

GABRIELE PALLOTTI

## BORROWING WORDS

### *Appropriations in child second-language discourse*

The role of repetition in child language has received considerable attention over the last decades (see e.g. Bennett-Kastor 1994, Speidel & Nelson 1989). The term 'repetition' may refer to speakers repeating their own linguistic expressions ('self-repetition'), and to speakers repeating expressions uttered by others ('other-repetition' or 'allo-repetition') (Tannen 1989). In this paper we will be concerned only with children's repetition of expressions originally produced by others. Given this ambiguity of the term 'repetition', the more transparent 'appropriation' will be preferred, as it more clearly indicates the child's effort to use expressions available in her communicative environment.

This use of the term 'appropriation' is quite similar to what Wagner-Gough and Hatch (1975) called "incorporation" in their discussion of the discourse of second language learners. The child they studied (Homer) 'incorporated' in his speech some of the linguistic expressions he heard, producing sequences such as the following (Wagner-Gough 1978:164):

1. NS: Is Homer a cat?  
NNS: Is Homer is no. [= Homer isn't a cat]
  
2. NS: Is this lemonade?  
NNS: Is no lemonade.
  
3. NS: Where are you going?  
NNS: Where are you going is house. [= I'm going home]

Wagner-Gough and Hatch argued that these incorporation sequences played an important role in the child's reconstruction of the rules of English. Other studies, especially in the Seventies, focused on the discourse of children learning second languages (Huang & Hatch 1978; Itoh & Hatch 1978; Peck 1978). Many of them discussed children's allo-repetitions, although only one study, at least to my knowledge, was entirely devoted to this issue. In her 1979 article, Deborah Keller-Cohen showed that, in the productions of two children learning English as a second language, non-elaborative repetitions (that is, repetitions without the child adding

anything to the repeated expressions) tended to decrease over time, while elaborative repetitions (repetitions in which the child adds some linguistic components to the repeated expressions) tended to increase. Similar findings were obtained in a later study by Calleri (1996). Work on beginning-level adult learners has shown how repetition of the interlocutor's word can be used a strategy of "phatic confirmation" (Mittner 1984), i.e. as a very basic way of displaying that the two conversational parties 'are together' and their interaction is proceeding.

In all these studies, appropriation was considered a unitary phenomenon, operationalizable as the repetition of some linguistic expression within a certain number of turns. The resulting class was then subdivided on linguistic criteria, such as the elaborative / non-elaborative distinction. However, types of appropriations were never distinguished based on their interactional features. For example, the differences between repetitions of words that were directed to the learner and repetitions of words directed to some third party have not been the object of any study to date. This neglect can partly be accounted for by the research designs of many previous studies. Keller-Cohen's data, for example, were recorded in a "relatively confined area, a room in a university building" (1979: 263), where children interacted one at a time with an adult researcher. Most of the examples reported in Wagner-Gough's study consist of sequences in which the adult researcher asked questions and the child responded.

More generally, the majority of data on second language discourse, and all the more so for adult learners, come from dyadic, semi-artificial interactions. What in many studies is called 'naturalistic' or 'spontaneous' speech can be thus defined only in relation to that elicited in even more constrained conditions, such as acceptability judgments, completion or manipulation exercises, elicited question-and-answer sequences. However, the ecological validity of this allegedly 'natural' discourse is problematic. Most learners do not normally acquire a second language in interactions with a patient interlocutor, who is more than willing to listen to them, to prompt them to speak, to anticipate, negotiate and remediate their troubles in understanding and producing utterances. Especially what are called naturalistic or untutored learners acquire the L2 in their *struggles* to understand and being understood. In their everyday interactional contexts, speaking and being spoken to are not a right, or even an invitation, as they are in more or less experimental settings, but an achievement to be accomplished through a variety of strategies. The traditional picture of native speaker (NS) - non native speaker (NNS) interaction (natives scaffolding non natives' productions, moving the conversation topic forward by using questions, checking understanding and providing solutions to conversational problems; see e.g. de Heredia & Noyau, 1986, Long 1996) should therefore really be seen as an outcome of certain conditions that obtain in research settings, rather than a generalized and easily generalizable set of discourse features.

For example, and this will be the main point of this chapter, the majority of children learning a second language in ordinary 'submersion' classes experience a quite different communicative environment from what has been described in experimental studies. Far from being isolated in confined rooms with accommodating native speakers, or having adults asking them series of questions, these children receive most of their input from interactions in which they are not the

explicit or unique addressee. The vast majority of studies on second-language interaction has dealt with dyads: we know little or nothing about how NNSs cope with the problem of participating in multi-party conversations (Gass 1997: 132; but see Pallotti 1999 and in press for an account of NNSs' communication strategies in multi-party settings). These conversations, however, might constitute the majority of exchanges in which at least some (but one could say many) learners are involved while using the second language. This is true especially of children learning their L2 in ordinary, mainstream classes. In these contexts, and all the more so at the kindergarten and primary levels, purely dyadic interactions are not frequent: even when we see only two persons interacting (two children, or a child and an adult), there are always some "bystanders" (Goffman 1979) who assist to their conversation and could - if not at any time, certainly on many occasions - join it without any special invitation or access ritual.

Elsewhere (Pallotti 1996) I have tried to show how a learner's interlanguage develops in this type of contexts. For example, the child who will be the subject of this study, Fatma, acquired among her first words in the L2 a number of verbs and adjectives and virtually no nouns. This contrasts with previous accounts of very early learner language, which was said to be based mostly on a "nominal structuring" (Perdue 1993).<sup>1</sup> Similarly, among the first grammatical morphemes acquired by the girl there were affect-marking morphemes, which are not reported in other basic varieties of Italian (or other languages, at least to my knowledge). And finally, in that paper on "the ecology of second language acquisition" I reported some of the girl's "sentence producing tactics" (Wong-Fillmore 1976) that could be seen not only, and perhaps not even mainly, as an approach to syntax, but rather as a way of solving the interactional problem of being heard and ratified as a participant in the fast, complex and multi-party conversations that occurred in the nursery school.

In this paper I am going to look at another phenomenon, that of the learner's repetition of other people's words, or appropriation. From an ecological perspective, repeating words directed to her and repeating words directed to some third party are quite different interactional moves. This paper attempts to be an investigation of these differences.

The approach taken here is thus ecological in that we are going to look at appropriations as a linguistic phenomenon occurring within a specific social context. More precisely, we could say that appropriations can be seen both as a linguistic and a social phenomenon. As a linguistic device, they belong to a wider class of cohesive mechanisms, i.e. forms that ensure that the content of an utterance is linked to that of preceding utterances (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). As a social strategy, they belong to a wider set of social strategies used to achieve participation in complex multi-party contexts. When a learner appropriates words, s/he is both 'talking about the same thing' (linguistic cohesion) and 'doing something together' (social participation). Language use and acquisition are thus seen as tightly connected to, or perhaps as the other side of, the processes whereby learners gradually become competent members of a micro-culture such as that of the nursery school. This approach is therefore part of the study of second-language socialization (Duff 1996, Morita 2000, Pallotti 1996, Poole 1992, Roberts 2001 [1998], Willett 1995). By

looking at a social and linguistic phenomenon like appropriations, and how it varies across different participation frameworks, we will be able to get a better grasp of the micro-practices whereby a second language learner develops his or her ability to be accepted within a given social group through interaction.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

A Moroccan girl aged five (Fatma) was observed for eight months in an Italian nursery school. Her first language was Moroccan Arabic and she had had no significant previous contact with Italian before the beginning of the study. 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 I was recording them, but I didn't want them to know that I was interested in those two particular children. A total of 150 hours of tape have been recorded.

The nursery school enrolled 25 children 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., during other weeks. They sometimes overlapped at lunch time, which was from noon to 12.30. A part-time teacher, who kept a special attention on 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.

In this paper we will be focusing on only one type of "communicative event" (Hymes 1972), the lunch. Lunches were chosen because they have an overall organization and a "participation structure" (Goffman 1979; Philips 1983) that remain constant from event to event. It is therefore easier to see the learner's changes over time on a relatively stable interactional background. Furthermore, the participation structure of lunches is quite flexible, so that it is equally possible to find free, lively and even noisy conversations, moments of absolute silence, one child's or adult's monologues, two party dialogues as well as multi-party conversations.

#### INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL APPROPRIATIONS

Fatma repeated both utterances of which she was the intended recipient and utterances that were directed at other participants. We will refer to these as 'internal' and 'external' appropriations, respectively. Internal appropriations are those where

the child is the addressee of the words that she repeats; in external appropriations the repeated words were originally directed to someone else. Appropriations from utterances directed to a group of which Fatma was part will also be considered internal. Therefore, external appropriations are only those involving words that were clearly *not* directed to the non-native speaker child.

Goffman gives us some useful descriptive terms for communicative situations in which more than two parties are involved. In these situations, participants may have different "participation statuses" (Goffman 1979). In our case, in internal appropriations the non-native child is a "ratified participant" and, more specifically, the "addressee"; in external appropriations she is not the addressee, and her participation status is between that of a "ratified participant" and that of a "bystander". That is, the child has the right to speak (as a ratified speaker) but also to remain silent all the time (as a bystander); in any case, unlike an addressee, the child has the *right* to speak, but not an *invitation* to do so.

External appropriations were defined quite narrowly, as repetitions of words clearly directed to a third party other than Fatma. One might expect them to be rather uncommon cases. They were however more than half of the total of appropriations in the whole period of the study (table 1). External appropriations were thus a strategy the child regularly used in her attempts to participate in interactions (a fuller account of external appropriations as a participation strategy is provided in Pallotti, in press).

*Table 1: Percentages of internal and external appropriations in the three periods of the study (each period = two months).*

<i>Period</i>	<i>Internal</i>	<i>External</i>	<i>?</i>
I	41 (45.6%)	47 (52.2%)	2 (2.2%)
II	36 (45.5%)	41 (51.9%)	2 (2.6%)
III	28 (44.4%)	35 (55.6%)	0
Total	105 (45.2%)	123 (53.2%)	4 (1.6%)

This should come as no surprise, if we think what communicative environment a nursery school is. As we said, adults are rarely interacting with individual children, but rather it is the latter who strive and struggle to obtain attention and ratification as interactional partners. This holds true for non native speakers as well. In a sub-sample of our corpus (six meals distributed over the whole period of observation), 77 % of the turns produced by Fatma were produced of her own initiative, with less than a quarter being responses to opportunities provided by someone else. Hence Fatma, while learning the Italian language, also had to learn to become an active participant, who could start or enter conversations without anybody inviting her to

do so. External appropriations were an efficient way to do so: by repeating some word(s) previously uttered by others, she could make her turn coherent to previous ones and increase her chances to be accepted as a ratified participant.

*Table 2: number of turns produced by Fatma during six meals, divided in turns solicited by others (response to opportunity) and turns she produced on her own initiative.<sup>2</sup>*

Total	Own initiative	Response to opportunity
270	207 (77 %)	63 (23 %)

The issue I will be addressing is: what are the differences between internal and external appropriations? Such a discussion bears on more general methodological and theoretical questions. Earlier studies on appropriation in child second language discourse were based on internal appropriations only. Can their results be taken as generalizable to all the types of appropriations that take place in a nursery school? This raises the ecological issue of the extent to which analyses of discourse can be valid across different settings: can the findings of previous studies based on dyads involved in focused interactions be generalized to multi-party conversations displaying a range of participant statuses?

#### COHERENCE: TOPICS AND ACTIVITIES

All appropriations share a very general function, that of 'hooking' to some previous talk. There are indeed other means of achieving discourse coherence, such as the use of pronouns, synonyms, generic terms, or various other semantic and pragmatic links not overtly expressed by specific linguistic expressions (Halliday and Hasan 1976). But the use of these cohesive strategies requires a considerable mastery of the language. This is why repeating previously uttered words is one of the safest ways not fully competent speakers can ensure that there is some commonality between what they are saying and what has been previously said.

Most of the literature on coherence in second language discourse has focused on issues like co-reference and topic maintenance - that is, the ways speakers 'talk about' the same thing (see e.g. Hatch 1992). Many of Fatma's appropriations, internal and external, served this purpose. Let us look at internal appropriations first.

#### **(Ex. 1)** (11/17)<sup>3</sup>

Teacher: buo::na questa ciccia. La pappa l'hai mangiata?

*good this meat. Have you eaten pasta?*

**Fatma:** **finita pappa.**  
*finished pasta.*

Teacher: brava.  
*good girl.*

Here Fatma incorporates in her utterance a word used by the teacher ('pasta'), adding the modifier 'finished', so that her turn is contingent on the previous one while at the same time giving new information. In another example of Fatma's speech, she incorporates the names of two children mentioned by her interlocutor and then adds her comment to them.

(Ex. 2) (4/27)

Sara: anche Ilham  
*Ilham too.*

(0.2)

**Fatma:** **Ilham, .hh no Ilham no.**  
*Ilham, .hh no Ilham no.*

(0.3)

Sara: Rashid?

(0.2)

**Fatma:** **<Rashid (sì) che schifo, Rashid.**  
*Rashid (yes) disgusting, Rashid.*

This use of internal repetition is also visible in several instances in which Fatma repeats a word she has elicited with a metalinguistic question such as 'how is this called?'.  
 This use of internal repetition is also visible in several instances in which Fatma repeats a word she has elicited with a metalinguistic question such as 'how is this called?'.  
 This use of internal repetition is also visible in several instances in which Fatma repeats a word she has elicited with a metalinguistic question such as 'how is this called?'.

(Ex. 3) (1/15)

Researcher: questa qui no  
*not this one*

Fatma: **come s chiama,**  
*how's it called,*

(0.4)

Researcher: questa si chiama pesce.  
*this is called fish.*

(.)

**Fatma:** **pesce (questa) qui così [non mangiare pesce.**  
*fish (this) here like this no eat fish.*

Researcher: [no

*no*

In the last two examples Fatma is doing what Keenan (1975) calls a "focus operation" - the repeated word is taken as a "topic candidate" (Keenan 1977), placed at the beginning of the turn with a comment following it.

Several external appropriations can also be described in terms of topic continuity. In the following example Fatma 'hooks' to the on-going topic and tries to push forward her contribution, raising her voice and stressing her 'me too, me too, me too'. What she says is that she has a big bed like her mommy, while other children were talking about being 'big' children and going to bed alone or with their parents (in their 'big beds'). Fatma manages to identify some words in the on-going talk and, by repeating them, to produce a turn that is somehow coherent with what is being talked about.

**(Ex. 4)** (1/22)

Teacher1: ((to Paolo, at other table)) vai a letto da solo? O viene anche la mamma?

*Do you go to bed alone? Or does mommy come too?*

Paolo: ( ) da solo

( ) *alone.*

Teacher1: e:: che bravo, sei già grande,

*ohh, what a good boy, you're already big,*

Derek: ((at Fatma's table)) anch'io sto da solo. U- Una volta, .hh quando (loro)

dormono di là dormo subito con loro nel letto grande

*me too I sleep alone. Once, when (they) sleep there I sleep at once with them in the big bed*

Teacher2: ((at Fatma's table)) hm

Derek: sì

*yes*

Giacomo: anch'io ( ), letto gra[nde

*me too ( ), big bed*

Derek: ( ) [anch'io mi addormento, .hh pian piani[no, e poi

( )

*Me too I fall asleep, slowly, and then ( )*

**Fatma:**

**[anch'io anch'io anch'io ce l'ho il letto gra:nde**

*me too me too me too I have it the big bed*

(1.0) ((Teacher2 looks at Fatma ))

**Fatma: come mamma.**

*like mommy*

We have so far seen how external and internal appropriations can be used to ensure a type of coherence based on topic continuity. There is however a type of discourse coherence that is not adequately characterized in terms of 'talking about' the same thing. Take for example a group of children greeting somebody, or self selecting by

raising their hands and saying 'Me!' at a teacher's offer. If the non-native child says 'bye bye' or 'me!' after other children, her behavior is coherent with theirs although one doesn't want to say she is 'talking about' the same thing. One might rather say she is 'doing' the same thing. This type of coherence is very common in a nursery school and, if appropriation is involved, it is almost always a matter of external appropriation. In fact, the child repeats words that were not directed at her, but joins others in a verbal activity directed towards some third party. In other words, as the addressee of some talk one can 'talk about' the same thing, but repeating what the interlocutor has just done is generally not an adequate move<sup>4</sup>. However, if the talk is directed to a third party, one can quite naturally *do* the same thing - even using the same words. This is precisely what Fatma does whenever, by means of external appropriations, she "does" (Sacks 1984) asking, "does" greeting, "does" self-selecting and so forth, as in the following excerpts.

**(Ex. 5)** (10/14)

Davide: *via, via, via* ((waving hand towards wasp))  
*away, away, away.*

(0.2)

Walter: *daai, va via.*  
*c'm on, go away.*

(0.8)

**Fatma:** **via, via, via** ((looking up and waving her hand))  
*away, away, away.*

Davide: *via, via!*  
*away, away!*

(1.0)

Walter: *dai, vai*  
*c'm on, go*

(0.4)

Walter: *via! [via! via!*  
*away! away! away!*

Davide: [*via. via. [via. ((waving hand))*  
*away. away. away.*

[[Idina waves hand]]

Walter: *ahiaaa, m'ha morsicato.=*  
*O::UCH, it bit me.*

**Fatma:** **via via. via.** ((looking up and waving hand))  
*away away. away.*

**(Ex. 6)** (11/4)

Mario: Gabriele [= Researcher]

(0.8)

Mario: mi dai l'acqua? ((holding cup))  
*would you give me some water?*

{6.1} ((Researcher eats a mouthful of food then pours water for Mario))

Gianni: acqua, dai l'acqua.  
*water, give water.*

[

((Fatma holds her cup))

Adele: acqua. (2.0) Acqua.  
*water. Water.*

[

((Researcher pours water for Fatma))

{1.5} ((Researcher pours water for Adele))

**Fatma:** **da:(h)i, acqua.**  
*give, water.*

(0.8)

Franco: acqua.  
*water.*

**Fatma:** **acqua. (0.6) a(hh)cq[ua. hh.**  
*water. water.*

(Franco): [ce l'ha:i.  
*you've got it*

(0.7)

**Fatma:** **Dai acqua. Dai acqua. Da(h)i acqua >°cusa fai°<**  
*((smiling and holding her cup out)).*

*Give water. Give water. Gi(h)ve water. What are you doing.*

Adele: ((clears throat))

**Fatma:** **Da(h)i acqua. (0.6) Dai a[acqua**  
*Gi(h)ve water. Give water.*

Gianni: [ce n'è!  
*there is some!*

Res.er: oh- però- Gianni, (0.3) io ti dò l'acqua ma attento a non rovesciarla, eh,  
*Oh- but- Gianni, I give you some water but be careful not to spill it, hm?*

**Fatma:** **da' acqua** ((holding her cup out)).  
((Fatma drinks))

In these two examples we see Fatma joining other children in an activity they are doing - chasing a wasp away, asking for water. In the second example she is asking for play - she already has water in her cup, as other children point out. But she is nonetheless "doing" asking, albeit for pretend. These external appropriations are fundamental for the child to participate in many of the collective, choral routines that take place in a nursery school. Thus, external appropriations have this important additional role: besides serving, like internal appropriations, to achieve topic coherence, they also serve to achieve what we might call 'collective interactional' coherence.

## TURNS WITH INTERNAL/EXTERNAL APPROPRIATIONS

A second area of differences between internal and external appropriations concerns their positioning in sequences of talk. Internal appropriations, as can be seen in the examples already shown, are produced in turns that are short, not insisted upon, 'direct'. The examples taken from Wagner-Gough's study also give the idea of how turns with internal appropriations may look like. Compare Wagner-Gough's and our three previous examples of internal appropriations with the external appropriation in which Fatma repeats 'give water'. Fatma insistently repeats this sentence six times. Other children take up her utterances, and respond to her that she already has water. However, the interlocutor to whom her asking was directed (the adult pouring water) does not provide any feedback, thus making reiteration of her move necessary, until she eventually gives up.

A similar pattern can be seen in another example of external appropriation. Here Fatma overhears an adult encouraging a child to eat his food. She incorporates two key words - 'eat' and 'good' - in a series of turns centering around the notion of 'being a good eater'.

(Ex. 7) (1/22)

[Teacher is trying to persuade Gianni to eat his food]

Teacher: *che cosa non ti piace che è buonissima, senti com'è buona, what? You don't like it? It's so good, just try how good it is*

Chiara: *è di verdura. it's got vegetables.*

Teacher: *hmm,*  
(1.2)

Teacher: *vero che è [buon- it's good, isn't it?*

**Fatma:** *[ke buona. how good.*

Teacher: *((to Fatma)) vero che è buona? it's good, isn't it?*

**Fatma:** *[sì yes*

Derek: *[sì è buona. yes it's good.*

Chiara: *Gianni lo sai che è buona? (0.6) Vero? (0.8) Eh? Gianni, you know it's good? Right? Hm?*

Teacher: *mah, vedrai che per me lui non l'aveva assaggiata. Adesso che l'ha assaggiata la mangia. Vero Gianni, è buona? c'm on I think he hadn't tasted it. Now that he's tasted it he's going to eat it. Right Gianni, is it good?*

**Fatma:** **Gianni ke mangia, ke buona.**

*Gianni [ke]<sup>5</sup> eats, [ke] good.*

Chiara: ( ) tutta così. Così, guarda.

( ) *all like this. Like this, look.*

**Fatma:** **guarda io ke mangiare tutta**

*look I [ke] eat all.*

{1.0} ((Teacher looks at Fatma))

{3.8} ((Fatma eats))

**Fatma:** **mangiare io tutta**

*eat I all*

(1.6)

**Fatma:** **guarda io ke mangia la tutta**

*look I [ke] eat it all.*

Fatma was not the addressee of the adult's talk nor of the child's - that talk was addressed to Gianni. When Fatma produces her first turn she is not a ratified participant in the conversation. Her utterance receives no uptake. She can therefore reiterate it, trying also some linguistic experimentation, alternating infinite and finite forms, adding and deleting the presentative 'look' and the multifunctional particle [ke]. As in the previous example, here too Fatma's turns are not taken up.

Table 3 shows the differences between internal and external appropriations in the number of utterances in which the appropriated word is repeated. When the word was appropriated externally, Fatma usually had to repeat the utterance containing it a higher number of times than when the word was taken from speech addressed to her.

Table 3: number of appropriations in which the appropriated word(s) was/were repeated by Fatma in more than one utterance. \*  $\chi^2 (1, N = 228) = 9.42, p < .005$

	2 utterances	3 utterances	4 utterances	>4 utterances	Total
Internal (n=105)	9	5	0	8	22*
External (n=123)	17	8	0	24	49*

In addition, turns containing external appropriations were also frequently prefaced by "attention getting devices" (Ochs Keenan, Schieffelin and Platt 1978) such as 'teacher', proper nouns, nonverbal sounds (such as *oh*, *hmm*) and nonvocal behavior (for example touching the addressee), as in the following example.

**(Ex. 7)** (17/11)

Idina: ho fre:ddo  
*I'm cold*

(0.3)

Teacher: ((to Idina)) hai freddo? In effetti è un po' freddo.  
*you're cold? It is a bit cold, actually.*

Teacher: ((to Fatma)) mangia Fatma. Tieni. ((giving her a cup of custard))  
*eat Fatma. Take this.*

(0.9)

Teacher: ((to Idina)) è buo::na. ((encouraging her to eat))  
*it's good.*

[

((Fatma touches Teacher))

**Fatma:** **maestra** ((touching Teacher, who is speaking to Idina))  
*teacher*

(1.4)

**Fatma:** **maestra** ((still touching Teacher)).  
*teacher*

{2.4} ((Teacher turns to Fatma))

**Fatma:** **(no io freddo). questa, questa no freddo.** ((pointing to her pullover))  
*(no I cold). this, this no cold.*

(0.3)

Teacher: non hai freddo?  
*you're not cold?*

**Fatma:** **questo** ((pointing to pullover)), **oh**  
*this, oh-*

Here Fatma has overheard the teacher and another child talking about the weather being 'cold'. She recognizes the word and wants to have her say about it. But her message is centered around a deictic, 'this', that requires the visual attention of the hearer in order to be interpreted. That is why Fatma has to summon the teacher both verbally and non verbally before producing her utterance.

Table 4 shows the number of turns with appropriations that also contain verbal attention getting devices<sup>6</sup>, like *teacher*, proper nouns, or verbs like *look*. These devices are far more common in turns with external appropriations than in turns with internal appropriations.

Table 4: number of turns with appropriations containing verbal attention getting devices. \*

$$\chi^2 (1, N = 228) = 6.92, p < .01$$

<i>Period</i>	<i>Internal</i>	<i>External</i>
I	1	4
II	1	5
III	0	4
Total	2*	13*

#### NUMBER OF APPROPRIATED ELEMENTS

The third and last area where differences between internal and external appropriations were observed is the length of repeated chunks of language. In most cases Fatma incorporated only one word from other speakers' turns. There were however instances where she repeated longer segments - two, three, sometimes even four words. This happened more frequently in external appropriations than in appropriations of speech directed at her, as can be seen in table 5.

Table 5: number of appropriations of more than one lexical item. \*  $\chi^2 (1, N = 228) = 11.16$ ,  $p < .001$

Period	Internal appropriations	External appropriations
I	1	6
II	4	13
III	3	11
Total	8*	30*

In the first two periods, these longer appropriations didn't involve more than two lexical items. In the third period, however, there were three external appropriations

where three content words were repeated and one in which four content words were repeated.

Let us consider some of the examples we have already discussed. In all the internal appropriations seen thus far, only one word gets repeated by Fatma. However, when Fatma repeats 'give water' in an external appropriation she is repeating two lexical items. We are now going to discuss the episode where Fatma repeated the longest stretch of language. It is from one of the last lunches recorded, seven months after Fatma's first exposure to Italian. A teacher and some children are talking about a bus trip they went on in the morning and they are commenting on what the bus driver said about their behavior.

(Ex. 8) (27/4)

- Mario: 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*
- Teacher: vi mangio?!  
*I eat you?!*
- Sara: e poi ci ha sgridato. (0.5) Ha sgridato l'Idina  
*and then he told us off. He told Idina off.*
- Teacher: non siete micca molto bravi, eh, a farvi sgridare anche dall'autista. Poi hai detto che siete stati 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?*
- Mario: sì, l'ha detto lei.  
*yes, she said it.*
- Teacher: c'hai un bel coraggio, eh? ((looking at Idina))  
*you're cheeky, ah?*
- (Idina): sì  
*yes*
- Idina: però, però (l'autista) ci ha detto ( ) che ci mangia.  
*but, but (the driver) told us ( ) he's going to eat us*
- Teacher: fosse ve:ro, [ne mangia]sse due o tre.] [hmm?  
*if it only were true, that he eats two or three of them. hm?*
- Fatma: [ha detto] (0.7) ] [ha detto l'autobus .hhh ha detto  
 @ non fate non [fate, hhh =  
*said (0.7) said the bus .hhh said @ you're not you're not, .hhh=*
- Teacher: ((to Mario)) [era uno grasso?  
*was he fat?*
- Fatma: = non fate i bravi [no .hh [no, non mangiate. .h h h ]=  
*= you're not good no .hh no, you don't eat .hhh =*
- Mario: ((to Teacher)) [sì

- Teacher: *yes*  
[era tanto grosso ( )]=  
he was *he so big* ( )=
- Fatma:** =**ha detto ha detto l'autobus .hhh non fate non fate i bravi no .hhh non mangiatehh.**  
= *said said the bus .hhh you're not you're not good you no .hhh you don't eat*
- Teacher: hm. ((to Fatma, nodding))
- Idina: no! sì, ha detto che mangi\_ate, 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 be good.*
- (0.8)
- Idina: ha detto no no non fai i bravi  
*he said no no you're not good*  
((Fatma turns to eating again))

Here we see Fatma repeating 'said', 'bus' (meaning BUS DRIVER), 'be good', and 'eat'. She displays an understanding of a great deal of what the others were talking about, although she misses a crucial difference expressed by aspects of Italian grammar and syntax she hasn't mastered yet - the other children were in fact saying that according to the driver they would have been the object of the eating, not its subject, as Fatma more commonsensically proposes. Anyway, we see here Fatma appropriating a considerable amount of lexical material in her utterance in order to become a participant in a conversation in which she was not yet directly involved. It should be recalled that there are no internal appropriations repeating four or three lexical items, and those repeating two lexical items are far less common than external appropriations.

## CONCLUSIONS

We have seen four points on which internal and external appropriations differ. To summarize them, internal appropriations achieve coherence at the level of 'talking about the same thing'; they occur in turns that are generally not insistent nor prefaced by attention getting devices; finally, they are rarely repetitions of more than one lexical item, and never of more than two. External appropriations can achieve coherence both at the level of 'talking about the same thing' and at the level of 'doing the same thing'; they occur in turns that are often reiterated and prefaced by attention

getting devices; they consist of repetitions of more than one lexical item and sometimes even more than two.

It is not hard to see how these differences may all stem from Fatma's different participant statuses in the production of internal and external appropriations. In producing an internal appropriation Fatma is already a "ratified participant" (Goffman 1979) in the conversation. Someone has spoken to her, thus making a contribution on her part not unexpected. In many cases, such a contribution might even be requested, as when the talk directed at her was a "first pair part" of an adjacency pair (Schegloff & Sacks 1973). If Fatma repeats parts of an utterance of which she is the intended recipient, her turn is very likely to be attended to by the speaker who addressed her. Furthermore, what is being done and what is being talked about have already been set by the first speaker. The talk addressed to Fatma has produced a certain type of "conditional relevance" (Schegloff 1972) on what is to follow. This explains some of the features of Fatma's internal appropriations. They don't need to be preceded by attention getting devices such as 'teacher', 'look' or a proper noun because the interlocutor's attention is already focused on Fatma. This also explains why internal appropriations tend not to be insistently repeated - the first try is generally sufficient as the addressee is already oriented to the girl. Finally, the fact that Fatma is already *in* the conversation guarantees the relevance of her turn to the ongoing talk - Fatma doesn't need to repeat many words of the previous turn to ensure that what she says will be perceived as relevant to what is going on.

External appropriations, on the other hand, occur in turns produced by a speaker who was not the addressee of the talk they are related to. Therefore, some extra work is required in order for such turns to be taken up by other participants to the on-going conversation. This explains why turns with external appropriations are repeated several times and are prefaced by attention getting devices more often than those with internal appropriations. Furthermore, in an external appropriation, the relevance of Fatma's talk to the on-going interaction is less clear than when previous talk has requested a contribution on her part. This might explain why in external appropriations Fatma tends to repeat longer chunks of discourse. Finally, by means of external appropriations Fatma can join other participants in their verbal interactions directed to a third party. That is, Fatma can repeat talk not directed at her in order to do what others are doing. This way she can join in and practice some affiliative behaviors common in a multi-party interactional environments like a nursery, following two of Wong-Fillmore's (1976) "social strategies", "join a group and act as if you understand the language, even if you don't" and "give the impression, with a few well-chosen words, that you can speak the language".

The bearing of these findings for research on non-native speaker discourse is twofold. As far as appropriation is concerned, I have shown that it is possible to identify two broad sub-classes according to an interactional factor such as participation status. These sub-classes, internal and external appropriations, exhibit some significant differences at the levels of both form and function which need to be taken into account in studies of appropriation in child second language discourse and acquisition. For example, it may be worth investigating the role of external appropriations in the child's developing ability to construct coherent dialogue. With

external appropriations, as we have seen, the child often can and has to try several versions of her turn before it gets taken up. Or she has to attend to and repeat longer chunks of language to make her turn cohere with the on-going conversation. Recent research and theorizing have analyzed the roles of input, output and interaction in second language acquisition (see e.g. Ellis 1999, Gass 1997). Appropriations are for learners a way of focussing their attention on both input and output while being engaged in interactional sequences, and may thus have a significant role in interlanguage development (DiCamilla & Anton 1997; Tomlin 1994). The structural, cognitive and interactional differences between two forms of 'borrowing words' like internal and external appropriations may impact differently on second language acquisition processes.

On a wider methodological plane, these findings demonstrate the importance of investigating discourse in its natural environment. Previous studies on repetition based on data collected in semi-artificial conditions missed a great part of what actually happens in ordinary settings like a nursery - what they missed was the whole class of external appropriations. Pointing out the differences between internal and external appropriations manifests the problematicity of generalizing findings across settings that differ in their interactional features (Bronfenbrenner 1979). These results thus argue for the importance of ecologically valid studies in naturalistic settings in order to get a more accurate picture of non-native speakers' communication and language acquisition.

## NOTES

## REFERENCES

- Atkinson, J. M. and J. Heritage (Eds.) (1984). *Structures of social action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bennett-Kastor, T.L. (1994). Repetition in language development: from interaction to cohesion. In B. Johnstone (Ed), *Repetition in discourse: interdisciplinary perspectives* (vol. 1, pp. 155-171). Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Calleri, D. (1996). Chinese children learning Italian: Allo-repetition forms and functions in semi-guided dialogues. In C. Bazzanella (Ed.) *Repetition in dialogue*. Tübingen: Niemeyer.
- Corsaro, W. A. (1985). *Friendship and peer culture in the early years*. Norwood: Ablex.
- Damhuis, R. (1993). Immigrant children in infant-class interactions. *Studies in second language acquisition*, 15, 305-331.

- de Heredia, C. & C. Noyau (1986). Comunicazione esolingue estrema: strategie di comunicazione tra parlanti nativi e immigrati principianti nella lingua. In Giacalone Ramat, A. (Ed.) *L'apprendimento spontaneo di una seconda lingua* (pp. 221-243). Bologna: Il Mulino.
- DiCamilla, F. & M. Anton (1997). Repetition in the collaborative discourse of L2 learners: a Vygotskian perspective. *The Canadian modern language review*, 53, 609-633.
- Duff, Patricia (1996). Different languages, different practices: socialization of discourse competence in dual-language school classrooms in Hungary. In K. M. Bailey & D. Nunan (Eds.), *Voices from the language classroom* (pp. 407-433). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ellis, R. (1999) *Learning a second language through interaction*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Fine, G. A. & K. L. Sandstrom (1988). *Knowing children. Participant observation with minors*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Garvey, C. (1974). Some properties of social play. *Merrill Palmer Quarterly*, 20, 163-80.
- Gass, S. (1997) *Input, interaction and the second language learner*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Goffman, E. (1979). Footing. *Semiotica*, 25, 1-29.
- Halliday, M. A. K. & R. Hasan (1976). *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman.
- Hatch, E. M. (1978a) (Ed.). *Second language acquisition: A book of readings*. Rowley, Mass: Newbury House.
- Hatch, E. M. (1978b) Discourse analysis and second language acquisition. In Hatch (1978a) (pp. 402-35).
- Hatch, E. M. (1992). *Discourse and language education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Huang, J. & E. Hatch (1978). A Chinese Child's acquisition of English. In Hatch (1978a) (pp. \*\*\*).
- Hymes, D. (1972). Models of interaction of language and social life. In J. Gumperz & D. Hymes (Eds.), *Directions in Sociolinguistics* (pp. \*\*\*) New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Itoh, H. & E. Hatch (1978). Second language acquisition: A case study. In Hatch (1978a) (pp. 76-88).
- Keenan, E. Ochs (1975). Evolving discourse - the next step. *Papers and reports on child language development*, 10, 80-88.
- Keenan, E. Ochs (1977). Making it last: Repetition in children's discourse. In S. Ervin-Tripp & C. Mitchell-Kernan (Eds.), *Child discourse* (pp. 125-38). New York: Academic Press.
- Keenan, E. Ochs, B. B. Schieffelin & M. Platt (1978). Questions of immediate concern. In E. N. Goody (Ed.), *Questions and politeness* (pp. 44-55). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Keller-Cohen, D. (1979). Repetition in the non-native acquisition of discourse: its relation to text unification and conversational structure. In R. Freedle (Ed.), *New directions in discourse processing* (pp. 245-71). Norwood: Ablex.
- Long, M. (1996). The role of the linguistic environment in second language acquisition. In W. Ritchie & T. Bhatia (Eds.), *Handbook of second language acquisition* (pp. 413-68). San Diego: Academic Press.
- Mittner, M. (1984). Strategies discursives, variabilité et situations de communication. *Studies in second language acquisition by adult immigrants*. Tilburg Studies in Language and Literature, 6. Tilburg: Tilburg University.
- Morita, N. (2000). Discourse socialization through oral classroom activities in a TESL graduate program. *TESOL Quarterly*, 34, 279-310.
- Pallotti, G. (in press) External appropriations as a participation strategy in intercultural multi-party interactions. In A. Di Luzio, S. Guenther, F. Orletti (Eds.), *Culture in communication*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Pallotti, G. (1996). Towards an ecology of second language acquisition: SLA as a socialization process. In E. Kellerman, B. Weltens, T. Bongaerts (Eds.), *Proceedings of EUROSLA 6, Toegepaste Taalwetenschap in Artikelen*, # 55, pp. 121-134.
- Pallotti, G. (1999) Socializzazione e apprendimento della seconda lingua. *Etnosistemi*, 6, 76-91.
- Peck, S. (1978). Child-child discourse in second language acquisition. In Hatch (1978a) (pp. 383-400).
- Perdue, C. (1993). Comment rendre compte de la 'logique' de l'acquisition d'une langue étrangère par l'adulte? *Etudes de linguistique appliquée*, 92, 8-22.
- Philips, S. U. (1983). *The invisible culture: Communication in classroom and community on the Warm Spring indian reservation*. New York: Longman.
- Poole, D. (1992). Language socialization in the second language classroom. *Language Learning*, 42, 593-616.
- Psathas, G. & T. Anderson (1990). The 'practices' of transcription in conversational analysis. *Semiotica*, 78, 75-99.
- Roberts, C. (2001) [1998]. Language through acquisition or language socialisation in and through discourse? Towards a redefinition of the domain of SLA. In C. N. Candlin & N. Mercer (eds.), *English language*

- teaching in its social context* (pp. 108-121). London & New York: Routledge. Originally published in *Working papers in applied linguistics*, Vol 4, Thames Valley University.
- Sacks, H. (1984). On doing 'being ordinary'. In Atkinson & Heritage (1984) (pp. \*\*\*).
- Schegloff, E. A. (1972). Sequencing in conversational openings. In J. Gumperz & D. Hymes (Eds.), *Directions in Sociolinguistics* (pp. \*\*\*) New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Schegloff, E. A. & H. Sacks (1973). Opening up closings. *Semiotica*, 8, 289-327.
- Speidel, G. & K. E. Nelson (Eds.) (1989). *The many faces of imitation in language learning*. New York: Springer Verlag.
- Tannen, D. (1989). *Talking voices. Repetition, dialogue and imagery in conversational discourse*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tomlin, R. (1994). Repetition in second language acquisition. In B. Johnstone (ed), *Repetition in discourse: interdisciplinary perspectives* (vol. 1, pp. 172-194). Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Wagner-Gough, J. (1978). Comparative studies in second language learning. In Hatch (1978a) (pp. \*\*\*).
- Wagner-Gough, J. & E. Hatch (1975). The importance of input data in second language acquisition studies. *Language Learning*, 25, 297-308.
- Willett, J. (1995). Becoming first graders in an L2: an ethnographic study of L2 socialization. *TESOL Quarterly*, 29, 473-503.
- Wong-Fillmore, L. (1976). *The second time around: Cognitive and social strategies in second language acquisition*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University.

---

<sup>1</sup> This difference might be explained in two ways, both invoking a notion of ecology of language acquisition and use. Adult learners studied in the European Science Foundation (ESF) project, on which Perdue's (1993) paper is based, might have acquired their L2 in communicative environments where learning nouns was more important than in a nursery school. However, the difference may also be attributable to the context and methods of data collection. A significant part of the data analyzed in the ESF project come from interviews and narrative elicitation tasks. In these cases, the use of nouns might be more widespread, and to a great extent necessary, than in the relatively free and dynamic interactions observed in the nursery.

<sup>2</sup> The six meals on which the count is based were the two first, last and middle ones of the study. A 'turn' was operationally defined as a stretch of speech bounded by silence (> 2.0 sec.) or by another speaker's turn. The terms "own initiative" and "response to opportunity" are taken from Damhuis (1993). It is striking to note how these findings in an Italian nursery conform to Damhuis' in Dutch "infant classes". Damhuis did not report on lunches, but her figures of 87 % and 12 % for own initiative and response to opportunity, respectively, in a "children group", and of 66 % and 33 % in a "small group with teacher" fit nicely with mine, that fall exactly in between, since at lunch time there were moments in which children were left alone and moments in which the teacher was present and contributed to the conversation. This coincidence is very important in that it demonstrates that studies of the learning environment *can* be generalizable.

<sup>3</sup> Transcription conventions are those used in conversation analysis (Atkinson and Heritage 1984; Psathas and Anderson 1990). Fatma's turns are in boldface and her name I underlined in turns in which she appropriates words. @ indicates a pharyngeal fricative. All names are pseudonyms. Dates after example number indicate the month and the day of the recording (e.g. 11/4 = November 4th).

<sup>4</sup> One exception particularly common in child language might be verbal or sound play. Fatma sometimes engages in play sequences in which she repeats what her interlocutor has just said, be it meaningful words or nonsense sounds. In these cases it is in effect hard to say that children are 'talking about' the same thing. However, if we assume "non literalness" to be a defining feature of play (Garvey 1974), it is equally hard to say that in these occasions children are literally 'talking'.

<sup>5</sup> Fatma's use of [ke] in the first stages of her interlanguage very rarely matches native speakers' use of Italian complementizer *che* - thus the use of a neutral phonetic transcription of the particle [ke]. An analysis of Fatma's interlanguage is outside the scope of this chapter, and the issue of the girl's early grammar can't be further discussed here.

<sup>6</sup> Fatma use non verbal attention getting devices as well, like gaze and touching. However, these devices and their function are sometimes very clear, sometimes quite elusive, thus making quantification highly problematic.