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Submerged in the mainstream? A case study of an immigrant learner in a New Zealand primary Classroom

Abstract

Immigrant children from diverse language backgrounds face not only linguistic challenges when enrolled in mainstream English-medium classrooms, but also difficulties adjusting to an unfamiliar learning community. The culture of primary school classrooms in New Zealand typically reflects conventions across three dimensions: interactional; instructional task performance, and cognitive-academic development. All three dimensions are underpinned by the culturally specific discourse conventions involved in language socialisation. New learners may be helped by classmates or their teacher to understand and successfully use these conventions, but left on their own they may sink rather than swim.

This is a case study of one Taiwanese eleven-year old boy, 'John', who entered a New Zealand primary classroom midway through the school year. John's basic conversational ability was sound, but he did not possess the interactive classroom skills needed to operate in the new culture of learning. Selected from a wider study of the classroom, transcript data from audio-recorded excerpts of John's interactions over several months with his teacher and classmates are interpreted from perspectives derived from sociocultural and language socialisation theories. The chapter concludes with a brief consideration of the extent to which John constructed, or was constrained from constructing, meaningful learning experiences, and suggestions for further research and reflection.

Introduction

Immigrant children whose first language is not English face a range of challenges when they are enrolled in mainstream English-medium classes soon after their arrival in a new country. Many of them have minimal or even no English language competence, and even those who are above this level have to rapidly acquire language skills in order to cope with the demands of the classroom. Typically in New Zealand, these students receive very little focussed English language tuition, for which they are withdrawn from their regular classes for a few hours a week (Barnard & Lata Rauf, 1999; Franken & McComish, 2002, Haworth, 2003). In New Zealand, as elsewhere (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002), there is much controversy about how satisfactory such immersion (or submersion) is, especially where a school or classroom has only a few learners from diverse linguistic and sociocultural backgrounds (Haworth, 2005). Thus initially, and indeed often for extensive periods, the day-to-day discourse of the English medium classroom may be incomprehensible to many learners for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL). However, in addition to linguistic difficulties, these learners also face the challenge of coping with a new culture of learning, the pragmatic conventions of which are very different from those in their home country.

The inextricability of language and culture, especially in education systems has been termed 'languaculture' (Agar, 1994), and this chapter focuses on the languacultural problems encountered by an eleven-year-old Taiwanese boy, 'John', in the course of several months in a fairly typical primary classroom. (All names are pseudonyms.) He arrived in New Zealand with his mother and his younger brother who attended another school while their father, a medical practitioner, remained in Taiwan. Although John's previous schooling had been entirely in Taiwan, he was well-travelled, having visited Hawaii, Malaysia and the USA on holiday visits, which gave him opportunities to develop a fairly fluent communicative competence in English; his favourite reading during his first week - and thereafter - was an atlas. Very little was known by the host school of his linguistic and educational background when he was enrolled on the first day of the third term, 20 July (the school year in New Zealand begins in late January). Following advice by the school administration, the mainstream teacher, 'Ms Wilkins', initially assumed that John's use of English was minimal, and it was some time before she rectified her assumption.

Most of the thirty or so boys and girls in Ms Wilkins' class were of European descent, although the following other ethnicities were also represented: two students each originally from mainland China, Fiji, and Somalia, and one each from Kiribati, Tuvalu, Papua New Guinea, and Syria; all of these had previously attended local feeder schools. Three other new immigrant students were enrolled in the class after the start of the year: in March, a Korean boy, who could speak no English at all (XXX, 2003); in June a Taiwanese girl whose command of English was much more limited than John's; and another Taiwanese girl in October, whose English was minimal. The two Taiwanese girls sat together and the first one considerably assisted the other to cope with the classroom situation partnerships (XXX, 2002).

However, they were never seen to communicate with the two boys during the entire time they spent in the class, and neither was there any interaction between the latter. On his arrival, John was placed at the back of the room, and very largely left to fend for himself; no student was designated, or asked, to act as a buddy or peer mentor.

The extracts presented and discussed here are taken from a year-long study in this classroom, in which the researcher was a participant observer. Interactions between the students and their teacher were recorded by lapel microphones; when asked, and when they agreed, the students put a small portable cassette-recorder in their pockets or pencil cases, and at times there were four recorders in action in different parts of the classroom. The aim of the study was to explore the extent to which the new immigrant students were assisted to participate in a new culture of learning.

Perspectives on Classroom Interaction
Cummins (2000) has argued that language minority students often seem conversationally proficient in English but yet perform badly in curriculum areas. Much earlier (1981), he delineated language competence into two separate categories – Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). BICS is the ability to function in everyday conversations, where a rich interpersonal and 'here and now' context facilitates both comprehension and communication. CALP, on the other hand, is the ability to reflect upon and manipulate language in context-reduced circumstances for the purposes of conceptual development, typically those of formal school learning. All school learners need to be encouraged and helped to move from context-embedded BICS – the language of the home, street and playground – to an awareness of, and competence in, the more abstract academic discourse required by CALP. While the distinction between BICS and CALP is both intuitively appealing and potentially useful, it is more complex than a simple dichotomous two-stage construct (Baker, 2006: 175), and there are likely to be intermediary stages in children's language development in their classroom environment as will be explained below.

Drawing upon classroom research in the USA, UK and New Zealand, Richards & Hurley (1990) discuss the complexity of learning in mainstream classrooms in terms of three dimensions. The first of these is the interactional dimension, by which is meant conventions about who communicates with whom, when and how. This dimension embraces such issues as initiating, sustaining and terminating interactions, bidding for turns, asking questions, and so on. It is important to note that such conventions apply also to various forms of nonverbal communication, such as eye contact, gesture and movement around the classroom. This dimension is a specific form of Cummins' BICs: it might, indeed, be termed CICS – Classroom Interaction Communication Skills (XXX, 2005). Since much interaction in New Zealand classrooms occurs among schoolmates - as well as with their teachers - the usual communication norms of the playground, home and street (topics, functions, roles, register, etc.) need to be somewhat modified to meet the contextual requirements of school learning. The importance of the interactional dimension is that it is the social basis upon which all classroom learning occurs; unless the conventions are adhered to, at least in large part, the other two dimensions of classroom learning will not be effective. Classroom teachers explicitly or implicitly establish and reinforce CICS norms in their classrooms based upon the prevailing pedagogical values, beliefs and practices. In Ms Wilkins' class, the process of co-constructing the learning environment continued throughout the year; however, the first few weeks were crucial in establishing the ground rules for effective classroom learning, to which Ms Wilkins paid explicit attention (XXXX, in press). It is important to note that John, and the other new immigrant learners, were not in the class during this initial explicit instruction, and the teacher did not specifically induct them into the norms; therefore had to acquire them *ad hoc*.

Richards and Hurley (1990) refer to the second dimension of classroom learning as 'instructional task performance'; this can be seen as the pivot between CICS and CALP. Citing Doyle (1979; 1983), Richards and Hurley (1990) point out that much of the primary school curriculum can be considered as a collection of various tasks through which learning is operationalised. Such tasks include copying, note-taking, symbolic manipulation (such as arithmetic calculation, adding punctuation to texts), information-extraction, comprehension of explicitly stated details, inferring implicit information, making summaries, comments, evaluation, etc. These tasks have widely different operational procedures, for example whether they are to be performed individually, in pairs, or in groups; they are mediated by various available print, visual and electronic resources; and they have specified outcomes, which may be represented orally, visually or in writing. Usually, the teacher explains to the class the particular features of set tasks - especially those that are new - but in doing so makes assumptions about the learners' previous classroom experiences. Thus, s/he might allude to, rather than directly

state, features of a task with which s/he considers the learners are already familiar - either from lessons they have shared together, or in the learners' earlier experience in the school system.

By following the interactional conventions and carrying out the instructional tasks, primary school students are expected to make cognitive gains in linguistically context-reduced areas – they learn technical terminology, comprehend new concepts, acquire new modes of enquiry, absorb the underlying discourse structures and modes of enquiry of the school subjects, and develop new learning strategies. Throughout this process, termed the 'socialisation of cognition through discourse' (Edwards & Mercer 1987: 157), language is utilised and central - and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency is thereby achieved to one degree or another. The learners are also encouraged to develop metacognitive skills – they learn how to become good learners: once again, language is central to this thinking process. Thus, they are socialised into what it means to be good citizens of the society in which they will one day play an adult part – the implicit languacultural curriculum of schools everywhere. The process of socialisation occurs in and through language (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986; Ochs & Schiefflin, 2008); socialisation *through* language takes place because dialogue is the medium of learning, and the socialisation that occurs is usually implicit; it occurs *in* language when the teacher explicitly seeks to develop the pupils' competence in the appropriate use of language; in this sense, the language is the content as well as the medium of learning.

Learning as social co-construction
A conventional view of learning, derived largely from behaviourist models, is that learning is a relatively permanent change in behaviour. In such a view, learning is the *product* of an input-output transmission model of information. A sociocultural perspective challenges this assumption by viewing learning as a dynamic *process* – an interdependent relationship between thinking and performance (Lantolf,1999). Learning results from the reciprocal affordances *from* the environment and consequent actions *on* the environment. From this perspective, learning is not the passive reception of information, but an active and reciprocal process of meaning-making (Jonassen & Rohrer-Murphy, (1999). Moreover, sociocultural theorists consider the process of meaning-making to be an essentially social activity: as Pea (1992: 47) points out, "the mind rarely works alone". According to Mercer (1995: 67), "the creation of shared knowledge and understanding is rarely, if ever, a matter of simply pooling information... it has to be generated by *working* with information (emphasis in original).

The process of acculturation begins in primary socialisation – the interpsychological dialogue between infant and parents (Vygotsky, 1981: 51) - and is continued and reinforced in the secondary socialisation carried out through the discourse of learning in formal communities of learning and practice (Wenger, 1998). Within any such community, transitions between one sub-culture and another (for example, from school to school, or from one workplace to the next) are facilitated by a form of apprenticeship in which the novice is helped to move from peripheral participation into full membership of a community of practice. From this perspective, understanding is jointly co-constructed in discourse between the interlocutors, such as learners with their teachers and among themselves. This discourse is mediated by the cultural tools that are used to transform the environment (Jonassen, 2003); these tools may be physical artefacts such as pens, books and computers, or symbolic instruments such as verbal and nonverbal language. Such co-construction among established members of a learning community is facilitated because they share the same *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1991): a culturally constituted body of values, attitudes and conceptual schemata. Bourdieu emphasises (1990:12-13) that the set of *dispositions* which comprises habitus is both generative and durable. By generative is meant that a set of unconscious and inventive strategies come into play when conditions are encountered that are identical or analogous to those which created the habitus in the first place (Scahill, 1993), thus facilitating intuitive social behaviour. By durable, Bourdieu means that "once acquired, (it) underlies and conditions all subsequent learning and social experience" (Bourdieu, 1991: 79), and this serves to economise psychic energy in a familiar milieu (Bourdieu, 1990: 90) by the individual's intuitive application of coping strategies. The important point about Wenger's construct is that the process of becoming an insider involves active learning to reshape the set of dispositions to meet the new circumstances; its limitation is that it implies that the burden of learning tends to fall on the apprentice. As will later be discussed, it is also incumbent upon the receiving community of practice to make reciprocal, perhaps even greater, efforts to learn by investigating their own community of practice.

The extent of that conscious effort to learn is considerably reduced for both novice and the receiving community when there is a shared habitus, because the unconsciously acquired set of dispositions need not be fully articulated in the process of acculturation. However, Scahill (1993) has pointed to the

negative implications when assumptions are unquestioningly made that the established members of a learning community do in fact share the same set of values, attitudes and mental schemata as the novice; for example, many teachers may neglect, or choose to ignore, important gender, ethnic or social dispositions that students of all sorts bring to schools from their own particular subcultural milieux. To the extent that this is true of any school classroom, it applies *a fortiori* when new immigrant learners from very diverse linguistic and social backgrounds are enrolled. Faced with an unfamiliar learning culture, one in which a learner's habitual conventions are irrelevant, the usual strategies may be unconsciously applied, not least because the newcomer makes false analogies and may have no alternative repertoire to fall back on. Alternatively, the novice learner attempts to use pragmatic strategies acquired in one context (for example, the playground) to the classroom without appreciating that somewhat different conventions apply. When these strategies subsequently prove to be ineffective, the consequences may well be the sense of anomie, depression and failure associated with culture shock.

The effect of any such learning culture shock on the socialisation of new learners depends on the interrelationship between three factors: the sociocultural gap between the two school systems, the personality of the individual learners, and the receptivity of the host institution, and its established members, to facilitate the newcomer's emergence as a legitimate member of the learning community.

Learners who come from an educational background similar to New Zealand, such as those from the United Kingdom, will tend to find the transition easier than those from neo-Confucian countries like Taiwan, where perceptions of the purpose and nature of learning, and the roles of learners and teachers, are very different. Traditionally, a Confucian attitude towards education is based on political utilitarianism (Hui, 2005), which has been explained by Zhu (1992: 4) as "its usefulness to those in power". Formal examinations have always played a key role in Chinese education (Chu, 1997) and are today still seen as the main gateways for academic progress and social esteem as much in Taiwan (Su, 2006) elsewhere in Asia. The pressure of examinations is particularly acute for entrance to higher education, but the effects percolate through the entire system, and teaching methods even in primary schools are closely geared to the competitive needs of examinations (Lin & Chen, 1995). A recent survey of 387 Taiwanese teachers of English revealed that the importance of pencil-and-paper tests, and the backwash effect on pedagogy, led to the "tendency to overemphasise learning outcomes at the expense of the learning process" (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007: 170). These teachers believed in the importance of motivating their students to make effortful engagement in the lessons. However, they did not consider it necessary to adopt interesting learning tasks to stimulate their students, and were reticent in allowing their learners to organise their learning process. (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007: 168). In these circumstances, the learners are accustomed to teacher-centred instruction (Gao, 1988) in which the learner's role is to be diligent and put great effort into achieving high grades (Hu, 2002). The learner must also demonstrate good memorisation skills whenever called upon (Hui, 2005). Typically, they show little initiative and appear to be passive and non-critical (Biggs, 1992; Butler, 2004; 2006; Cortazzi & Jin, 1996). Many of these general attributes of Confucian attitudes towards learning were illustrated in a recent analysis of classroom interaction in an English lesson in a Taiwanese primary school (Ching-yi & Barnard, in press).

As was noted earlier, little was known by the school or the researcher of John's own educational background, but it may be reasonably inferred that his schooling was typical of other Taiwanese youngsters, mitigated perhaps by a broader experience of other cultures gained by his holiday visits abroad – although he never attended school elsewhere than in Taiwan – and his own personality. Aspects of his personality, and the ability of his teacher and some of his classmates to legitimate him as a functioning participant in their learning community, will now be illustrated through a series of transcripts of his classroom interactions at different times of the school year. The transcripts will be interpreted from a broadly sociocultural point of view to provide *plausible* explanations of what occurred.

The partiality of these interpretations is readily acknowledged, because many classroom interactions were unrecorded, and those which were collected were not always fully audible or intelligible to the researcher. The interpretations are also partial in another sense; the explanations were made without seeking those of the teacher or students involved. The reason for this is that the entire project was intended to be an 'intrinsic' (Stake, 1994: 237) case study, one seeking to illuminate the specific context rather than to change it in any way by intervention. It was felt that soliciting the interpretations of the participants immediately after any event might influence their future behaviour; if recall were to

be stimulated at some later time, it would be difficult for the participants to remember the events and their decision-making processes. When the project was finished, many of the findings were discussed with the teacher concerned, who accepted that these interpretations were reasonable, but also had her own views which did not necessarily coincide with those of the researcher. Therefore, alternative interpretations are more than merely possible, and readers are strongly encouraged to critically reflect upon those that are made here in the light of their own experiences and theoretical perspectives. The paper will conclude with some implications for pedagogy and research arising from this case study.

John's classroom interactions

Extract A: Peer interaction (interrupted) - August

One day, the teacher initiated a Social Studies unit on New Zealand disasters, which occupied the class for most afternoons for two weeks. After doing pre-tasks and tests, the pupils were told each to choose an individual topic, carry out library research, make notes, discuss their work in groups and eventually prepare and give oral and written presentations. Ms Wilkins did not require John to do a project, although he had performed reasonably well on the associated pre-tasks; instead, she gave him some simple - and unrelated - vocabulary worksheets, which he did quite easily, quickly – and accurately. With little else but time on his hands, he spent the class hours devoted to the project either reading his atlas, or drifting from group to group. On occasion, he was asked for his help; for example, at the start of the second week a Somali girl, Amah, sought his help:

01. Am: xxx?
02. Jo: Draw a map of New Zealand? This one? Sure!
03. Am: Like that one, please - cos I don't know>
04. Jo: Did you need more little?
05. Am: I need a big one
06. Jo: A big one?
07. Am: Just like that one.
08. Jo: OK
09. Am: Can you draw?
10. Jo: Yep I can... I can. I have drawed with, with yeah this pen, with this one ... and
     it's easy>
11. Am: It's not easy>
12. Jo: It's easy - for me!
13. Am: No.

Having responded to Amah's presumed request, John negotiated with her fairly precisely (02 to 08) what she wanted him to do - an example of pupils working collaboratively with language to carry out an instructional task; an example of socialisation through language. Their tone was one of ease, support and mutual friendliness. John willingly set to work, and incidentally demonstrated his greater expertise in this area. While drawing the map for Amah, he occasionally muttered or sang to himself (a form of private speech and, as always, in English) and sometimes interacted with Amah about the work in hand: the exchanges showing a fair amount of amiable give and take. For example, a few minutes later, Amah was able to reciprocate his help:

01. Jo: (to Amah) What's that? Do you need to do work like that? ... (to self) I got to
     do thing xxx busy... making their own things... Oh! (singing as he writes the
     locations of certain disasters on Amah's map of NZ). Wellington flewd.
02. Am: Flood.
03. Jo: Oh, flood! (laughs) What's flood?
04. Am: Flood's where xxx (explains inaudibly) ... F L O O D. Flood
05. Jo: (singing to himself) ...

Amah helped John firstly by directed performance: she effectively modelled the pronunciation of the word (02), which John repeated. She then followed up John's incomprehension (03) by explaining what the word 'flood' meant (04). In this way, she reinforced his learning by spelling the word aloud, and again modelling the pronunciation. In short, the meaning of what was initially incomprehensible to John was negotiated between the two learners in this short, but effective conversation. Throughout this episode, both pupils freely initiated and sustained interactions in a task they had decided to share: each scaffolded the other's learning at different times and in different ways. In this way, assistance was reciprocal and tactful feedback was provided where necessary. However, the interaction and joint activity was then interrupted by the teacher:

01. Jo: dee ddee (singing as he draws. Ms Wilkins approaches)
02. T: What are you doing John?
03. Jo: Oh, I'm helping Amah.

04. T: How 'bout you do your spelling?
05. Jo: OK
06. T: Be a good idea? (moves away)
07. Jo: Na-haha (quietly – to himself?)
08. Am: xxx spelling xxx
09. Jo: xxx (mutters inaudibly to self, as he reads through his spelling list).

Deprived of the chance to interact and collaborate with his classmates, John increasingly lost interest in what was happening in the class project. In the following days, he rarely attended to the teacher-class dialogues – apparently not recognising the value of the somewhat informal 'instructional conversations' (Tharp & Gallimore, 1991; Goldenberg, 1992-3) which were a feature of Ms Wilkins' pedagogy. And he showed little interest in the eventual presentations of their projects by his classmates. It would seem that this was a lost opportunity – an opportunity to promote the boy's involvement in the learning culture of the classroom. This is especially poignant: given John's interest in and knowledge of world affairs, he could have helped his classmates as well as move from the periphery of classroom activity towards fuller, legitimated, membership.

It needs to be considered that the teacher could not easily have known the extent to which John and Amah were working effectively. There were over thirty students in the class, some of them rather disruptive. Others were *very* disruptive. She saw that John was not doing the work she had set, and may have thought he was preventing Amah from getting on with her own project. Hearing John's singing and muttering, she probably felt it important to get him back on-task. At this stage, three weeks after his arrival in the class, she still had not accurately gauged John's more than basic interpersonal communication skills.

Extract B: Thwarted participation - October
The teacher was working within the Visual Language strand of the English curriculum. She spent a few minutes in conversation with the class to set the scene for this activity, which would require the pupils to identify visual incongruities in a set of illustrations in a large picture book, which she was holding up in front of the class. Most of the pupils followed the explanation attentively, but John paid no attention, fiddling with papers on his desk instead. He remained in his seat when the rest of the class then gathered around the teacher. After a few minutes, however, he did move closer and then sought to participate. Once or twice, he bid unsuccessfully for a turn by raising his hand, but - passed over - he eventually called out**:**

01. Jo: (raising his hand and calling out) Excuse me!>

02. T: (speaks to another pupil)

03. Jo: Ms Wilkins! Ms Wilkins!
04. T: I'm not going to pick you cos you're calling out. You're also making it impossible for
        the people behind you. (gestures John to sit) Thank you John, that's better. What do
        you think Mark?

John's first utterance (01), using a conversational formula for initiating or interrupting an interaction, indicated that he probably did not intend to be rude. However, 'excuse me' is not the conventional way to bid for a classroom turn. Neither was his next attempt (03). Ms Wilkins firmly but courteously explained (04) how he was flouting the conventional rules of classroom interaction – an example of socialisation *in* language – a point which John appeared to understand. He resumed his seat and followed the discourse with increasing interest; a few minutes later he raised his hand, managing not to call out, and was nominated:
01. T: (responding to a P) Wheelcap. Yes. Yeah - good. John?
02. Jo: The picture is upside down
03. Ps: Doh!
04. T: We've had that before! You must listen
05. P: Three times!
06. T: (to class) That's the Mona Lisa

John's failure to have understood, or even perhaps have heard, the previous discourse was explicitly criticised by both classmates (03) and Ms Wilkins (04). One pupil's comment (05) indicated that at least one other pupil had done the same as John, and it is interesting to note that this earlier repetition had not been similarly commented upon**.** On several other occasions during this lesson, John tried to gain attention by raising his hand, but was thwarted:
01. Jo: Ung, Ung
02. T: Gene? (To John) No - you're calling out again>
03. Jo: Oh>

    04. T: I won't pick you if you call out
    05. Ge: The person in the painting's drinking this thing
    06. T: (laughs) Yes. Painting on the wall - extra-long straw. Yes, Buna?
    07. Bu: The dog is playing
    08. T: What's the dog doing?
    09. Ps: xxx
    10. T: Playing cards - yes. OK - someone else now? (to John) No, you're calling out. Arthur?

Ms Wilkins' intention to explicitly socialise John in language is again evident in this brief sequence. Three times (02, 04, 10) John was reprimanded for calling out, although he was – probably unintentionally – vocalising, rather than verbalising, his bid for a turn. Despite this lack of encouragement, he continued to take an interest in what was happening, several times moving around in order to get a better view of the pictures held up by Ms Wilkins. At one point, as he walked to the other side of the teacher he inadvertently bumped into a classmate, who complained vociferously:

    01. P: John!>
    02. T: (To John) Sit down. Quick. Down! You can stay where you were, but I want you
        sitting down. (T shows next picture) "We went through this old photo album, and I
        listened as he told stories">
    03. P: John, don't play with that!>
    04. Jo: Huh?>
    05. P: xxx (to teacher)
    06. T: No, we don't need xxx>
    07. P2: John's pulling this thing out of there!
    08. Jo: Oh! I just>
    09. T: Right>
    10. Jo: I'm just xxx it out, and I put it back
    11. T: Just leave it, thank you. I'm not going to continue if you're going to be disruptive.
        Would you hold those still please...

Once again, John's inappropriate classroom behaviour caused the teacher to reprimand him (02), and her displeasure was picked up by two or three of his classmates, who (05, 07) drew the teacher's attention to something John was doing off-task. John tried to defend his actions (08, 10), but this led to further public rebuke from the teacher, and she stated (11) that John was likely to bring the enjoyable activity to an end.

In this lesson, John's genuine, if pragmatically clumsy, attempts to participate in the discourse of learning were thus thwarted: none of his contributions to the class dialogue were appreciated. As on previous occasions, he was publicly rebuked, and this added to his reputation for being inattentive and somewhat disruptive. He still really did not understand that when the teacher was engaging in give-and-take instructional conversations with the class, this was a learning opportunity – either for cognitive input, or for instructions about how to do a task, or to explain the criteria for successful completion. He was still probably waiting for a simple transmission of information, with written reinforcement on the whiteboard. Likewise, he did not fully understand the pragmatic rules of classroom kinesics and proxemics: unused in Taiwan to freedom of movement, he was unaware of the physical parameters within which students operated in New Zealand classrooms – when it was appropriate to move, and when not*;* which zones were accessible, which were not; how far or how near to sit or stand by someone.

Extract C: Interaction with the teacher - November
In a science lesson a few weeks later, the teacher revised earlier work on the orbit of the earth around the sun, and set the class to work in groups to answer questions on a worksheet. John was seated among his usual group of five boys, and engaged Ms Wilkins in conversation as she was distributing the worksheets:

    01. Jo: Ms Wilkins! Ms Wilkins. When I was in Taiwan, I ha, I read a book about those
        things. I ha, looked at about, the earth when it turned around. Correctly, it's twenty-
        three hour fifty six minutes and four second. But I axed my Mum, and I say why do we
        say twenty-four hour, and my Mum say>
    02. T: Well, we call it twenty-four hours to round it off>
    03. Jo: Yeah>
    04. T: And, but it is only twenty three hours and a few minutes - you're right. That's why
        once every four years we have leap year day - the twenty-ninth of Febru>
    05. Jo: But I have>
    06. T: ary to catch up>
    06. Jo: But I thought, but in the book it's also writing about when the earth turn the sun
        around, it's twenty-three, three hundred and sixty-five point three days, so I'm

    thinking>
08. T: We just round it off, don't we
09. Jo: Yeah. (teacher moves away)

Ms Wilkins acknowledged John's display of knowledge (02), although she did not explicitly praise him for it. John appeared to understand the notion of rounding off (03), and evidently wished to elaborate the point. In doing so, he twice interrupted (05, 07) the teacher in order to further display his knowledge, and perhaps seek further clarification. This was, however, pre-empted by the teacher (08), whose repetition of her earlier utterance seems intended to close the exchange, confirmed by her subsequent moving away. John's ability and willingness to interact freely with the teacher - and display the extent and precision of his knowledge - is very noticeable here. While this exchange indicates John's conversational fluency, it marks too an unawareness of verbal tact towards the teacher - manifest, for example, by his interruption of her explanation, and the possibly assertive implications of his use of 'but' (07) to preface a remark. He was also delaying the distribution of worksheets, which might be seen as also contravening pragmatic conventions.

In the previous extract, his attention-getting signal 'Excuse me' would have been perfectly acceptable in an everyday conversation, but it was probably less so in a classroom context, especially given John's sharp tone of voice, which of course the transcript does not show. In the above extract, his repeated interruption of the teacher - and 'but' is also something of a challenge - may have seemed inappropriate to the teacher, and perhaps further evidence of his 'naughtiness' or impertinence. It needs to be remembered that most classroom teachers assume that their students do actually understand the pragmatic ground rules, and that any deviance from them is an indication of defiance, rather than ignorance.

Extract D: Peer interaction - November
A week later, John and his immediate (male) classmates were in a group, whose task it was to devise and write a script for a playlet. John did not appear to understand this as being a learning activity: he stood outside the (seated) group as it deliberated, or sat on the widow ledge, often looking outside and occasionally throwing in occasional off-task comments and drawing attention to himself. At one point, he moved closer to the group to see and hear what they were doing:
01. Ar: John! Stop it - you're hurting my sandal.
02. Jo: Huh?
03. Ar: You're hurting my sandal.
04. Jo: Oh, you're hurting my, shoe. Yes you did.
05. Ar: Stop it! Stop it! Stop hitting me! John!
06. Jo: Don't hit me!
07. Ar: Stop that John.
08. Jo: He hit me!
09. Ar: I'm not hitting him!
10. Jo: Did you like that?
11. Ar: What?
12. Jo: Did you like that?
13. Ar: xxx (noise)
14. Jo: Did you like that?
15. Ar: Yes, I did.
16. Jo: Yes you did! Don't hit me! Oooh!" (mock sobs. and continues to make crying noise, quite loudly, then laughs) Nah. Nothing! Nah, nah , nah>
19. Ar: xxx Kicking me!
20. T: Right boys! Pack up! Quietly take out your reading books.

The extract indicates John's inability to focus his attention on the work at hand, or perhaps even to understand that what the boys were doing was considered to be 'work'. It also shows a readiness to distract the others by creating a disturbance. Other boys in the class were also disruptive at times, but in most cases they had learned how to do so surreptitiously, or else with charming bravado. The illocutionary intent of some of the above utterances is now obscure; however, the exchange does indicate, at least in disputation, that John was able to hold his ground in micropolitical discord. The process of socialisation involves contestation (Mickan, Lucas, Davies & Lim, 2007) in which "the process of constructing knowledge is one in which power and influence are inevitably exerted, and sometimes contested" (Mercer 1995: 20). However, rather than facilitating the co-construction of understanding, the effect of the above dispute was to lead to a negative social and pedagogical outcome, both for the boys who were enjoying the activity which John caused to be disrupted and for

John himself. After Ms Wilkins had stopped the activity, John sighed, took out his reading book and was silent for the rest of the lesson. By now, he was socially isolated. It is not unreasonable to suggest that towards the end of the year, he wished to break down his isolation by any means available – even by attracting negative comment and sanctions. His private speech increased considerably over the year, and he often had fairly long conversations with himself – dialogues between 'I' and 'me'. Nobody else wanted to talk to him.

Extract E: Self-assessment - December
At the end of the year, students were asked to write criteria-referenced self-assessments. The following is an extract from John's initial draft:

> *Using the 5'c: I think my using 5'c is not really good because I often didn't listen the instruction, and I didn't think thing careful, and I'm bad at a group, but I would like to take care of someone I like, and I didn't say "shut-up" normal now.*
> *(NB 5Cs = care, courtesy, cooperation, challenge, consideration)*
> *Relating to other people: I think my relating to other is quit bad, because I've do some things silly some times, made other people unhappy.*
> *Challenge taken up: I think I'm rather poor at some challenges., because sometimes I'm nervious at the difficalt, but I like piano, table tennis... the things I'm good at it, I'm very happy to have those challenges. Acien Achievement of goal: I think I'm, bad at this one, because I'm not a good goal, in fect, I didn't like the game with goal, except hockey.*
> *successes i have made this second half year*
> *The thing I have successes is a lot of spelling and some name in English of maths, and I also know what Commonwealth Games is, and how to sun smart, some knowledges about N.Z., how to make English report, also some knowledges about health, I think I've learn a lot in social studies.*

This written self-evaluation may be seen as a form of private speech; in this case, it is intended as a rehearsal for a written submission to the teacher. It may need to be emphasised that this is only a part of his first draft: he wrote much more about what he has learnt in specific curriculum areas. John's comments, especially in the first two categories here, show that given the opportunity he was able to reflect upon his pragmatic competence, or lack of it. They also show his developing understanding of the interactional skills which were needed to move him towards legitimate, and fuller, membership of the classroom. It is utterly poignant that it was only at the end of the school year that he became aware of these points. By then it was too late. His experience was so negative that he and his brother and their mother returned to Taiwan for them to continue their education there.

Quite clearly, learners from diverse language backgrounds need to learn how to use an often newly acquired language effectively - and tactfully - in order to cope with the interactional, task performance and cognitive-academic demands of the mainstream classroom. While there are undoubtedly many success stories, evidence from my own research as reported both in this chapter and elsewhere (for example, XXX, 2003; 2005; forthcoming), and that of others (such as Cummins, 2000), has shown that some immigrant learners in mainstream classes can have a thoroughly miserable time: isolated from their peers, ignored, marginalised, even alienated. The data here suggest that John was situated in an uncomfortable third space between the teacher and the class: he did not fit in. He was largely constrained from constructing meaningful learning experiences because he did not understand the largely implicit conventions of classroom interaction – and nobody took care to explain them to him. His attempts to adjust to a new learning culture, and indeed his identity as a successful learner in his own habitus, were confounded and negatively evaluated.

Implications for teaching and research
Sensitive and experienced teachers can greatly assist new learners to adjust to the new culture of learning. They could do this by explicitly inducting them into the conventions of CICS. Many teachers like Ms Wilkins do spend time at the start of each school year setting out the ground rules, such as the 'Five Cs'. But in doing so, they implicitly build upon the pragmatic rules that the majority of their learners have acquired in their previous schooling within the same educational context – the shared habitus - and they may be quite unaware of how different these are from schools elsewhere. Such intercultural knowledge and sensitivity is important in countries like New Zealand, which are hosts to increasing numbers of ethnically diverse immigrant groups. However, even with such awareness, teachers may be unable to fully address pragmatic issues with learners from diverse backgrounds when they arise because of the multifarious demands of inclusive mainstream classrooms, such as those

illustrated in this paper. It is possible to suggest that some of the more experienced students in the class, especially perhaps those from similar cultural and/or linguistic backgrounds, may be socially, psychologically and physically more accessible to coeval classmates than the teacher. Thus they may be more effective than the teacher at critical times in providing assistance not only in the narrowly linguistic requirements of learning in a new language, but also in the sociocultural norms associated with classroom contexts. This points to the importance of the physical placement of new learners among sympathetic peers, and careful monitoring of their languacultural progress within these cohorts. The teacher might take some of these classmates aside and show them how to be practically helpful to new learners, perhaps by developing systematic buddy or peer-scaffolding.

Teachers can play a vital part in investigating the reality of classroom learning by systematically engaging in exploratory practice (Allwright, 2003; 2006). It would be useful for many of them to conscientiously engage in reflective practice (Schon, 1987; Zeichner & Liston, 1996) to illuminate their own classrooms and their activities therein. This might be done by (audio) recording parts of their lessons, and analysing them to identify key episodes of where interactions with specific learners were noticeably successful, or otherwise. This would enable them to consider the reasons for the actions they took in the episodes, and the possible assumptions which underpinned these actions, and those of the students. From thus reflecting *on* action, they might reflect *for* action – in the sense that they could plan for more successful interactions in future lessons. This could be followed by their collaboration in action research projects, in which salient episodes of pragmatic and cultural (mis)understandings occurring in their own classrooms can be collectively identified, analysed and resolved within the specific context.

In addition to reflective practice and action research by teachers, there is a need for more detailed classroom investigation in actual classrooms, and not in the quasi-experimental paradigm which has long been the dominant paradigm for much research into second language acquisition. The latter tends to discount, or even entirely factor out, the rich social and pragmatic issues which fundamentally promote - or hinder - learning. Thus there is a need for more exploratory studies which could provide rich data for both microgenetic and ontogenetic analysis.By the former is meant the word-by-word analysis of the discourse - what is actually said by learners and teachers – in their interactions. In this way, it may be possible to capture the co-construction of meaning and understanding as it occurs, which Vygotsky (1978: 68) referred to as 'cognition in flight'. By itself, however, microgenetic analysis is insufficient because it does not show the negotiation and co-construction of understanding over an extensive period of time, in which social relationships change, and a higher degree of intersubjectivity may emerge in the 'long conversations' (Maybin, Mercer & Stierer, 1992: 36) which comprise much classroom learning. This is what is meant by ontogenetic analysis. For example, in the transcript data presented above, the teacher's and students' actions towards the end of the school year can be more fully appreciated in the light of knowledge of the previous interactions and the relationships which developed over a significant period of time.

Moreover, it is useful for multiple perspectives to be brought into play when analysing classroom data. For example, stimulated recall techniques (Gass & Mackey, 2000) could be applied by inviting participants to recollect their intentions and meanings by reflecting and commenting on audio- or video-record extracts, and/or transcripts, of recent classroom episodes. Such elicitation may serve to explicate the contemporary intentions and underlying beliefs and values of the direct participants, and thereby provide alternative interpretations than those of the outside observer/s. Sometimes, as was pointed out earlier in this paper, it is not possible or perhaps even desirable to seek the 'insider' views of participants. In such cases, it is useful to obtain triangulation by showing and/or discussing the data with others, and eliciting alternative interpretations (see Fanselow & Barnard, 2005). In this connection, it is hoped that readers of the case study reported in this article will reflect on the transcript data provided and consider alternative interpretations to those suggested by the author, based on their own understanding and experience of classroom interaction in their own professional contexts.

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Comment [TC1]: We need clarification- Is the 2 a page number or the no. What about the page numbers, if the latter?

Comment [TC2]: Pages are missing

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