoan households, children will be sanctioned according to the negative effects of their behaviors. This is also the case in the legal arena, where actions are assessed almost exclusively in terms of social and economic losses and disturbances. In the context of assessing misdeeds, in Samoan society, the focus is much less on personal intentions behind an utterance/action. In this context, it is not terribly important if the wrongdoer did something by accident, inadvertently, or on purpose. Indeed, Samoans see persons as not in control of their misdeeds (Shore 1977, 1982). Samoan children may try to get out of punishment by denying that they did that culpable act, but they do not try to worm out by saying I didn't mean it, It was just an accident, I did it by mistake, I couldn't help it, I didn't do it on purpose, as do WMC children almost by routine.

Other accounts, following a more phenomenological approach to communication, have focused on the importance of the hearer's role in the assignment of meaning. Kochman (1983), for example, has commented that for this community of Black speakers, very often the perlocutionary effect on the hearer takes precedence over speaker's intended meaning. Indeed, here as in other societies such as Samoan society, speakers often leave ambiguous what is meant, waiting to see how a hearer will take it up. In this sense, meaning is in the hands of the audience more than in those of the speaker; the audience has the final word.

Taking these accounts altogether, we might propose that we have found a variable in terms of which societies contrast. There are societies like the WMC in the United States that focus primarily on the personal sources of utterances/actions and other societies--such as the Ilongot of the Philippines, the Ifaluk of the Caroline Islands, the Samoans, and the working-class Blacks in the United States--that focus primarily on the social consequences of utterances/actions.

This distinction, however, is too simplistic. For example, there are theories supported by scholars within the WMC society in the United States that argue against the primacy of personal intentions in establishing meaning. Sociohistorical theories of meaning such as that held by Bakhtin (Volosinov 1973), deconstructionist theories within literary criticism, and hermeneutic perspectives (e.g. Gadamer 1976) are alive and popular within this country. (Notice, however, that these traditions stem from scholarly lines outside the United States.) This observation and ethnographic observations of Samoan interaction suggest that within each society, both orientations persist. The difference between societies lies in the contexts in which these two orientations prevail, the relative importance given to each of them, and the frequency with which these orientations mark social interaction.

In Samoan society, personal intentions are a focus of concern in a restricted set of contexts, primarily when the speaker/actor is of high social status and/or of higher social rank relative to the hearer/audience. For example, Shore (1977, 1982) and Duranti (1981) have noted that in the context of political meetings of titled persons, only high chiefs and high status orators are entitled to voice personal opinions. In this sense, high status speakers in this context are treated more as individuals than are others present, and their personal intentions are attended to. In addition, when a higher ranking person orders a lower ranking person to carry out some action, personal intentions of the speaker are also of primary importance. The lower ranking party cannot assign his own interpretation but rather must grasp that intended by the higher ranking speaker.

Where the speaker is of low status and/or of lower rank than the hearer, then his or her personal intentions tend to assume low priority in assigning meaning and the interpretation of the higher ranking hearer takes precedence. Notice that whether the higher ranking party is speaker or hearer, that high party controls meaning.

Given that explicit guessing is tied to the pursuit of speaker's intentions, it is somewhat understandable, in light of the foregoing comments, that we would observe very little explicit guessing directed to lower ranking speakers. The personal intentions of lower ranking speakers, such as children talking to caregivers, do not 'count' in the same way as do those of higher ranking speakers. It would be particularly improbable for caregivers to direct guesses at infants, since at this early point in life, infants are seen neither as personalities nor as conversational partners (Ochs 1982).

While the two perspectives on meaning are variable within WMC and Samoan society, the two have different contextual distributions and salience in each of the two societies. That theory of meaning which Holquist (1983) calls the 'personalist' view of meaning (the view that 'I (the speaker) own meaning') is far more salient in WMC society than in traditional rural Western Samoan communities. When WMC caregivers attend very carefully to the unclear gestures and utterances of their infants and young children, when they explicitly guess at what the child means, they are socializing children into this prevailing view of meaning in which personal intentions are of primary importance. The absence of explicit guessing by Western Samoan caregivers is tied to the restricted relevance of this theory of meaning to Samoan social life, in particular to its inappropriateness in a wide range of contexts, including those in which children communicate with caregivers. Samoans generally display a strong dispreference for guessing at what is going on in another person's mind. This dispreference has reflexes in a range of verbal activities and accounts for the rarity of activities such as test questions, riddles, and guessing games of the 'Twenty Questions' and 'I Spy' variety. These activities are not part of traditional instruction settings nor are they common in informal adult-child, adult-adult, or child-child interactions. (They appear mainly in the context of formal classroom instruction in Christian churches and Western-oriented public schools.) Western Samoan caregivers' behaviors, then, are congruent with traditional Samoan theories of knowledge, including their theories of learning and their theories of meaning.

Notes

I am grateful for the helpful comments of Elaine Andersen, Yigal Arens, Niko Besnier, Alessandro Duranti, and Edward Finegan, and for

the long discussions with Emanuel Schegloff on earlier drafts of this research paper.

1. I am indebted to E. Schegloff for providing this term.

2. This strategy is roughly comparable to the notion of 'candidate understanding' within the paradigm of conversation analysis (Schegloff, personal communication).

References

Austin, J. L. 1962. How to do things with words. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bateson, G. 1972. Steps to an ecology of mind. New York: Ballantine.

Bauman, R., and J. Sherzer. 1975. Explorations in the ethnography of speaking. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bloom, L. 1973. One word at a time. The Hague: Mouton.

Bretherton, I. 1984. Symbolic play. New York: Academic Press.

Brown, R. 1977. Introduction. In: Talking to children: Language input and acquisition. Edited by C. E. Snow and C. Ferguson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1-27.

Bruner, J. 1975. The ontogenesis of speech acts. Journal of Child Language 2:1-19.

Cazden, C. 1981. Performance before competence: Assistance to child discourse in the zone of proximal development. Quarterly Newsletter of the Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition 3.5-8.

Cicourel, A. 1973. Cognitive sociology. London: Macmillan.

Cole, M., and M. Griffin. 1980. Cultural amplifiers reconsidered. In: Social foundations of language and thought. Edited by D. Olson. New York: W. W. Norton and Co.

Cole, M., and B. Means. 1981. Comparative studies of how people think. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Cross, T. 1977. Mothers' speech adjustments: The contribution of selected child-listener variables. In: Talking to children: Language input and acquisition. Edited by C. E. Snow and C. Ferguson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 151-88.

Cross, T. 1981. The linguistic experience of slow language learners. In: Advances in child development. Edited by Nesdale et al. University of Western Australia.

Duranti, A. 1981. The Samoan fono: A sociolinguistic study. Pacific Linguistics, series B, vol. 80. Canberra: The Australian National University, Department of Linguistics, R.S. Pac.S.

Duranti, A. 1984. Intentions, self, and local theories of meaning: Words and social action in a Samoan context. MS. Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition. University of California, San Diego.

Duranti, A. (in press) Sociocultural dimensions of discourse. In: Handbook of discourse analysis. Edited by T. van Dijk. London: Academic Press.

Duranti, A., and E. Ochs. 1982. The social organization of other-correction in Samoan verbal interaction. Paper presented at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meetings, Washington, D.C.

Flavell, J. 1977. Cognitive development. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Frake, C. 1961. The diagnosis of disease among the Subanun of Mindanao. American Anthropologist 63.1:113-32.

Frake, C. 1969. A structural description of Subanun religious behavior. In: Cognitive anthropology. Edited by S. Tyler. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Freud, S. 1960. The ego and the id. New York: Norton.

Freud, S. 1965. New introductory lectures on psychoanalysis. New York: Norton.

Gadamer, H-G. 1976. Philosophical hermeneutics. Translated and edited by D. E. Linge. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Giddens, A. 1976. New rules of sociological method. New York: Basic Books.

Goffman, E. 1974. Frame analysis. New York: Harper and Row.

Golinkoff, R. 1983. The pre-verbal negotiation of failed messages: Insights into the transition period. In: The transition from prelinguistic to linguistic communication. Edited by R. Golinkoff. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum. 57-78.

Goody, E. 1978. Towards a theory of questions. In: Questions and politeness. Edited by Esther Goody. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 17-43.

Goody, J. 1977. The domestication of the savage mind. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Greenfield, P., and J. H. Smith. 1976. The structure of communication in early language development. New York: Academic Press.

Grice, H. P. 1968. Utterer's meaning, sentence-meaning, and word-meaning. Foundations of Language 4.1-18.

Grosz, B. 1977. The representation and use of focus in dialogue understanding. SRI International Technical Note 151. Menlo Park, Calif.: Stanford Research Institute.

Gumperz, J. 1983. Discourse strategies. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Heath, S. 1983. Ways with words: Language, life, and work in communities and classrooms. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Holquist, M. 1983. The politics of representation. Quarterly Newsletter of the Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition 5.I:2-9.

Hymes, D. 1974. Foundations in sociolinguistics: An ethnographic approach. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Jakobson, R. 1960. Linguistics and poetics. In: Style in language. Edited by T. Sebeok. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press. 350-77.

Kochman, T. 1983. The boundary between play and nonplay in black verbal dueling. Language in Society 12.3:329-38.

LCHC [Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition, University of California, San Diego]. 1981. Culture and cognitive development. To appear in: L. Carmichael's manual of child psychology: History, theories, and methods. Edited by W. Kessen. New York: John Wiley.

Leontyev, A. N. 1981. Problems of the development of mind. Moscow: Progress Publishers.

Luria, A. R. 1976. Cognitive development: Its cultural and social foundations. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Lutz, C. 1982. The domain of emotion words on Ifaluk. American Ethnologist 9.1:113-28.

Mandelbaum, D. G., ed. 1949. Selected writings of Edward Sapir. Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California.
Mead, G. H. 1956. On social psychology. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Mead, M. 1930. The social organization of Manu'a. Honolulu: B. P. Bishop Museum.
Michaels, S. 1981. Sharing time: Children's narrative styles and differential access to literacy. Language in Society 10.3:423-42.
Minsky, M. 1975. A framework for representing knowledge. In: The psychology of computer vision. Edited by P. Winston. New York: McGraw-Hill.
Nelson, K. 1981. Social cognition in a script framework. In: Social cognitive development. Edited by J. Flavell and L. Ross. New York: Cambridge University Press.
Nelson, K., and J. Gruendel. Generalized event representations: Basic building blocks of cognitive development. In: Advances in developmental psychology, vol 1. Edited by M. Lamb and A. Brown. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum.
Ochs, E. 1982. Talking to children in Western Samoa. Language in Society 11:77-104.
Ochs, E. (in press) Culture and language acquisition: Acquisition of communicative competence in a Western Samoan village. New York: Cambridge University Press.
Ochs, E., and B. Schieffelin. 1982. Language acquisition and socialization: Three developmental stories. In: Working Papers in Sociolinguistics. Edited by R. Bauman and J. Sherzer. Austin, Texas: Southwest Educational Laboratory. To appear also in: Culture theory. Edited by R. Schweder and R. Levine. New York: Cambridge University Press.
Piaget, J. 1929. The child's conception of the world. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
Rosaldo, M. 1982. The things we do with words. Ilongot speech acts and speech act theory in philosophy. Language in Society 11:203-37.
Schank, R.C., and R.P. Abelson. Scripts, plans, goals and understanding. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum.
Schegloff, E., G. Jefferson, and H. Sacks. 1977. The preference for self-correction in the organization of repair in conversation. Lg. 53.361-82.
Schieffelin, B. (in press) How Kaluli children learn what to say, what to do, and how to feel. New York: Cambridge University Press.
Schieffelin, B., and E. Ochs. 1983. Cultural perspectives on the transition from prelinguistc to linguistic communication. In: The transition from prelinguistic to linguistic communication. Edited by R. Golinkoff. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum.
Scollon, R., and S. Scollon. 1981. Narrative, literacy, and face in interethnic communication. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex.
Scribner, S., and M. Cole. 1981. The psychology of literacy. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
Searle, J. 1969. Speech acts. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Shore, B. 1977. A Samoan theory of action. Doctoral dissertation. University of Chicago.

Shore, B. 1982. Sala'ilua: A Samoan mystery. New York: Columbia University Press.
Snow, C. E. 1977. The development of conversations between mothers and babies. Journal of Child Language 4.1-22.
Trevarthen, C. 1979. Communication and co-operation in early infancy: A description of primary intersubjectivity. In: Before speech: The beginnings of interpersonal communication. Edited by M. Bullowa. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 321-47.
Volosinov, V. N. 1973. Marxism and the philosophy of language. New York: Academic Press.
Vygotsky, L. 1978. Mind in society. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
Wentworth, W. 1980. Context and understanding: An inquiry into socialization theory. New York: Elsevier.
Wertsch, J. 1980. The significance of dialogue in Vygotsky's account of social, egocentric and inner speech. Contemporary Educational Psychology 5.150-62.
Wertsch, J. (in press) Cognitive development theory: A Vygotskian perspective. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
Wittgenstein, L. 1958a. Philosophical investigations. Oxford: Blackwell.
Wittgenstein, L. 1958b. The blue and brown books. Oxford: Blackwell.