

The Contribution of Basil Bernstein's Sociology to Research on the Social Formation of the Mind

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A contribuição da sociologia de Basil Bernstein para
a pesquisa sobre a formação social da mente

La contribución de la sociología de Basil Bernstein a la
investigación sobre la formación social de la mente

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Review article

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Abstract

In this paper I will demonstrate how Bernstein's work elevates and refines the work of the Russian theorist Lev Vygotsky and in doing so provides a powerful platform for further theoretical and empirical work on the social formation of mind. I will illustrate this point through reference to some of my own work in which I have struggled to advance this argument.

Keywords:

Bernstein; Vygotsky; cultural history; mediation; social formation of mind

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Resumo

Neste artigo, demonstrarei como o trabalho de Bernstein eleva e aperfeiçoa o teórico russo Lev Vygotsky, o que proporciona uma plataforma sólida para futuros trabalhos teóricos e empíricos sobre a formação social da mente. Ilustrarei este ponto através de referências a alguns dos meus próprios trabalhos, nos quais procurei avançar em torno deste argumento.

Palavras-chave:

Bernstein; Vygotsky; história cultural; mediação; formação social da mente

Resumen

En este artículo, demostraré cómo la obra de Bernstein eleva y perfecciona la del teórico ruso Lev Vygotsky, lo que proporciona una sólida plataforma para futuros trabajos teóricos y empíricos sobre la formación social de la mente. Ilustraré este punto a través de referencias a algunos de mis propios trabajos, en los que he procurado avanzar en torno a este argumento.

Keywords:

Bernstein; Vygotsky; historia cultural; mediación; formación social de la men

Introduction

The point of departure in this paper is with the account of the social formation of mind developed in the wake of the writing of Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky which, arguably, forms a psychological backdrop to the sociology of Basil Bernstein.

The essence of the developmental model advanced by Vygotsky is a dialectical conception of the relations between the personal and the social. Clearly, schooling constitutes a form of collective social activity with specific forms of interpersonal communication. Furthermore, within schools and between schools there are differences in the content, structure, and function of interpersonal communication. Despite the valuable contribution of the Vygotskian school, Institutional structures and processes have been addressed only with the broadest theoretical brushes, while experiments have focused almost entirely on face-to-face interactional processes.

Vygotsky attached the greatest importance to the content of educational curricula but placed the emphasis on the structural and instrumental aspects of that content [...] In this connection it must be said that Vygotsky did not take these fruitful ideas far enough. In this approach it is quite possible to regard the school itself as a 'message' that is, a fundamental factor of education, because, as an institution and quite apart from the content of its teaching, it implies a certain structuring of time and space and is based on a system of social relations (between pupils and teacher, between the pupils themselves, between the school and its surroundings, and so on). (Ivic, 1989, p. 434)

A major trend in many recent publications has been to attempt to theorise relations between the social and the psychological in such a way that cultural and socio-institutional matters are removed from the 'error term' and introduced as key elements in a unified thesis. Minick *et al.* (1993) provide a recent example of such an approach. They see their work as following in the wake of researchers such as Cole & Scribner (1974) who challenged contemporary notions about mental development by suggesting that cognitive functioning is bound to specific contexts of social practice and that development is based on mastery of defined modes of speaking, thinking, and acting (Minick *et al.*, 1993)

They proposed a four-element conception of development in post-Vygotskian research:

1. The culturally specific nature of schools demands close attention to the way in which they structure interactions between people and artifacts such as books.

2. Rather than language being understood as a 'generalised or abstract system that mediates activity interaction, and thought' it should be treated as 'a multitude of distinct speech genres and semiotic devices that are tightly linked with particular social institutions and practices'— In schools 'there are many speech genres that mediate specific forms of social and psychological life in distinct ways'.

3. '—educationally significant human interactions do not involve abstract bearers of cognitive structures but real people who develop a variety of interpersonal relationships with one another in the course of their shared activity in a given institutional context.'

4. '—modes of thinking evolve as integral systems of motives, goals, values, and beliefs that are closely tied to concrete forms of social practice'. (Minick *et al.*, 1993, p. 6)

One of the central pillars of Vygotsky's contribution to social science is his concept of mediation: the process through which the social and the individual mutually shape each other. His rich, complex, and challenging texts focus on a nuanced notion of mediation that was not necessarily visible to those active in the command-and-control climate of the Stalinist era.

This theoretical perspective draws attention to aspects of practice which are ignored by policymakers and practitioners who are, albeit tacitly, operating with more traditional theoretical models.

Within the post-Vygotskian theoretical framework there is a requirement for a structural description of social settings which provides principles for distinguishing between social practices. Descriptions of this sort would be an important part of the apparatus required to carry out empirical investigation and analysis of the psychological consequences for individuals of different forms of social organization. However, description itself would not be enough. Vygotsky's writing on the way in which psychological tools and signs act in the mediation of social factors does not engage with a theoretical account of the appropriation and/or production of psychological tools within specific forms of activity within or across institutions.

Vygotsky's emphasis on humans mastering themselves using symbolic and cultural systems carry with its implications concerning the origins and availability of such artefacts. My interest here is in the creation of new cultural forms through human activity. This form of externalization is a form of production, as Vygotsky reminds, as tools of development.

This theme has recently been studied by the Russian philosopher Lektorsky:

Humans not only internalize ready-made standards and rules of activity but externalize themselves as well, creating new standards and rules. Human beings determine themselves through objects (artefacts) that they create. They are essentially creative beings. (Lektorsky, 1999, pp. 66-67)

In a study of the tacit background of children's judgements, Hundeide (1985) has shown how participants in an activity create partially the setting. These 'taken for granted background expectancies' reflect the sociocultural experience that the individual brings to the situation.

One needs a framework that takes into account the historical and cultural basis of individual minds: the collective institutionalized knowledge and routines, categorization of reality with its typifications, world view, normative expectations as to how people, situations, and the world are and should be, and so forth. All this is tacit knowledge that has its origin beyond the individual, and it is this sociocultural basis that forms the interpretive background of our individual minds. (Hundeide, 1985, p. 311)

There is a need to connect theory with the descriptions that are used in the activity of research. Crucially, research should attempt to provide a means of relating the social, cultural, and historical context to the artefact. Bernstein (2000) illustrates the need for such a language of description in his discussion of the concept of *habitus*.

[...] if we take a popular concept *habitus*, whilst it may solve certain epistemological problems of agency and structure, it is only known or recognised by its apparent outcomes. *Habitus* is described in terms of what it gives rise to, and brings, or does not bring about [...]. But it is not described with reference to the particular ordering principles or strategies, which give rise to the formation of a particular *habitus*. The formation of the internal structure of the particular *habitus*, the mode of its specific acquisition, which gives it its specificity, is not described. How it comes to be is not part of the description, only what it does. There is no description of its specific formation. [...] *Habitus* is known by its output not its input. (Bernstein, 2000, p. 133)

As Daniels and Tse (2020) argued, a sociological focus on the rules which shape the social formation of discursive practice may be brought to bear on those aspects of psychology which argue that cultural artefacts, such as pedagogic discourse, mediate human thought and action both explicitly and implicitly.

This departure involves the incorporation of a sociology of pedagogy into the post-Vygotskian formulation of the social formation of mind. In so doing, it seeks to extend the understanding of pedagogic practice beyond the analysis of dyadic or small group interactions so often found in studies which acknowledge the formative influence of Lev Vygotsky's writing and develops further the analytic and descriptive capacity of the various versions of activity theory developed in the wake of Leontiev's (1978) early work.

Bernstein

In 1987, Bernstein posed the following question in relation to research in the social sciences: 'How does the outside become inside, and how does the inside reveal itself and shape the outside?' (Bernstein, 1987, p. 563). In this paper, I will seek to develop a theoretical position that will assist efforts to answer this question.

Several commentators have noted similarities in the theoretical assumptions (e.g. Daniels, 2001, 2012; Kellogg 2019; Lerman 2019) and cultural priors (e.g. Castelnuevo and Kotok-Friedgut 2015) of Bernstein and Vygotsky. These similarities suggest a certain level of compatibility but not complete alignment. The main concerns are with respect to individual agency, situational characteristics and formative effects. For example, Atkinson (1985) notes that Bernstein's approach epitomizes an essentially macro-sociological point of view.

It is undoubtedly true that in Bernstein's general approach there is little or no concern for the perspectives, strategy and actions of individual social actors in actual social settings. (Atkinson 1985, p. 32)

This position concurs with that of some Vygotskian theorists who also argue that individual agency has been significantly under acknowledged in Bernstein's sociology of pedagogy (e.g. Wertsch, 1985).

Hasan (2004), who was influenced by both Vygotsky and Bernstein, argued that each act of speaking is a social event, behind which lies the history of the individual and so the history of the community of which the individual is a member. This is an understanding of the semiotic process which

in fact provides a powerful sociological complement to Vygotsky's account of the role of semiotic mediation in the development of mind in society (Hasan, 2001). Wider social institutional factors will have been reduced to lower levels of explanation in the absence of an appropriate theoretical framework. In the same way, psychological studies of learning which ignore contextual constraints will confound and confuse the interpretation of results. Vygotsky's (1994) approach lacks that which Bernstein explicitly has set out to provide—a theoretical framework for the description and analysis of the changing forms of cultural transmissions.

Bernstein seeks to link semiotic tools with the structure of material activity. He draws attention to the processes that regulate the structure of the tool (e.g. the pedagogic discourse) rather than just its function.

As Shotter and Lock (2012) point out, the relationship between the work of Vygotsky and Bernstein is not straightforward.

Bernstein and Vygotsky wrote in very different times and circumstances (Bernstein being 10 years old when Vygotsky died in 1934). There are thus, necessarily, some difficulties in discussing the relation between their bodies of work: rather, we need to *construct* useful relationships. That said, it was very clear to the first author here (Shotter) in his personal contacts with Bernstein from 1959-1962, and as Atkinson (1985) also makes clear, that in addition to being deeply influenced by Durkheim's emphasis on the importance of "the social bond" in the "structuring of experience" (Bernstein, 1971, p.3), the works of Vygotsky, Luria, (along with Whorf, Mead, and Cassirer) were also central in his attempts to set out *how* people's different ways of relating themselves to each other, and to their surroundings, give rise to different structures of experience, and types of relationship, which show up in our practical dealings with the others and othernesses around us. (Shotter & Lock, 2012, p. 61).

Bernstein (1971, 1973) himself acknowledged a debt to Vygotsky. It was through Luria's attempts to disseminate his former colleague's work that Bernstein first became acquainted with Vygotsky's writing.

I first came across Vygotsky in the late 1950s through a translation by Luria of a section of *Thought and Speech* published in *Psychiatry* 2, 1939. It is difficult to convey the sense of excitement, of thrill, of revelation this paper aroused: literally a new universe opened. (Bernstein 1993, p. 23).

This early translation of Vygotsky's work along with a seminal series of lectures given by Luria at the Tavistock Institute in London sparked an intense interest in the Russian cultural historical tradition and went on to exert a profound influence on post war implications in the development of education for young people with severe and profound learning difficulties, and theories and practices designed to facilitate development and learning in socially disadvantaged groups in the United Kingdom. In November 1964, Bernstein wrote a letter to Vygotsky's widow outlining her late husband's influence on his developmental thesis.

As you may know, many of us working in the area of speech (from the perspective of psychology as well as from the perspective of sociology) think that we owe a debt to the Russian school, especially to works based on Vygotsky's tradition. I should say that in many respects, many of us are still trying to comprehend what he said (Bernstein, 1964, p. 1).

It was Vygotsky's (1987) non-dualist cultural historical conception of mind claims for the role of *intermental* (social) experience in the shaping of *intramental* (psychological) development that continued to influence Bernstein's thinking. This was understood as a mediated process in which culturally produced artefacts (such as forms of talk, representations in the form of ideas and beliefs, signs, and symbols) shape and are shaped by human engagement with the world (Daniels 2008; Vygotsky 1987). However, Vygotsky did not consider the ways in which concrete social systems bear on psychological functions. He discussed the general importance of language and schooling for psychological functioning however, as Ratner (1997) notes, he failed to examine the real social systems in which these activities occur and reflect. Vygotsky never indicated the social basis for this new use of words. The social analysis is thus reduced to a semiotic analysis which overlooks the real world of social praxis (Ratner, 1997).

The theoretical and methodological development of post-Vygotskian theory requires languages of description which will facilitate a multi-level understanding of pedagogic discourse, the varieties of its practice and contexts of its realization and production.

Bernstein's (2000) work provides the basis for such a language of description which may be applied at the level of principles of power and control which may then be translated into principles of communication. Different social structures give rise to different modalities of language which have specialised mediational properties. They have arisen, have been shaped

by, the social, cultural and historical circumstances in which interpersonal exchanges arise and they in turn shape the thoughts and feelings, the identities and aspirations for action of those engaged in interpersonal exchange in these contexts. Hence the relations of power and control, which regulate social interchange, give rise to specialised principles of communication that mediate social relations.

Discourse may mediate human action in different ways. There is visible (Bernstein, 2000) or explicit (Wertsch, 2007) mediation in which the deliberate incorporation of signs into human action is seen as a means of reorganising that action. This contrasts with invisible or implicit mediation that involves signs, especially natural language, whose primary function is in the act of communication which are part of a pre-existing, independent stream of communicative action that becomes integrated with other forms of goal-directed behaviour (Wertsch, 2007). Invisible semiotic mediation occurs in discourse embedded in everyday ordinary activities of a social subject's life. Such discourse is ordinary in that its sayings and their meanings are seen as entirely natural and arguably, that is why it is so effective. It is instrumental in creating 'habits of the mind' which are crucial to a subject's ways of engaging in decision making in the social world.

The challenges of studying implicit mediation have been approached from a variety of theoretical perspectives. Holland *et al.* (1998) have studied the development of identities and agency specific to historically situated, socially enacted, and culturally constructed worlds in a way which may contribute to the development of an understanding of how the development of social capital is situated. This approach to a theory of identity in practice is grounded in the notion of a figured world in which positions are taken up constructed and resisted. Bakhtin's (1986) concept of the *space of authoring* is deployed to capture an understanding of the mutual shaping of figured worlds and identities in social practice.

They refer to Bourdieu (1977) in their attempt to show how social position becomes disposition. They argue for the development of social position into a positional identity into disposition and the formation of what Bourdieu refers to as *habitus*—a recursive, internalised process of embodied enculturation structured by spaces, sociality, and institutions (Bourdieu, 1977, pp. 85–97). Significantly, Bernstein is critical of the *habitus*, arguing that the internal structure of a particular *habitus*, the mode of its specific acquisition, which gives it its specificity, is not described (Bernstein, 2000). In Bourdieu there is

no language of description and analysis of the social formation of *habitus* that allows for a consideration of its contextual specificity. Holland *et al.* (1998) tend to lean on Bourdieu to explicate the pervasive influence of structuration in shaping agency and *habitus* in institutional settings, but it may be argued that an enlightened synthesis of Bernstein's and Vygotsky's work can provide a tantalizing alternative to such overreliance on Bourdieu for sociological analysis.

Bernstein's work is concerned with inter-relations between changes in organizational form, changes in modes of control and changes in principles of communication. His language of description is generated from an analysis of power (which creates and maintains boundaries in organisational form) and control (which regulates communication within specific forms of interaction). Initially, he focuses upon two levels: a structural and an interactional one. The structural level is analyzed in terms of the social division of labour it creates (classification) and the interactional level with the form of social relation it creates (framing). He defines modalities of pedagogic practice in terms of principles for distinguishing between contexts (recognition rules) and for the creation and production of specialized communication within contexts (realization rules). Modalities of pedagogic practice and their discourses may then be described in terms directly referenced to the theory. Features of cultural artefacts may be described in terms of the cultural context of their production. Bernstein (1993) argues that much of the work that has followed in the wake of Vygotsky "does not include in its description how the discourse itself is constituted and recontextualised" (p. xix).

Bernstein's approach to analysis can be applied to different levels of school organization and various units within a level. This allows the analysis of power and control and the rules regulating what counts as legitimate pedagogic competence to proceed at a level of delicacy appropriate to a particular research question.

Bernstein both theorizes the semiotics of the transmission and provides a language with which differences in structure can be brought to the focus of empirical studies of individual acquisition. Developments of Bernstein's thesis offers the potential of an appropriate form of socio-cultural theory to the post-Vygotskian enterprise. As Atkinson (1985) notes, the roots of Bernstein's thinking are entangled with elements of the Vygotskian thesis.

Bernstein's thinking was influenced profoundly by his acquaintance with the various philosophical and anthropological authors on language and

symbolism—including Cassirer and Whorf. To this was added the work of the Russian psychologists Vygotsky and Luria. (Atkinson, 1985, p. 14)

Bernstein (1996) refined the discussion of his distinction between instructional and regulative discourse. The former refers to the transmission of skills and their relation to each other, and the latter refers to the principles of social order, relation, and identity. Whereas the principles and distinctive features of instructional discourse and its practice are relatively clear (the what and how of the specific skills/competences to be acquired and their relation to each other), the principles and distinctive features of the transmission of the regulative are less clear as this discourse is transmitted through various media and may indeed be characterised as a diffuse transmission. Regulative discourse communicates the school's (or any institution's) public moral practice, values beliefs and attitudes, principles of conduct, character, and manner. It also transmits features of the school's local history, local tradition, and community relations. Pedagogic discourse is modelled as one discourse created by the embedding of instructional and regulative discourse. This model of pedagogic discourse provides a response to one of the many theoretical demands which have remained unfulfilled in the post-Vygotskian framework. The rejection of the cognitive / affective dualism which Vygotsky announced was not followed by a model within which a unitary conception of thinking and feeling could be discussed and implemented within empirical research.

Vygotsky's approach lacks a theoretical framework for the description and analysis of the changing forms of cultural transmissions that Bernstein explicitly set out to provide: "I wanted to develop a different approach which placed at the centre of the analysis the principles of transmission and their embodiment in structures of social relationships" (Bernstein, 1977, p. 3).

The language that Bernstein has developed allows researchers to develop measures of school modality. That is, to describe and position the discursive, organizational, and interactional practice of the institution. He also noted the need for the extension of this work in his discussion of the importance of Vygotsky's work for research in education: "His theoretical perspective also makes demands for a new methodology, for the development of languages of description which will facilitate a multilevel understanding of pedagogic discourse, the varieties of its practice and contexts of its realization and production" (Bernstein, 1993, p. 23).

I will refer to three studies which in their different ways drew on Vygotsky, Bernstein and to a lesser extent activity theory: a study of classroom talk, a study of classroom wall displays as relays of the underlying pedagogic discourses at play, and a study of the practices of school design. I will use 'we' when discussing work which was undertaken in collaboration with others.

The Regulation of Subject Specific Talk in Classrooms

This study was concerned with the transmission of selected criteria of communicative competence in schools. It was argued that different contexts generate different criteria of competence. The study refers to the account of the social formation of mind developed by and after Vygotsky and the model of cultural transmission developed by Bernstein. The study draws on both these approaches to examine the relationship between individual competences and social structure of schools. The focus is on the implications of the organisational structure of the school for pupil talk in specified subjects. The experimental evidence was suggestive of the role of social organisation in schooling.

Part of Bernstein's argument is that everyday discourse, which is often not the object of conscious reflection and analysis, puts in place understandings about the world. Such discourse is ordinary in that its sayings and their meanings are seen as entirely natural and that is why it is so effective. As Hasan (2001) argue, when we talk, we enter the flow of communication in a stream of both history and the future. There is therefore a need to analyze and codify the mediational structures as they deflect and direct the attention of participants and as they are shaped through interactions which they also shape. In this sense, combining the intellectual legacies of Bernstein and Vygotsky permits the development of cultural historical analysis of the invisible or implicit mediational properties of institutional structures which themselves are transformed through the actions of those whose interactions are influenced by them. This move serves to both expand the gaze of post Vygotskian theory and at the same time bring sociologies of cultural transmission into a framework in which institutional structures are analyzed as historical products that are subject to dynamic transformation and change as people act within and on them.

It is important to reflect on the fact that the rules of speech in pedagogic contexts are rarely explicitly taught and some of these were the rules of interest

in this study. For example, pupils are rarely formally taught how to *recognize* and *realize* (produce) subject specific speech, e.g. to recognize and/or to make a statement which counts as an artistic statement or a scientific statement. It is even rarer for them to be given explicit lessons in their difference. Children must realize different communicative competences in the different schools, although they may enter school with shared competences and recognition rules of subject specific discourses. This finding echoes that of Foley (1991).

What clearly showed up was that the restriction in teaching of a limited number of writing type activities (genres) was denying the child the opportunity of educational success. Whereas the introduction of a genre-based approach to the development of writing which gives exposure to a wide range of genres gives access to writing as a tool for entry into the culture. (Foley, 1991)

The empirical focus of my study (Daniels, 1995) is on the extent to which boundaries between subject categories are distinguishable by children and the extent to which they produce speech which constitutes a realization of these boundaries. The focus is thus on a form of discrimination which is not formally or informally taught. Thus, concern is with a form of textual production which must be tacitly inferred. The curriculum subject contexts chosen for the study were those of art and mathematics. The selection was made because these contexts allow the maximum observable differences in language use.

In order to compare school effects on this form of communicative competence, a model of description was generated based on the general model of cultural transmission proposed by Bernstein (1981). This model is designed to relate macro-institutional forms to micro-interactional levels and the underlying rules of communicative competence. Bernstein (1977) focuses upon two levels; a structural level and an interactional level. The structural level (classification) is analyzed in terms of the social division of labour it creates and the interactional with the form of social relation it creates. The social division (framing) is analyzed in terms of strength of the boundary of its divisions, that is, with respect to the degree of specialization. Thus, the key concept at the structural level is the concept of boundary, and structures are distinguished in terms of their category relations. The interactional level emerges as the regulation of the transmission/acquisition relation between teacher and taught. That is the interactional level comes to refer to the pedagogic context and the social relations of the classroom or its equivalent. The curriculum may then be analyzed as an example of a social division of labour and pedagogic practice as its constituent social relations through which the

specialization of that social division (subjects, units of the curriculum) are transmitted and expected to be acquired.

As Bernstein (1985) states:

The theory of instruction is a crucial recontextualized discourse as it regulates the orderings of pedagogic practice, constructs the model of the pedagogic subject (the acquirer), the model of the transmitter, the model of the pedagogic context and the model of communicative pedagogic competence. (Bernstein, 1985, p. 14)

The organization of the staff, pupils, and use of specialised discourses should be in direct relation to the theory of instruction. The school will be organized to allow the required theory to be put into practice. Each level of school organization will have its own division of labour (classification) and its own social relation (framing). Full details of the coding procedure and the development of the model are given in Daniels (1988). This was undertaken in schools that witnessed differences in the classification and framing of the pedagogic discourse and its practices.

Where the theory of instruction gives rise to a strong classification and framing of the pedagogic practice, it is expected that there will be a separation of discourses (school subjects), an emphasis upon acquisition of specialized skills, the teacher will be dominant in the formulation of intended learning and the pupils are constrained by the teacher's practice. The relatively strong control on the pupils' learning acts as a means of maintaining order in the context in which the learning takes place. This form of instructional discourse contains regulative functions. With strong classification and framing the social relations between teachers and pupils will be more asymmetrical, that is, more hierarchical. In this instance, the regulative discourse and its practice is more explicit and distinguishable from the instructional discourse.

Where the theory of instruction gives rise to a weak classification and weak framing of the practice (as in an integrated day progressive primary school setting), children will be encouraged to be active in the classroom, to undertake enquiries, and perhaps to work in groups at their own pace. Here, the relations between teacher and pupils will have the appearance of being more symmetrical. In these circumstances, it is difficult to separate instructional discourse from regulative discourse as these are mutually embedded.

Where the values of classification and framing of the culture of subjects were strong, children achieved the criteria of specific communicative competence held by their teachers with respect to discrimination between subjects to a greater extent than when, in a school such as transfer certificate (TC), values of classification and framing were weak.

This study attempted to connect the institutional structure with the individual effect. As such, it offers limited and conditional support for the utility of such an enterprise. It also calls a specific agenda item into place. The suggestion that different types of schooling give rise to different types of effect carries with it questions of structural adequacy for purpose. The analytic tools of some forms of social and educational psychology are blunted by their inability to investigate socio-institutional effects. Similarly, the gaze of sociologically inspired policy studies is averted from effects on individuals. The development of a socially extended post-Vygotskian model offers the possibility of understanding the consequences of specific policy developments at the level of individual effects. The use of units of analysis which are conceptualized in terms of the use of psychological tools in contexts raises questions of differences between contexts. Differences in the structure of pedagogic practices constitute differences in contexts which are of semiotic significance. Bernstein theorizes the semiotics of the transmission and provides a language whose differences in structure can be brought to the focus of empirical studies of individual acquisition. Developments of Bernstein's thesis offers the potential of an appropriate form of social theory to the post-Vygotskian enterprise.

Bernstein (1993) discussed the contribution of Vygotsky's work to his own thinking. The emphasis on the regulative function of speech to be found in both Luria and Vygotsky is crucial to Bernstein's theory and requires further development.

Wall Displays as Tacit Relays of Pedagogic Practice

There is a clear need to develop systems of enquiry that enable clarification of the implications of placing children in particular school environments. Whilst we have legislation that demands that special educational provision be formulated in terms of children's needs, we do not appear to be in a position to consider what it is about schools that children perceive as being important or different.

When entering schools, children have to learn very quickly 'what goes here'. If they fail to do this, for whatever reason, they can become marginalised in a variety of ways. If we are to take seriously any attempt to enable as many children as possible to have access to mainstream school, we need to understand the infinitely subtle mechanisms by which schools send messages to children. The issues explored here may be of relevance to children in special schools but the underlying principles are of importance in all forms of pedagogic practice.

In Daniels (1989) the arrangements through the production, selection, and combination of children's painting was shown to act as a relay of the deep structure of the pedagogic practice of particular schools, although as far as the teachers were concerned, they were simply mounting wall displays rather than using wall displays explicitly as relays of the focus of their practice. Whilst they were keen to create a good impression through their wall display work, they were not aware of their expression of the underlying principles of school practice.

Following the directions given by Vygotskian psychology, it seemed profitable to investigate the meaning of wall displays for children as a step in the process of understanding what counts as important in a particular school (Wertsch, 1985). It is important to remember that the children produced the pictures in the investigation of wall display and were socialized in that activity. The products of these socializing activities are then selected, combined and organized by the teacher in a way which celebrates and announces the expected competences required of a particular school and/or classroom. Rather than reading backwards from statistics describing the outputs of schooling, it would seem worthwhile to consider what is relayed to children by particular activities. From this perspective, schools may be considered as generators of a specialized semiotic. The meaning of these signs for the participants in the practice of schooling then becomes the object of study. The study of wall displays indicates that children from different schools 'saw' different meanings in the same displays. They were oriented towards different sets of recognition and realization rules.

Figure 1.
A display in School A



Note. Daniels (1989).

Figure 2.
A display in School B



Note. Daniels (1989).

In summary, children in a structured school (A) were concerned with individual identity in relation to performance whereas in the other school (B) children emphasised principles of social relation. The school environments were specified in terms of what is ultimately their social nature. The different aesthetic principles of the schools in question are contained within very different institutions. The arrangements through the production, selection, and combination of children's painting was shown to act as a relay of the deep structure of the pedagogic practice of particular schools.

When the children were asked to differentiate between selected children's paintings, children in school A referred to the importance of the individual producer of the painting. Children in School B did not echo these remarks about the labelling of individual children's work, and of the overall class task. Further when preferences in terms of class placement, children in school A talked about the school where the best pictures were produced. On the other hand, in TC, children talked about whether the children in the class could choose what they wanted to do, and paint in the way they wanted to paint rather than the way the teacher wanted. 'This school teaches you how to choose.' These children distinguished between classrooms on the basis of pedagogic relations within classrooms. Contrasts were drawn between classrooms where 'you paint what you see' and 'you paint what the teacher sees'. That is, between classrooms with strong and weak values of framing. The children were presented with the same stimuli but they realized different meanings. It would appear to be inadequate to talk about quality of wall display independent of a type of pedagogic practice. A complete analysis would also refer to the information that a display relays to children about the practice of the schooling where they are the subjects.

This study used measures of school modality as described in the study of subject specific speech. Although somewhat crude, these were measures of the discursive, organizational, and interactional practice. A connection was made between the rules children used to make sense of their pedagogic world and the modality of that world. This suggests that the study of non-linguistic means of mediation may form an important part of the more general move to understand institutional regulation within a post Vygotskian framework.

From this perspective schools may be considered as generators of a specialized semiotic. The meaning of these signs for the participants in the practice of schooling then becomes the object of study. The study of wall displays indicated that children from different schools "saw" different meanings in the same displays. They were oriented towards different sets of recognition and realization rules.

Here lies the possibility for the development of an interesting theoretical development. The bringing together of work within semiotics, new Vygotskian psychology, and symbolic interactionist and structuralist sociology for the sake of the development of an overall theoretical perspective.

School Design

The specific focus here was on the transition between primary and secondary schooling in years 6 and 7 of the English system of schooling. This work builds on previous studies discussed above. In Daniels (1989) a study of wall displays as tacit relays of the structure of pedagogic practice suggested that the grammar of pedagogic practice of a school is both revealed and relayed indirectly by visual representations of significant texts. In Daniels (1995) it was argued that differences in the structure of pedagogic practices constitute differences in contexts which are of semiotic significance.

In this study, we were concerned with school designs as explicit and tacit relays as students moved between different structures of pedagogic design and practice (Daniels and Tse, 2021). We followed students from the end of year 6 in their primary schools through their transition into year 7 of their secondary schools. Our concern was the effects of continuities and discontinuities in these trajectories. Thus, our focus was on the effects of change in the physical environment and pedagogic factors at the institutional level as experienced at the personal level by students.

Moving between different forms of pedagogic practice that are aligned with design environments appears to have a marked effect on how connected students feel to their schools. It has long been well known that the transition between some homes and school on starting education is more difficult than those where continuity is evident (Bernstein, 2000). The internal coherence of design and practice also seems to be important. Perhaps of more interest is the evidence we have obtained on the implications of moving from one modality of design and practice to another. It would seem when students move between different structures of pedagogic practice, they are faced with specific challenges in adjusting to what may be thought of as new semiotic orders in which specific forms of competence are privileged. We have shown that this does matter.

We deployed Bernstein's approach to the development of a language of description and applied this to the study schools. Vygotsky's understanding of mediation by psychological tools is, as it were, situated by the Bernsteinian understanding of the regulation, structuring, and recontextualisation of the artefact. In this way, a psychological understanding of the social formation of the mind is extended through a sociological understanding of the origins of mediational means.

In a recent paper, Singh (2017) compares Foucault and Bernstein's ideas on governance. She suggests that new policies on school design are in effect new modes of pedagogic governance, and these modes of pedagogic governance are recontextualised in specific practices.

This project advances the development of the post occupancy evaluation of schools through the incorporation of perspectives drawn from Vygotsky's theory of sociogenesis and Bernstein's later work on cultural transmission. The paper has also shown how Bernstein's approach to the codification of modalities of pedagogic practice can be extended to incorporate a broader notion of the configuration of space in the design of a building and allows for the examination of the consequences of change over time.

We suggest that innovations in school design must be understood as relays of underlying arguments that may come into conflict with other pedagogic perspectives in the social world of schooling. The interplay between design and practice can ease or exacerbate the challenges of moving between schools.

This phenomenon may well be an example or the creation of social order discussed by Makitalo and Säljö (2002). They argued that an important view on the dynamic creation of social orders may be gleaned

from the study of processes of categorization within which the development of linguistic categories plays an important part in the way that they mediate professional action. Our findings suggest that categorization influences 'national' levers of policy across the UK (McCluskey *et al.*, 2024). In England, the fragmentation of the school system sits alongside the devolution of power to headteachers. This in contrast to the direct control of public services which is still the norm in the other jurisdictions. Policy guidance was more legalistic in both tone and content in England and Northern Ireland than in Scotland and Wales. The focus in government documents on 'student behaviour' in England was in stark contrast to the emphasis on 'relationships' in Scotland.

Makitalo and Säljö (2002) suggest that once produced, categories become an important feature of the regulation of institutional activities. They argue that:

language categories are produced within collective practices to serve as mediational means (Wertsch, 1991). They are also used by people as constitutive resources in such practices. Through the sedimentation of traditions of argumentation, categories have been produced to form collective ways of understanding people, actions, events, and social practices. Institutionalization implies that categories serve as tools in the process of accounting for the relation between the collective and the individual. Categories are manifested in the concrete infrastructure of organizations – in documents, administrative routines, databases, and other tools. In this sense, they are embedded in political, economic, social and material circumstances. (Makitalo and Säljö, 2002, p.64)

At the individual actor level of school staff working school contexts, these processes may well operate at a tacit or relatively unobservable or unseen level as described by Bernstein (2000) and Wertsch (2007). They are taken as the 'everyday' or 'common sense' or the 'way we do things'. Bowker and Star (2000) argued that infrastructure is invisible when it operates smoothly and becomes visible when it breaks down. Hence at times of threat to a social order the social categories of classification become more visible.

Conclusion

So where does all this take the practice of research on what might be termed contextual effects? Vygotsky provides a powerful account of mediation in which impact on the individual is brought to the fore. He does not provide a means of calibrating or describing the situation in which individual development takes place.

Bernstein offers a theory of cultural transmission and a theoretical basis for constructing models of description which may be crafted to the delicacy of description required by the research questions at hand. The insights that may be drawn from his sociology of pedagogy help us to understand the formation and transmission of the rules that shape human practice.

However, as Atkinson points out it is not overly helpful in progressing an analysis of individual formation.

It is undoubtedly true that in Bernstein's general approach there is little or no concern for the perspectives, strategy and actions of individual social actors in actual social settings. (Atkinson, 1985, p.32)

So, it is possible to see that the respective strengths of each theory can be combined to meet the demands of research agendas. However, the prospects for a single all-powerful theory remain elusive and that may be as it should be. It calls on researchers to ask, what theory do I need for these questions? And importantly why is this the case?

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