Hannele Dufva (Jyväskylä, Finland)

LANGUAGE LEARNERS AS SOCIO-COGNITIVE AND EMBODIED AGENTS: DIALOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Х. Дуфва (Ювяскюля, Финляндия). Изучение иностранных языков с точки зрения диалогической философии: социальный, когнитивный и телесный аспекты. Статья представляет собой анализ идей М. М. Бахтина и В. Н. Волошинова применительно к теориям обучения второму (иностранному) языку. Социально-ориентированные подходы к обучению ИЯ традиционно противопоставляются когнитивно-ориентированным. Понятие диалогичности позволяет снять противопоставление социальных и когнитивных аспектов языковой деятельности, помогая представить их как две взаимодополняющие ипостаси существования человека в обществе. В статье представлен холистический подход к фигуре изучающего иностранный язык, чья речевая деятельность определяется не только социальными и когнитивными практиками, но также и телесным опытом. Теория обучения иностранному языку должна учитывать тот факт, что связь между индивидом и окружающей средой определяются социальным, когнитивным и телесным опытом человека.

Ключевые слова: изучение второго языка, диалогичность, социальный опыт, когнитивный опыт, холистическая перспектива

The article applies Mikhail M. Bakhtin and Valentin N. Voloshinov's ideas to theories of second language acquisition. The dialogical perspective allows for removal of the traditional dichotomy of social and cognitive approaches to second language learning. Instead, the holistic view on the figure of language learner is introduced: he/she is now treated as an agent whose activities are rooted not only in social and cognitive practices, but also in bodily experience. To build a successful theory of second language learning one has to remember that language learners' social, cognitive and physical experience establishes a strong connection between the person and the environment through dialogue and intersubjective use of signs.

Keywords: second language acquisition, dialogism, social experience, cognitive experience, holistic perspective

1. Introduction

The paper discusses the potential contribution of the Bakhtin Circle – particularly Mikhail M. Bakhtin and Valentin N. Voloshinov – to theories about second and foreign language learning and development (for an introduction to the work of the Bakhtin Circle, see, e. g., Brandist 2002). In this paper, I will draw mainly on the Bakhtin Circle dialogism, but it should be clear that some other directions, such as sociocultural tradition, are important (see, Lantolf 2004; Lantolf & Thorne 2006; Johnson 2004). Drawing on the dialogical thinkers, I will argue for a holistic view of language learners in which they are seen as first, socio-cognitive agents participating in the social and cultural practices of language use, but second, also embodied organisms, firmly rooted in the physical world.

The orientation of the early Anglo-American second language acquisition (SLA) research from the 1970s on was a strongly *cognitive* one. Further, the notion of 'cognition' embedded in the research was then defined on the Chomskyan, rationalist lines that were also typical of the psycholinguistics of the time (for criticism, see Dufva 1998). Today, views that stress the essential role of the *social factors* in learning languages have steadily gained ground and become popular. Dialogism, clearly, is one of the directions that argue for the primacy of the social dimension. At the same time, dialogism is also a theory about human mind and human consciousness. Thus the way dialogism regards the concepts of 'social' and 'cognitive', aims at dissolving the Cartesian dualism between them. 'Social' and 'cognitive' are not to be read as two autonomous spheres, but sooner as words that aim at capturing two aspects of the human, meaning-making world: the social aspects that are visible and observable as such events as classroom interaction, or various everyday activities and the cognitive aspects that can be approached and studied upon indirectly, by such methods as introspection, written narratives or oral interviews.

Thus to call dialogism as a socio-cognitive theory does not equal to saying that both social *and* cognitive factors are important in building a theory of language learning. Rather, the word 'socio-cognitive' aims at saying that in describing something that we think of as cognitive, we at the same time capture something that is social – and vice versa (see, e. g. Dufva 2010) As language users and learners we are engaged in activities that are at the same time social and cognitive. Thus di-

alogism transcends the dichotomy between the social context with its manifold practices and the uniquely individual experiences, individual life histories and particular cognitive abilities of language users and learners who are engaged in these particular events.

Furthermore, I will also argue that socio-cognitive world of language learners also needs to be understood in terms if embodiment and materiality. Drawing on Voloshinov's conceptualization of language particularly, the view of language as an abstract, decontextual code is challenged (see also, Dufva et al. 2011). This view indicates that language learners are also – at the same time – embodied agents who are engaged in interactions via concrete, *modality*-dependent ways (as speakers, writers, signers, hearers, readers). Further, the view suggests that in second and foreign language development, learners do not acquire an abstract decontextualised code, but, rather, concrete linguistic usages that are situated and modality-specific.

It would be wrong to hail Bakhtin and Voloshinov as forerunners of a theory of language learning. First, they wrote very little about language learning or teaching; some general , but still important, observations in Voloshinov (1973) and Bakhtin's (2004) paper on teaching stylistics is what we have on the subject (see also Dufva, forthcoming). Second, their writings – particularly those of Bakhtin – are notoriously open to interpretations (see e.g. Brandist 2002; Lähteenmäki 2003). Third, the two authors are not identical in their position (see e.g. Markova 2003). Thus what will be said about language learning leans much on what they wrote about 'language' or 'human consciousness' in general. A further point would be that in developing a contemporary theory of language learning and development, also contemporary writing needs to be drawn on. Here, the recent discussions on dialogism that are most relevant include, e.g., Rommetveit 1992; Lähteenmäki 2001; Lähteenmäki & Dufva, eds. 1998, Linell 1998; 2009. Similarly, recent sociocultural approaches within language learning and language education are to be noted upon, and often also involve dialogical arguments (e.g. Cazden 1989; 1993; Wertsch 1990; Hall, Vitanova & Marchenkova, eds. (2005), Johnson 2004).

2. Cognition and social world: Cartesian or non-Cartesian?

The relationship between social and cognitive is at the crux of language learning. A tangle of different definitions concerning these concepts and their relationship is found within research concerned with

learning and teaching of languages. Perhaps a majority of the approaches shares the Cartesian conviction that what is cognitive is ontologically different from what is social. Some choose examining the cognitive functions as their starting point while others begin with the social realm; some seek to understand the relationship between these two, some aim at excluding the other sphere completely.

The early SLA research was strongly *cognitivist* in orientation – not only did it prioritize the study of the mental and individual aspects, but it consciously aimed at excluding the social element altogether. In its theorizing and concepts, the early research was overwhelmingly influenced by Chomskyan conceptualizations of language and mind – a fact that can be seen already in the process where the terminology changed from 'learning' to 'acquisition'. Accepting the Chomskyan argumentation about the insignificant role of the external environment ('E-language'), the social factors were seen of little importance only and if the social environment was discussed at all, its role was understood as one of 'providing the input' for the learner.

Although cognitivism was undoubtedly the mainstream paradigm during the years from the 1970s to the 1990s, there were also some doubts that were expressed from the very first. Dell Hymes was one of those authors who voiced their concern about leaving social factors outside analysis - and his ethnographically oriented views on communicative competence and language use continue to have an influence (for the issues relevant to the present argument, see, Cazden 1989; 1993). By the 1990s, however, cognitivism was encountered by increasing criticism, as obvious in, e.g., the influential paper by Firth and Wagner (1997). Criticizing the cognitivist orientation for its asocial focus on experimentation and quantitative analysis, they spoke for using methods for describing the social interaction, such as *conversation analysis*. Similarly, Rampton (1997) pointed out the importance for analyzing such real-life issues of the societal world as race or ethnicity. The need to analyze the social world became increasingly acknowledged in many areas, including the paradigm of *language socialization* where also ethnographic methods are used to analyze how learners as novices come to participate the events in communities of practice (see e.g. Kulick & Schieffelin 2004) and where also real-life concerns such as the needs of language education or minority issues are attended to.

In many ways, it seems that SLA research is now characterized by what Block (2003) has called a 'social turn'. The research community has moved – or is moving – from a basically cognitivist position to a basically social one. This movement is a truly sympathetic one, but taken to an extreme it can also mean a denial of the research foci that deal with the individual and/or with issues that can be defined as cognitive. An extremist social position may also result in a reductionist view where such events as language learning are seen as mere social constructions, or discursive practices (for criticism, see Dufva 2004a; Dufva 2010). Also, an extremist social view that focuses on, e.g., mere description of interactive situation is simply not explanatory enough as a theory of learning.

In a way, then, perhaps a new 'cognitive turn' is on its way in which it is recognized that social and cognitive viewpoints can not only be combined, but also merged. Thus something that could be seen as a third position – possibly a range of positions – is occupied by authors or paradigms who seek to understand the complex influences and interrelationships between the two worlds of social and cognitive, rejecting Cartesian arguments and formulations. A feasible theory of language learning needs to address the question of by what kind of processes the language practices of the community will be *appropriated* by an individual. In other words, the research community needs to answer many old questions of the 'cognitivist' framework, this time being equipped with new concepts and possibly also new methodological tools.

The directions based on the Russian philosophy and psychology of the early 20th century – sociocultural theorizing that draws upon Vygotsky's work (Wertsch 1990; Lantolf 2000, 2004; Lantolf and Thorne 2006, Pavlenko & Lantolf 2001), Activity Theory that recontextualised ideas originally addressed by A.N. Leont'ev (see e.g. Engeström, Miettinen & Punamäki, eds. 1998) and dialogism of the Bakhtin Circle are perhaps the foremost representatives of current directions that take a socio-cognitive stand. They all highlight the primacy of the social in their own ways, but at the same time, remind us of the fact that human mind and the social world are mutually inclusive and reciprocally embedded in each other. As Lantolf (2004:30-31) points out, rather than being a theory of the social or of the cultural aspects of human existence, sociocultural thinking is a theory of mind. Below, I will discuss the dialogical position in more detail and refer only passingly to

Activity Theory, sociocultural theory and other non-Cartesian directions, at the same time implicitly recognizing their importance and relevance to the issues discussed.

3. Dialogism: sociocognitive *and* embodied perspective?

There is no doubt that the analysis of the social – whether in the sense of actual instances of concrete interactions or in the sense of the macro-structures of society influencing our usages and decisions - is an important starting point of dialogism. However, it needs to be stressed that dialogism does not see cognition as something that can be *reduced* to the social events or discursive practices. As an essentially non-Cartesian approach, dialogism does not subscribe to the conceptualization of *social as external* and *cognitive as internal*. The two central concepts of dialogism – dialogue and intersubjectivity – are thus not to be understood as processes occurring *between* two worlds (social-cognitive). Rather, as the non-Cartesian argument would have it, what we call social and cognitive are both events (or, eventing) within one human world that is essentially semiotic in nature. As Voloshinov (1973) argued, (personal) *psyche* and (societal) *ideology* are in a constantly on-going process always mutually included in each other.

For the researchers of language learning, dialogism offers a perspective which is cognitive in the sense that it is interested in the perspective of the learner as a unique individual but also deeply informed of the various positions the learners occupy in their manifold social contexts. Language learners are unique as individuals, but at the same time they are also located in particular social, cultural and historical situations (see also Breen 2001:173) and share ways of speaking and beliefs of their communities. The conclusion seems to be that in order to understand language learning, we need to analyze the social events, the social interaction or societal issues at large. However, we also need to understand how learners are engaged – as unique selves – in interaction, how they experience these events, what beliefs they might have about language(s) and language learning and what capacities they have (e.g. Dufva 2003; Aro 2009). This is to argue that as social and cognitive aspects are always co-present and there is no way of detaching one from the other: the social and cognitive are interwoven in the variety of ways the individuals participate events.

Further, I will argue here that the socio-cognitive theory of language learning can be strengthened by adding the dimension of em-

bodiment. It thus needs to be pointed out that language learning is not socio-cognitive in the abstract sense. Language use consists of concrete, embodied acts of human agency that testify for a fundamental embodiment and belonging-to-the-world. If this is accepted, it follows that language learning could also be thought of not only as a situated but also as a rather more concrete and modality-dependent process than usually considered. In trying to figure out how language learning happens, we should turn our gaze to concrete multimodal events of language use that occur in the physical world.

For example, children learn their first language along ordinary conversations that involve talking and listening but also facial expressions, movements of body, or gestures of hands. These semiotic practices do not occur *in vacuo*, but in real situations, with real people. Thus embodiment also reminds us of the fact that not only are the language learners real persons, but that, as Hymes' (1974) view of spoken communication suggests, each situation is characterized by a multitude of factors that both provide particular affordances and set particular constraints to language use. For example, research carried out in the Finnish context shows that foreign language classrooms provide textbook-centered and literacy-based materials and that classroom interaction, most usually, is teacher-led and highly regulated in nature while in the contexts of informal language learning, teenager may be engaged in such activities as gaming (Piirainen-Marsh & Tainio 2009) or reading magazines and watching television (Nikula & Pitkänen-Huhta 2008).

To summarize, the dialogical perspective thus seems to suggest is that in order to understand language learning, we need to analyze the learner's life-world: the experienced world with its affordances and learning opportunities and the practices by which the learner proceeds to appropriate these. In what follows I will examine the potential contribution of the dialogical perspective in more detail drawing both on Bakhtin and Voloshinov. Although the social origin of mind is a starting point for both Bakhtin and Voloshinov, their positions are not identical. To pin down one difference, Bakhtin's understanding of the 'social' seems to lean on 'interpersonal' whereas Voloshinov's arguments are biased towards the 'societal' (Markova 2003). Thus the Bakhtinian interpretation helps perhaps towards understanding learners as individual human beings with their experiences while Voloshinov's arguments focus on how, in what kind of circumstances and un-

der which constraints learners are engaged in interaction with others. Bearing in mind that sociocognitive is here given also a material and embodied reading; I will discuss the Bakhtinian *interpersonal* interpretation first.

3.1. Bakhtinian dialogue: learners as persons

Dialogue is the central notion of Bakhtin's thinking. But what does it imply and, importantly, what is its relevance for language learning research and the reformulation of language learners as persons? First, Bakhtin's (1986: 167) uses the word 'dialogue' to express relationality and the essential interpersonality in being a human – personhood is not confined to an 'I' but to an 'I' in interrelationship with an other. There is no essential self and/or a composite of features that would be *inside one's skull.* Instead, the Bakhtinian phrasing indicates that personhood is dynamic: it takes place between persons and/or occurs in relations rather than being defined by static cognitive features or traits[1]. Ultimately, the concept of dialogue does not refer to any concrete event or an exchange of verbal communication only, but rather, aims at capturing a potential for the dynamic process of "asking and responding". Human agents – thus also language learners – live in a world of potential and actual relationships – or, *systemic* relationships as Järvilehto (1998) would call them.

Bakhtin's view of personhood and being-in-the-world thus seems to speak for a social, 'interpersonally' (and also phenomenologically) biased view in which selves are characterized through interrelationships. Transferring this view to language learning, it would mean to say that learning does not happen by the power of internalizing the input one is exposed to, but rather, that *learning occurs in different relationships.* However, Bakhtin's (1986) view of self as emergent in relationality does not erase the role of the individual experience and thinking. Bakhtin (1993) emphasizes that each person occupies a unique position in the world and thus by a unique perspective as well. Therefore each person is a unique me who may have his/her 'private' world of experiences and thoughts, but who is still constantly connected to others and influenced by their words and deeds. This is a

---

[1] Person-to-person dialogue is not the only reading of Bakhtin's concept. Dialogue has been understood also as a person-to-world or even person-to-god relationship.

sociocognitive argument: although our minds (our selves) are relational and emerge in the dialogue, we still participate in the dialogue as unique beings having our own vantage points. Thus the dialogical view of language learners differs radically from the cognitivist approach where learners were regarded as autonomous rationalist agents, devices for processing computational information and/or replaceable subjects in experimental research. At the same time, it also differs from those viewpoints that see them at the mercy of the societal forces, as mere "puppets on a string" (cf. Linell 1998).

Thus it is not enough to say that language is learned and used *in* interaction, or *by* interaction. Rather, language is learned and used by the power of different systemic relationships that are available for each language learner. These relationships may be manifold: ranging, e. g., from spoken interactions with other human agents to activities that involve using different material artifacts such as texts in books or in the virtual environments. This, however, may be another way of saying that learning and using language is a deeply *other-oriented* process and – in being other-oriented – is also a *meaningful* and purposeful process. In other words still, Bakhtin (1986) would say that there is *addressivity* present in all language use: words will be spoken *for* a purpose, *to* somebody. At the same time, the words will be spoken *by* somebody real, by a *voice* that belong to a speaking personality or "speaking consciousness" (Bakhtin 1981).

My argument here is that the Bakhtinian dialogue can also be understood through the notion of embodiment. This might seem a somewhat contradictory argument as Bakhtin's position has also been interpreted as an idealist one: his concept of dialogue has been regarded not only as a highly abstract, but also an immaterial, even spiritual process. Although this, along many other issues in Bakhtin's œuvre, is open to interpretation, it is perhaps worthwhile to note how frequently he mentions such words as 'life' and 'living' when he talks about 'dialogue'. Also, his wordings (in e. g. Bakhtin 1984: 243) are rather concrete: "a person participates in the dialogue of living 'with his eyes, lips, hands, soul, spirit, *with his whole body and deeds*'". A similar emphasis on embodiment (as I would characterize it) can be found in Bakhtin (1993) where he mentions the *bodily position* – a unique, spatio-temporal location that humans occupy – that offers them a perspective to the world. To underline the fact that our viewpoints to the world are bodily, Bakhtin (1993:47) says: "as a *disembodied spirit,* I lose

my compellent, ought-to-be relationship to the world, I lose the actuality of the world".

To me, Bakhtin's phrasings suggest that dialogue is about life and living persons, and being part of the human life-world that is not only social and cognitive but also embodied in nature (see also Dufva 2004b). Having said that, it needs to be pointed out that the assumption of embodiment does not necessitate an assumption of crude materialism and neither does it entail the assumption that language is a matter of brains only. Instead, it can be suggested that Bakhtin's views come rather close to the phenomenology of the body in Merleau-Ponty's (1974) writings. Thus the body should not be understood in its narrow biological, or, mechanical sense, but through regarding it as a *lived,* or *experienced body.*

For the current topic, the above argument seems to indicate that each language learner is a *person* who has an individual life history with characteristic memories and recollections, a view which challenges the approaches in which individuals have been regarded as anonymous 'subjects' of the experimental/ laboratory research (for criticism of the positivistic and experimental views, see, e. g. Roebuck 2000). There are many examples from the recent research that have shown the importance of addressing the learner's personal and experienced views and discussing their relevance for theorizing learning (e. g. Breen, ed. 2001). Pietikäinen & Dufva (2006) illustrated the co-presence of personal and societal viewpoints in their analysis of how a Sami-speaking journalist speaks about language and identity: the results showed that individuals draw on socially and publicly available, popular or even hegemonic *discourses,* but that these intertwine with the life-world and life-span of the person and bring in a personal *voice.* Similarly, life-stories of teachers (Kalaja & Dufva 1996) or the students' self-portraits as language learners (Kalaja et al. 2008) show how the unique experiences of language learning or teaching intertwine with events and decisions at the macro level of the society: the language education policies, the linguistic and educational discourses and the practices of the classroom.

Personhood, life history and experiences throw light on the particular features and unique experiences of learning languages, but they also, importantly, tell a story of a more general and universal. It was argued above that, as language learners, people are persons, unique in their perspective. But accepting that the position is a bodily one, we

can argue that learners share the physical world of embodiment with other embodied agents. Thus on one hand, the Bakhtinian argument is about the ultimacy of the bodily perspective (and uniqueness of each language learner). But at the same time, the notion of dialogue opens up a possibility to negotiate between the unique viewpoints so that these do not remain incommensurable. It is thus not a contradiction to say that dialogism also emphasizes both uniqueness and connectedness and here, the notion of embodiment plays an important role. The body, as Holquist (1997: 224) puts it, is not only a unique place to be, but also 'the one home we share in the world's materiality'. Drawing on not only Bakhtin, but also Voloshinov and Rommetveit (1992), it can be argued that unique viewpoints meet and are subjected to negotiation of meanings in the on-going semiosis and meaning-making that is intersubjective in nature and that happens in an embodied manner.

3.2. Voloshinov's intersubjectivity: semiosis as a place for learning

Bakhtin's conceptualization of the dialogue that was described above is a 'softer', more interpersonal viewpoint to the human connectedness. Voloshinov's (1973; 1976) arguments are firstly, more societal in nature, and secondly, give more emphasis to the role of language. The position of man is defined in the Aristotelian manner as a 'social animal' but also as a member of a social class. 'Social', in Voloshinov's parlance, refers most often to the social stratification and to the person's position within the society.

Voloshinov (1973) speaks about the social world in terms of 'ideology'; these are the points of view and perspectives that are characteristic to the society and the ways of speaking that accompany them. The individual mind – the importance of which is not denied – is called 'psyche', and ideology and psyche are regarded as reciprocally connected. There is a "continuous dialectical interplay" between psyche and the *ideological signs,* a process where psyche and ideology intrude to each other, becoming mutually self-effacing (Voloshinov's 1973:39). In their constant mixing and mingling, psyche and ideology are thus *of the same material* – that is *signs.* Intersubjectivity is achieved in *semiosis,* in the processes of signification.

However, it needs to be pointed out that talking about the interaction between psyche and ideology, Voloshinov does not say that the process of semiosis means *transferring* signs from 'out' to 'in', from

'inside' to 'outside' or from one person to another. Transfer of information is a wrong metaphor, because nothing is being *moved* from one place to another. For example, a spoken conversation can be characterized as a process in which meanings are being negotiated (Rommetveit 1972) or language is being *shared* rather than transferred. For example, a conversation between native and non-native speaker can be thought of as a situation where the utterances of the native speaker are afforded for the non-native speaker offering him opportunities of learning (Suni, 2008).

It is interesting that Voloshinov also addresses the issues of body, embodiment and materiality. Voloshinov's criticism of the Saussurean notion of language as an abstract code, or system, is well-known and he himself saw language in terms of materially based, embodied phenomena, arguing that linguists should analyze language in its *concrete* manifestations, not as an abstract system of linguistic forms, or as isolated monological utterances (Voloshinov 1973: 94-95). If his view is accepted, it seems to follow that linguists should not study only what they see as 'verbal', but also what was in many cases dismissed as 'nonverbal' (e.g. voice, gesture, expression). Although already Hymes (1974) made a similar observation, it has been only recently that there has been a surge of interest in studying interaction and human language use in all its multimodal manifestations. This angle is very welcome also in language learning research.

To add, Voloshinov (1973: 90) also points out that signs *need* to be materialized in order to fulfill their function, they are material and cannot exist in abstraction It follows that the material means and resources in question (such as present in articulated speech or in the means for producing written texts) will mold *what* it is possible to express. Voloshinov's arguments thus seem to lead to a claim that there is no 'language' to be learned (in the abstracted sense), but different modality-specific practices. The modality-specific practices do not refer only to the 'traditional' ones of speaking, listening, reading and writing, but also all multi-modal ways of contemporary language use in face-to-face and media environments. Also, while the post-Saussurean 20th century linguistics seemingly conceptualized and analyzed language as an underlying, modality-independent system, many authors have now argued that in fact the linguistic analysis has been influenced by written modality and literacy, and thus often embeds a *written language bias* (e. g. Linell 2005) – repeating the very

same observation that was made by Voloshinov (1973). It is no wonder that a similar bias of written language, literacy and textbooks is typical of institutional language teaching and assessment of the learners' skills (Dufva & Alanen 2005; Dufva et al. 2011).

If turned into more contemporary wordings, Voloshinov's arguments seem to suggest that concrete, multimodal events that occur at the social scene are one focus of language learning research and that this analysis could – and perhaps should – be complemented by using the learners' experiences of these events. Language learners most definitely, social agents and members of the society, but it has to be noted that also the social practices are manifest in concrete deeds, events and documents that are somehow perceived and acted upon by language learners.

Summarizing, different as Bakhtin and Voloshinov are in their emphasis, the arguments of both aim at diluting the difference between the cognitive and the social worlds – if these words are given a Cartesian interpretation – and also emphasize the fact that as language users and learners humans are not only sociocognitive beings but also embodied agents.

4. Conclusion

The dialogical arguments of the Bakhtin Circle members that were first presented during the late 1920s and early 1930s have not lost their acuteness. Their work can be read as a critical commentary of the Cartesian conceptualizations of language and mind and the dichotomy between the cognitive and the social. In this, their work helps us notice the cul-de-sac into which both the early, cognitivist SLA research and the radical social views lead us. In rejecting the two extremist approaches, dialogism would seem to offer insights and ingredients for a metatheory of language learning where the conceptualization of man is holistic (social-cognitive-embodied) and where the connectedness of the learners with their environment (through dialogue and intersubjectivity) is important.

The holistic view of language learner says that learners are *persons*. On one hand, each language learner is a unique self who has a unique life history and unique experiences – each learner develops his or her own *voice.* On the other hand, persons are also born into a certain historical and cultural context which is also the context of their first language(s). The social environments and speech genres that a person

encounters provide affordances – and in providing certain affordances they exclude some others. Therefore, the linguistic repertoire of each person is dependent both on individual and social factors which constantly intertwine.

But the holistic view also says that the bodily aspects of language learning should not be forgotten. Each Me, or each Self, is born not only to a social context but into a physical existence as well. By their embodiment, persons are also bodily beings who engage in sensory-motor activity to use language in various instances of spoken, written and signed interactions and who are thereby by necessity connected to the respective physical environments and the constraints present in these. As language learners humans are *also* organisms in their human Umwelt (see also Dufva 2004b). The view does not imagine language users as mechanical bodies, or biologically tuned message-senders and receivers - and it does not refer to an assumption either that it is only the brain that matters in the process of representing language knowledge or using it. It is important to note that even though language learners can be regarded as organisms, they are 'experiencing' and 'lived' bodies in the sense of Merleau-Ponty, capable of not only 'reasoning' or 'processing information', but also 'giving significance', 'feeling', or 'remembering'.

The comments of Bakhtin and Voloshinov are not sufficient as such for developing a sociocognitive and embodied metatheory of language learning. However, dialogism can be linked to other frameworks of more contemporary research and theorising, arguments and results therein. Within non-Cartesian approaches to cognitive sciences, (social) psychology and language learning and teaching research there are directions and authors whose views seem to be compatible with dialogism, and/or helpful in developing the theorizing further on lines that are similar to the view described above. These include ecological psychology (Gibson 1970), systemic psychology (Järvilehto 1998), embodiment in language (Thibault 2006), ecological approach (van Lier 2006) and rather self-evidently, the research carried out within sociocultural approaches (e.g. Lantolf & Thorne 2006). Different as their arguments are, they insist on seeing the relationship between social and cognitive in a non-Cartesian manner and they all pay attention to the embodied nature of being a human.

To sum up, the dialogical standpoint that was developed above might be characterized as a 'cognitive' one, because it stresses the

need to consider the processes of language learning that are individual and cognitive in character. In this, however, the view also strongly suggests the need to re-consider the assumptions, concepts and arguments of the cognitivist era. At the same time, the standpoint is clearly 'social'. Dialogical thinking certainly recognizes the fact that humans are also social animals – also in those matters that involve learning and teaching of languages. However, a dialogist would say that it is not *enough* to examine social interaction or social practices in order to reach feasible descriptions of the prerequisites and processes of language learning. It is thus evident that the dialogical conceptualization of 'cognition' intertwines it essentially with *social* interaction and human networks, but also, by implication, through embodiment, with the physical world at large. Human cognition is part of the social world, as the social is part of cognition, both being characterized by semiosis. As the signs of meaning-making are not abstractions but have a material base, the sociocognitive world with its processes of mediation and its various artifacts and tools is also a world which is characterized by embodiment. Finally, although my argument above is seemingly tripartite – consisting of the social, cognitive and embodied aspects – it needs to be added and specified that the purpose is not to separate them from each other. As language users and language learners we do live in one human world – not in two or three distinct and separate worlds.

REFERENCES

1. Aro, M. Speakers and doers. Polyphony and agency in children's beliefs about language learning // Jyväskylä Studies in Humanities. – 116. – University of Jyväskylä, 2009. URL: http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-39-3532-0 (accessed September 10, 2011).

2. Bakhtin, M. M. The dialogic imagination / Trans. by C. Emerson & M. Holquist. – Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.

3. Bakhtin, M. M. Speech genres and other late essays. – Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986.

4. Bakhtin, M. M. Toward a philosophy of the act. – Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993.

5. Bakhtin, M. M. Dialogic origin and dialogic pedagogy of grammar: Stylistics as part of Russian language instruction in secondary school / Transl. L. Stone // Journal of Russian and East European Psychology. – 2004. – 42, 6. – Pp. 12-49.

6. Block, D. The social turn in second language acquisition // Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. – 2003.

7. Brandist, C. The Bakhtin Circle: Philosophy, culture, and politics. – London: Pluto Press, 2002.

8. Cazden, C. Contributions of the Bakhtin Circle to 'Communicative competence' // Applied Linguistics. – 1989. –10, 2. – Pp. 116-127.

9. Cazden, C. Vygotsky, Hymes and Bakhtin: From word to utterance and voice // Contexts for learning / Ed. by E. A. Teoksessa Forman, N. Minick, C. A. Stone. – New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

10. Dialogue with Bakhtin on Second and foreign language learning: New perspectives / Ed. by J. K. Hall, G. Vitanova, L. Marchenkova. – New York: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2005.

11. Dialogues on Bakhtin. Interdisciplinary Readings / Ed. by M. Lähteenmäki, H. Dufva. – Jyväskylä: Centre for Applied Language Studies, 1998. URL: https://www.jyu.fi/hum/laitokset/solki/tutkimus/julkaisut/pdf-julkaisut (accessed September 10, 2011).

12. Dufva, H. From 'psycholinguistics' to a dialogical psychology of language: Aspects of the inner discourse(s) // Dialogues on Bakhtin: Interdisciplinary readings / Ed. by H. Dufva & M. Lähteenmäki. – Jyväskylä: Centre for Applied Language Studies, 1998. – Pp. 87-104. URL: https://www.jyu.fi/hum/laitokset/solki/tutkimus/julkaisut/pdf-julkaisut (accessed September 10, 2011).

13. Dufva, H. Beliefs in dialogue: a Bakhtinian view // Beliefs about SLA: New Research Approaches / Ed. by A. M. F. Barcelos and P. Kalaja. – Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer, 2003. – Pp. 131-151.

14. Dufva, H. The contribution of the Bakhtin Circle to the psychology of language // Papers from the 30th Finnish conference of linguistics, Joensuu, May 15-16, 2003 / Ed. by M. Nenonen. – 2004(a). – Pp. 21-26.

15. Dufva, H. Culture, language and thinking: Whorf, Bakhtin, Merleau-Ponty and situated embodiment // Thinking culture dialogically / Ed. by F. Bostad, C. Brandist, L. S. Evensen & H. C. Faber. – Macmillan Publishers, 2004(b).

16. Dufva, H. Reclaiming the Mind: Dialogism, language learning and the importance of considering cognition // Proceedings of the Second International Interdisciplinary Conference on Perspectives and Limits of Dialogism in Mihail Bakhtin. June 3-5, 2009 / Ed. by K. Junefelf & P. Nordin. – Stockholm: University of Stockholm. 2010. –

Pp. 41-48. URL: http://www.nordiska.su.se/pub/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d= 11267&a=60149 (accessed September 10, 2011).

17. Dufva, H. (forthcoming). Bakhtin and Second Language Acquisition // Social, Dynamic, and Complexity Theory Approaches to Second Language Development / Ed. by A. Ohta // The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics: Vol. 21 / Ed. by C. Chapelle.

18. Dufva, H. Metalinguistic awareness in dialogue: Bakhtinian considerations / H. Dufva, R. Alanen // Dialogue with Bakhtin on Second and foreign language learning: New perspectives / Ed. by J. K. Hall, G. Vitanova & L. Marchenkova. – New York: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2005.

19. Dufva, H. Languages as objects of learning: language learning as a case of multilingualism / H. Dufva, M. Suni, M. Aro, O.-P. Salo // Apples: Journal of Applied Language Studies. – 2011. – 5,1. – Pp. 109-124. URL: http://apples.jyu.fi/index.php?volume=5&issue=1 (accessed September 10, 2011).

20. Firth, A. On discourse, communication and some fundamental concepts in SLA research / A. Firth, J. Wagner // Modern Language Journal. – 1997. – 81, 3. – Pp. 285-300.

21. Gibson, J. J. The ecological approach to visual perception. – Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979.

22. Holquist, M. Bakhtin and the beautiful science: The paradox of cultural relativity revisited // Dialogue and critical discourse, Language, culture and critical theory / Ed. by M. Macovski. – New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. – Pp. 215-236.

23. Hymes, D. Foundations of Sociolinguistics: An Ethnographic Approach. – Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1974.

24. Johnson, M. A philosophy of second language learning. – New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.

25. Järvilehto, T. The Theory of the Organism // Environment System: I. Description of the theory. Integrative Physiological and Behavioural Science. – 1998. – 33, 4. – Pp. 321-334.

26. Kalaja, P. Self-portraits of learners of EFL: Finnish students draw and tell / P. Kalaja, R. Alanen, H. Dufva // Narratives of learning and teaching EFL / Ed. by P. Kalaja, V. Menezes, A. M. F. Barcelos. – London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

27. Kalaja, P. The life of every (foreign) language teacher is worth writing about / P. Kalaja, H. Dufva // Unity and Diversity. Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Narrative / Ed. by J. Knuf. – Lexington: University of Kentucky, 1996. – Pp. 163-169.

28. Kulick, D. Language socialization / D. Kulick, D. D. Schieffelin // A companion to linguistic anthropology / Ed. by A. Duranti. – Oxford: Blackwell, 2004. – Pp. 349-368.

29. Lähteenmäki, M. Dialogue, Language and Meaning: Variations on Bakhtinian Themes. – Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, Diss, 2001.

30. Lähteenmäki, M. On the interpretation of Baxtin's linguistic ideas: the problem of the texts from 1950-60s // Russian Linguistics. – 2003. – 27:1. – Pp. 23-39.

31. Lantolf, J. Socio-cultural theory and the second language learning. – New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

32. Lantolf, J. Sociocultural theory and second and foreign language learning: an overview of sociocultural theory // New insights into foreign language learning and teaching / Ed. by K. van Esch, O. St John. – Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2004.

33. Lantolf, J. P. Sociocultural theory and the genesis of second language development / J. P. Lantolf, S. Thorne. – Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

34. Learner contributions to language learning. New directions in research / Ed. by M. P. Breen. – London: Longman, 2001.

35. Linell, P. Approaching dialogue. – Amsterdam: J. Benjamins, 1998.

36. Linell, P. The written language bias in linguistics: Its nature, origins and transformations. – London: Routledge, 2005.

37. Linell, P. Rethinking language, mind, and world dialogically. – Charlotte, NC: IAP Information Age Publishing, 2009.

38. Marková, I. Dialogicality and social representations: The dynamics of mind. – Cambridge: CUP, 2003.

39. Merleau-Ponty, M. Phenomenology of perception. – New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974.

40. Nikula, T. Using photographs to access stories of learning English / T. Nikula, A. Pitkänen-Huhta // Narratives of learning and teaching EFL / Ed. by P. Kalaja, V. Menezes, A. M. F. Barcelos. – London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

41. Pavlenko, A. Second language learning as participation and the (re)construction of selves / A. Pavlenko, J. P. Lantolf // Sociocultural theory and second language learning / Ed. by J. P. Lantolf. – Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. – Pp. 155-177.

42. Perspectives on activity theory / Ed. by Y. Engeström, R. Miettinen, R-L. Punamäki. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

43. Pietikäinen, S. Voices in discourses. Dialogism, critical discourse analysis and ethnic identity / S. Pietikäinen, H. Dufva // Journal of Sociolinguistics. – 2006. – 10, 2. – Pp. 205-224.

44. Piirainen-Marsh, A. Other-repetition as a resource for participation in the activity of playing a video game / A. Piirainen-Marsh, L. Tainio // The Modern Language Journal. – 2009. – 93, 2.–Pp. 153-169.

45. Rampton, B. Second language research in late modernity: A response to Firth and Wagner // Modern Language Journal. – 1997. – 81, 3. – Pp. 329-333.

46. Roebuck, R. Subjects speak out: How learners position themselves in a psycholinguistic task // Sociocultural theory and second language learning / Ed. by J. P. Lantolf. – Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. – Pp. 79-95.

47. Rommetveit, R. Outlines of a dialogically based social-cognitive approach to human cognition and communication // The dialogical alternative: Towards a theory of language and mind / Ed. by A. H. Vold. – Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1992.

48. Suni, M. Toista kieltä vuorovaikutuksessa, Kielellisten resurssien jakaminen toisen kielen omaksumisen alkuvaiheessa. – Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, 2008. URL: http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-39-3209-1 (accessed September 10, 2011).

49. Thibault, P. Brain, mind and signifying body. – London: Continuum Books, 2006.

50. van Lier, L. The ecology and semiotics of language learning: A sociocultural perspective. – Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2006.

51. Voloshinov, V. N. Marxism and the philosophy of language – New York: Seminar Press, 1973.

52. Voloshinov, V. N. Freudianism. A Marxist critique. – New York: Academic Press, 1976.

53. Wertsch, J. Dialogue and dialogism in a socio-cultural approach to mind // The dynamics of dialogue / Ed. by I. Markova, K. Foppa. – New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990. – Pp. 62-82.

Ханнеле Дуфва
Ювяскюльский университет
Семинааринкату 15, PL 35, 40014, Ювяскюля
Финляндия
dufva@campus.jyu.fi

Hannele Dufva
University of Jyväskylä
PL 35, 40014, Seminaarinkatu 15, Jyväskylä
Finland
phone: +358 40 8053181