

# Clandestine interactional reading: Intertextuality and double-voicing under the desk

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## Abstract

This article approaches reading as an ideologically grounded and institutionally organized activity. It examines children's clandestine practice of interactional reading in an educational context where individual silent involvement with text is the teachers' prescribed way of reading. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in second- and third-grade elementary school classrooms, I document the crafty ways in which children inject interactional reading into the terrain of the normative reading canon, where it thrives under the surface of prescribed classroom praxis. In addition, I examine how clandestine episodes of interactional reading unfold and identify characteristic ways in which texts are interactionally accessed and apprehended.

Through the analysis of reading practice, I aim to illuminate the interface between the sly mechanisms through which a certain *habitus* perdures, and the tactical operations that produce its clandestine transformations.

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## 1. Introduction

Reading is no longer viewed as merely a psycholinguistic phenomenon. While decoding and comprehension, and their underlying neurological mechanisms, remain central topics of reading research, the socio-cultural nature of reading has also become a central focus of inquiry. Reading is a situated activity. As such, it can best be approached as a range of historically contingent, ideologically grounded, and culturally organized practices (e.g., Barton, 1994; Cook-Gumperz,

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1986; Duranti & Ochs, 1986, 1997; Heath, 1983; Street, 1984). In proposing in the early 1990s an approach to reading pedagogy informed by critical sociology, Alan Luke and Carolyn Baker cogently wrote:

How people are taught to read, what it conventionally means to read, what and when and where people can and do read, the ways in which they read these things, why they read them, how their readings are used and heard, are not supplied by “cognitive processes” or by texts—they are provided in the social, economic, ideological, cultural and institutional fabric of a given time and place. (Luke and Baker, 1991, xiii)

Thus, learning to read is not *only* a matter of acquiring a set of cognitive skills afforded by neurophysiological maturation; it is also a wider process of literacy socialization through which children acquire a reading *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1977, 1996; Bourdieu & Chartier, 1985). Reading curricula and pedagogy propose normative definitions of involvement with text (Heap, 1991). Certain kinds of reading are authorized and promoted, while others tend to be neglected or even intentionally excluded.

In the past two decades, a number of studies have shed light on the ideological nature of the dominant reading *habitus*, detailing its multifaceted manifestations and pinpointing its mechanisms of inculcation and reproduction (e.g., Baker, 1991; Cochran-Smith, 1986; Freebody, Luke, & Gilbert, 1991; Heath, 1983; Luke, 1992), but little attention has been devoted to the analysis of unofficial reading practices—that is, the surreptitious and inventive activity by which readers flout the rules of cultural orthodoxy (de Certeau, 1984).<sup>1</sup> This article responds to this neglect by penetrating the cracks of reading pedagogy and curricular classroom activities. In particular, I draw on an ethnographic and discourse analytic study of children’s clandestine interactional reading in an educational context where teachers promoted individual silent involvement with text as the preferred way of reading. The study documents the crafty ways in which children inject interactional reading into the terrain of the normative reading canon, where it thrives under the surface of prescribed classroom praxis. In addition, this paper examines how clandestine episodes of interactional reading unfold, thereby revealing characteristic ways in which texts are interactionally accessed and apprehended. Particular attention is devoted to two prominent meaning-making procedures in clandestine interactional reading: interactional construction of intertextuality and double-voiced reading. My analysis demonstrates that these two procedures rest on an understanding of the author’s intended meaning of the focal textual passage in order to then infiltrate other voices therein, thereby challenging its authority and deflecting in different ways its meaning (Bakhtin, 1981).

Methodologically and thematically, this study is inspired by and aims to follow the tradition of ethnographic studies of the classroom (e.g., Cazden, 1988; Cochran-Smith, 1986; Dyson, 1989, 1993; Erickson & Mohatt, 1982; Gutiérrez, Rymes, & Larson, 1995; Mehan, 1979, 1982; Philips, 1983), as well as of children’s social worlds and peer culture (e.g., Corsaro, 1985; Dyson, 1989; Goodwin, 1990). In particular, it is in keeping with the work of (Gutiérrez et al., 1995; Gutiérrez, Baquedano-Lopez, & Tejada, 1999) by paying special attention to the *underlife* in the classroom and to the meaning-making practices of students other than those prescribed in the scripted curriculum.

<sup>1</sup> Gilmore’s research on sub-rosa literacy activities of urban African-American elementary school children is a notable and inspiring exception (Gilmore, 1986).

This article has also a theoretical ambition: following in de Certeau's footsteps (de Certeau, 1984), it aims to illuminate the interface between the sly mechanisms through which a certain *habitus* perdures, and the tactical operations that produce its clandestine transformations. In this spirit, I focus on reading as a practice shaped by a certain ideology and punctuated by unofficial variants. In addition, by focusing on the school – that is, on the institutional site where the reading *habitus* is inculcated and reproduced – this article offers evidence of the parallel inception of improvised, ingenious procedures for the *habitus*' creative manipulation and transformation.

## 2. Data and methodology

The paper draws upon a 9-month-long ethnographic study of children's reading activities in two classrooms, one second grade and one third grade, in an elementary school affiliated with a large research university in California. In keeping with the school's mission, the classrooms were ethnically and socio-economically diverse.

Approximately 45 h of video-recordings document the different kinds of reading activities practiced in the two classrooms. The video-recorded data are integrated with daily fieldnotes providing additional information about the classrooms' micro-culture, implementation of curricular goals, and daily decision-making by the teachers. Audio-recorded open-ended interviews with the two teachers primarily responsible for instruction in the two classrooms offer further insights on their approach to teaching and their ideas about reading.

The analysis I present here focuses specifically on approximately 15 h of video-recorded observations of peer interactional reading that children performed spontaneously, often surreptitiously. These episodes of interactional reading among peers have been transcribed according to the conventions of conversation analysis (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984; see Appendix A). For this analysis, I used methods from both ethnography and discourse analysis (Erickson, 1995; Goodwin, 2000). In particular, five dimensions are considered: (1) reading context, that is the built environment and instructional situation in which the joint reading activity occurs; (2) participation framework; (3) texts, in their form and content; (4) talk, as it is produced in the course of reading activity, be it oral decoding of text, interpretive commentaries, procedural indications, scaffolding actions, etc.; (5) gestures, as they guide and support joint engagement in reading.

## 3. Reading *habitus*

Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* as systems of acquired dispositions, functioning as organizing principles of action as well as categories of perception and assessment (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990), invites approaching human activities – particularly those traditionally conceived of as quintessentially cognitive phenomena, such as reading – as historically rooted and culturally shaped practices.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the notion of *habitus* highlights the bodily dimension of practice. Bourdieu underlines that the *habitus* is inscribed in the body (Bourdieu, 1990) and that the socialization process pertains not only to beliefs and attitudes and to ways of thinking about and perceiving reality, but also to the ways people move, position their bodies, and sensori-motorly carry out actions in the lived world. Thus the body is conceptualized as a locus of learning and social control.

Within this framework, reading *habitus* can be conceived of as a historically contingent and culturally situated configuration of involvement with text, namely as a set of organizing principles

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<sup>2</sup> The impact of Bourdieu's theorization on research and discussion in education is of great significance. For an account of this influence see, for instance, Grenfell and Kelly (1999) and Luke (1992, 1995).

that regulates encounters between readers and texts at the sensori-motor and the interpretive level (Bourdieu & Chartier, 1985). Reading as a practice entails situated uses of the body subject to norms, preferences, and expectations, just as the practice of text interpretation does. The history of reading witnesses variation in approaches to text and reveals modes of apprehension that have now become obsolete in certain communities (Boyarin, 1992; Cavallo & Chartier, 1995; Chartier, 1989; Saenger, 1982).<sup>3</sup> The forms of involvement with text presently sanctioned by reading curricula, nurtured in school contexts, and overwhelmingly represented in the media are thus to be analyzed as actualizations of a specific reading *habitus*.

In present-day Western societies, an ideology of reading as an individual activity predominates. Oral and interactional readings are commonly practiced in pre-school and first grade (and in some out-of-school contexts), but early introduction to individual silent reading is recommended (Pilgreen, 2000). Moreover, even if considerable data suggest that “independent silent reading is not an effective practice when used as the only type of reading instruction to develop fluency and other reading skills” (National Reading Panel, 2000), full reading proficiency remains identified with independent apprehension of text. Furthermore, consider the spatial organization and code of behavior that characterize, with very few variations, libraries around the world: in the site specifically designed for reading, in what we could define as an institutional sanctuary for reading, such activity is to be carried out individually and silently. This ideology of reading, which favors individual silent involvement with text, is also represented in popular media and in public education campaigns (Schieffelin & Gilmore, 1986). Advertisements that encourage families to engage in reading often portray family members reading together but independently (see Figs. 1 and 2).

The popular international campaign “Get Caught Reading,” designed to promote reading as a leisure-time activity, uses photos of personalities from the worlds of media, sports, and politics “caught” in the act of reading. Each celebrity is portrayed as an independent silent reader, and the idea of reading as an individual pastime is also conveyed by the logo for the campaign (see Fig. 3).

Even when media messages are primarily addressed to caretakers who can help children develop their reading skills, the image accompanying the message sometimes presents a child reading alone (see Fig. 4).

The actual practice of reading pedagogy in the classrooms I observed mirrors this reading ideology. Teachers’ directions, such as the following, were frequent in the video-recordings:

- Teacher: I would like you to be reading quietly.  
Not talking.  
You have no book in front of you.  
You need to have a book in front of you.
- Teacher: Tory,<sup>4</sup> you’re reading to yourself.  
You can share again after reading.
- Teacher: Please, read silently and don’t disturb your friends.
- Teacher: Annice, (3.5) read it independently.

<sup>3</sup> The practice of individual silent reading is in fact a relatively recent invention! Well after the invention of the printing press and thus despite increasing accessibility to books and growing numbers of literate people, texts continued to be read aloud: by readers for their own enjoyment or for the enjoyment of listeners. In Early Modern Europe, both in public settings and in gatherings of friends and family, listening to texts being read aloud was one of the most popular forms of entertainment and sociability (Chartier, 1989; Coleman, 1996; Crosby, 1936).

<sup>4</sup> Children have been assigned pseudonyms and, in the pictures, their faces have been blurred to protect their identity.

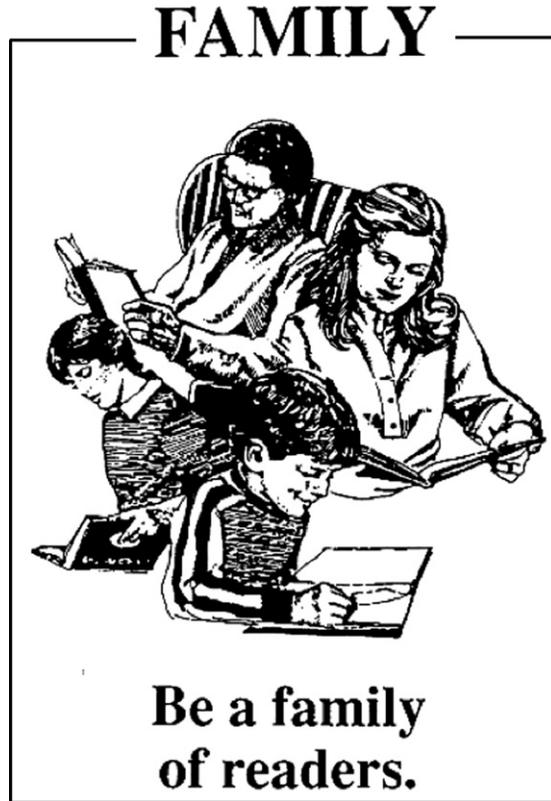


Fig. 1. Reading in the family (American Library Association, 1990).

The normative model of involvement with text is made explicit by the teachers, who also point out the moral implications of departing from the preferred mode of reading. The first excerpt in particular reveals the bodily component of the reading *habitus*, with precise instructions on the prescribed reading demeanor: one entailing an individual reader with a book in front him/herself.



Fig. 2. Simpson family reading “together” (American Library Association, 1990).



Fig. 3. Get Caught Reading International Campaign (1999).

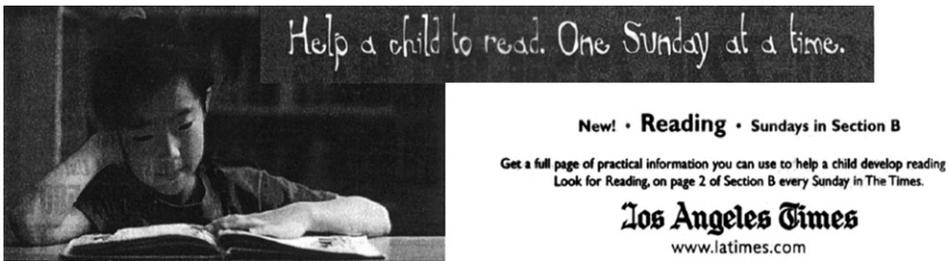


Fig. 4. Los Angeles Times Reading Campaign (March, 1999).

Involvement with the text is *quiet* so that *friends* are not disturbed. Reading independently is thus imbued with moral meaning. In summary, these instructions and warnings may be considered emblems of a literacy ideology, namely one that promotes silent, individual reading over other forms of literacy interaction.

#### 4. Clandestine interactional reading

My observations, however, revealed that children displayed a preference for collaborative involvement with text and that they organized complex interactive reading events, most of the time surreptitiously. As *Dyson (1993)* has illustrated, within the “official classroom world” children strive to construct their own social worlds. In the observed second- and third-grade classrooms, interactional reading was both a recurrent and a covert peer activity, not encouraged by the teacher and frequently suppressed if detected, yet a pillar of children’s “unofficial” (*Dyson, 1993*) and clandestine culture.

In attempting to capture the significance of clandestine interactional reading, by identifying its subtle logic and its inventive trajectories as well as its dispersed, fragmentary, and elusive character, I draw on the theoretical and analytic contribution of *de Certeau (1984)*. De Certeau’s theorization

continues the French intellectual tradition of Foucault and Bourdieu in that it focuses on social practices, aiming to illuminate their underlying ideological apparatuses and their mechanisms (*techniques* in Foucault's terminology) of production and reproduction. De Certeau, however, is more interested in investigating those processes that are not related to the exercise of institutional power—that is, processes that “have not been ‘privileged’ by history but are nevertheless active in innumerable ways in the openings of established technological networks” (de Certeau, 1984, p. 49).<sup>5</sup> In order to present his object of inquiry and to highlight the diverse nature of institutional versus popular “ways of operating,” de Certeau differentiates between *strategies* and *tactics*. He defines a *strategy* as,

the calculation (or manipulation) of power relationships that becomes possible as soon as a subject with will and power (a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated. It postulates a *place* that can be delimited as its own and serve as the base from which relations with an *exteriority* composed of targets or threats (customers or competitors, enemies, the country surrounding the city, objectives and objects of research, etc.) can be managed. (de Certeau, 1984, pp. 35–36)

By contrast with a strategy, a *tactic* is

a calculus which cannot count on a “proper” locus (a spatial or institutional localization), nor thus on a borderline distinguishing the other as a visible totality. [. . .] The space of a tactic is the space of the other. Thus, it must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power. (ibid., pp. xix and 37)

In institutional sites (*places* in de Certeau's terminology), such as the classroom or the library, where the reading *habitus* is housed and informs the official practice of individual silent involvement with text, peers' interactional reading is tactical in character: it insinuates itself surreptitiously into prescribed curricular activities, making furtive appearances in the domain of normative order.

In the two classes I observed, episodes of interactional reading took place in peripheral areas of the classroom, such as in the corners, under the desks, in secluded sites sometimes built by the children before beginning the joint reading activity (see Fig. 5).

Interactional reading episodes also occurred in the library, which the two classes visited once a week for approximately 30 min: there, children were authorized to move freely, select books from the shelves, leaf through them, and check them out to take to class and/or home. In these short visits to the library, children took time from the official activity of book selection to engage in almost secret moments of interactional reading.

We now turn to the analysis of episodes of interactional reading, considering first their inception – the non-verbal preliminaries and the opening move – and then how they unfold.

<sup>5</sup> In the general introduction to his essay “The practice of everyday life” (1984), de Certeau positions his contribution as analogous and contrary to that of Foucault by specifying: “[it is] analogous, in that the goal is to perceive and analyze the microbe-like operations proliferating within technocratic structures and deflecting their functioning by means of a multitude of ‘tactics’ articulated in the details of everyday life; contrary, in that the goal is not to make clearer how the violence of order is transmuted into a disciplinary technology, but rather to bring to light the clandestine forms taken by the dispersed, tactical, and makeshift creativity of groups or individuals already caught in the nets of ‘discipline’.” (ibid., pp. xiv–xv)

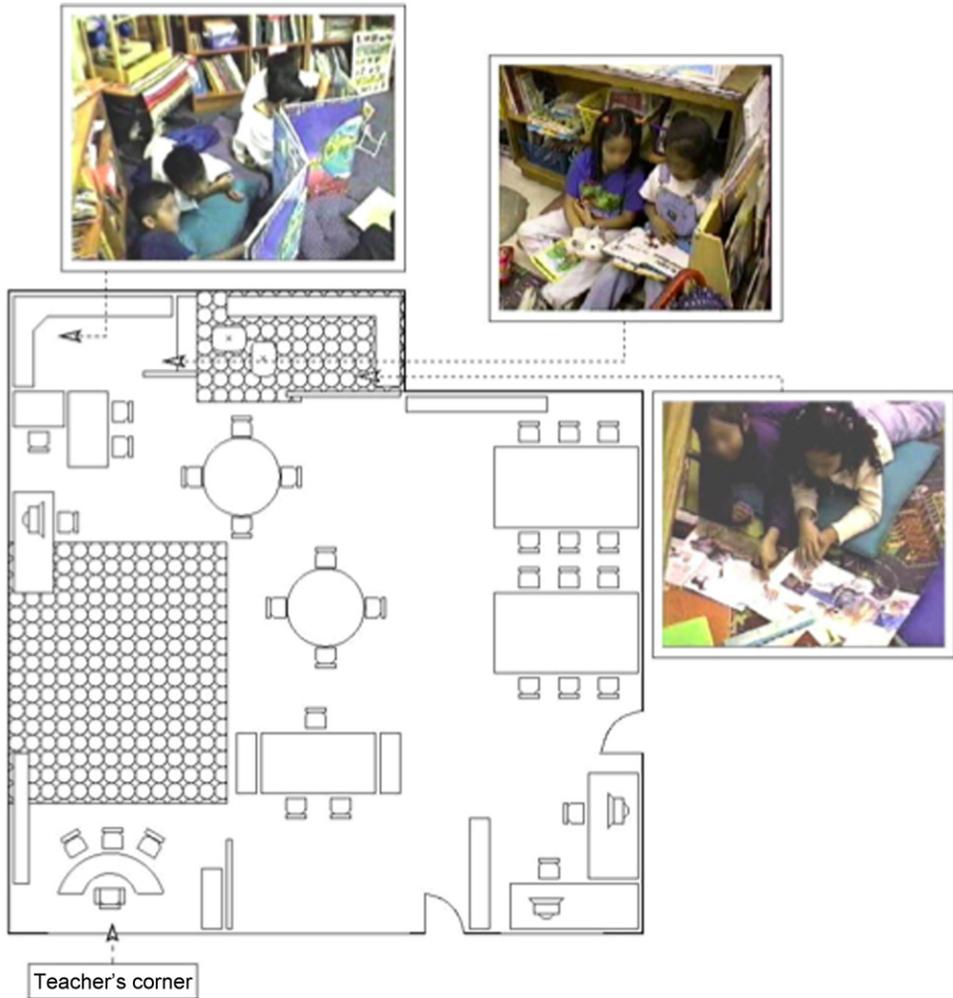


Fig. 5. Clandestine interactional reading in the classroom.

#### 4.1. *Non-verbal preliminaries*

As already noted, the reading *habitus* implies a strictly codified body *hexis*, which is a constant object of the teacher's monitoring and explicit instruction. The prescribed spatial configuration of the individual reader "with a book in front of her" (see excerpts from teacher's reading instruction presented above), was instantiated by the children in two different and consequential ways: they either held the book upright so that only they could see it, or laid it open flat on the table (see Figs. 6 and 7, respectively).

While the first form of the prescribed text-reader arrangement creates an intimate *niche* that is not accessible by anyone else, the second configuration offers others access to the reader's focus of attention. It is this latter spatial arrangement that children most often adopted and that created the context for interactional reading. Consider, for instance, the following opening moves of an



Fig. 6. Individual reading with book held up.

interactional reading episode, involving classmates Lorenzo and Larry.<sup>6</sup> Lorenzo has chosen an issue of “Nature for Kids” from the magazine case and then has taken a seat at a round table. While turning the pages and reading silently Lorenzo holds his torso upright and the magazine open flat on the table:

#### Example 1a



Shortly after Lorenzo is seated, classmate Larry passes by, glances at what Lorenzo is reading, reaches the magazine case from which he chooses an item, and joins Lorenzo at the table. While taking a seat across from his classmate, Larry positions his magazine flat on the table and accompanies his movements with a whispered presentation utterance (line 1):

<sup>6</sup> This episode took place in the library.

**Example 1b**

1. La: here's my game-boy book!

Although Larry does not explicitly select Lorenzo (either verbally through a vocative, or non-verbally through a glance) as the recipient of his opening turn, his body orientation, the positioning of his magazine, and his introductory utterance project the transition to interactional reading. Lorenzo immediately raises his eyes towards Larry's magazine, then responds by pointing, with both gestures and language, at his own magazine (for analysis of the opening move, see below), which in turn, captures Larry's attention:

**Example 1c**

2. (2.2)  
 3. Lo: look ((pointing at page))  
 4. La: what ((leaning towards Lorenzo's journal))

[...] ((the interaction unfolds with the two children reading and exchanging comments on their magazines))

Thus, in the space of a handful of seconds and few brief utterances, the two children establish a framework for interactional reading. The rapidity of their mutual attunement responds to the contextual constraints within which Larry and Lorenzo operate: a time constraint, given that children have less than half an hour to move through library shelves and choose reading materials;<sup>7</sup> and an activity constraint, given that they are supposed to select items for later reading and not to begin reading them in the library with classmates. Therefore, Larry and Lorenzo's spatial orientation, body positioning, and whispered exchanges cannot be mistaken for fortuitous; rather, they are tactics skillfully enacted for pursuing joint involvement with texts: in a space where the teacher's surveillance is less strict (and/or efficient, because the library is bigger than the classroom and spatially organized in a way that facilitates withdrawal from the sight of others), Lorenzo has chosen to sit at a small round table, between shelves, couches, and other bigger desks.

<sup>7</sup> Half an hour was the total time of each class's visit to the library, and it included 5–10 min to return books and check out new ones.

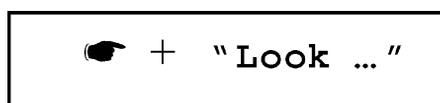


Fig. 7. Individual reading with book open flat.

Although positioned on one side of the library, the small round table is in the path of those who wander through the shelves. Lorenzo keeps his torso upright and the magazine flat open on the table, thereby indicating to peers his availability to engage in interactional reading. Larry passes by, notices Lorenzo, and after picking up a magazine himself joins his classmate at the table. As he takes a seat, Larry solicits and obtains Lorenzo's attention; the coordination is immediate and interactional reading promptly ensues. There is no need of formal preamble;<sup>8</sup> the two children have already communicated non-verbally to each other their availability and intentions. Besides, they cannot afford to waste time. They know that the propitious circumstance may be short-lived: at any time the teacher might turn towards them and notice their interaction; each utterance, even if whispered, could reach the teacher's ear. Thus the two clandestine readers act with precision and without superfluous movement.

#### 4.2. *The opening move*

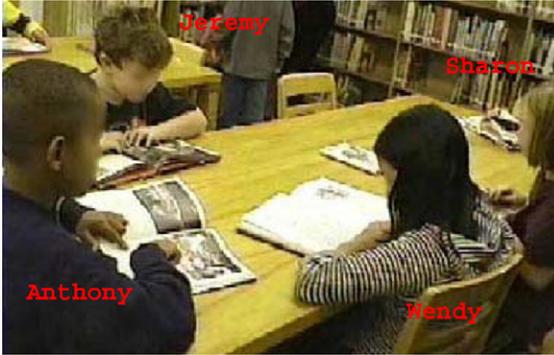
These same features are found in the opening moves of other interactional reading episodes: the children mobilize different semiotic resources concurrently to establish the focus of attention and create a participation framework that affords joint involvement with text. The prototypical format of the opening move has two components: a deictic gesture and an attention-getting linguistic marker.



<sup>8</sup> A formal introduction would entail, for instance, an explicit request or offer by one of the participants to share reading.

Thus the opening move invokes a switch in the recipient's focus of attention and topicalizes something on the page, making it clear that the recipient should look towards the target of the pointing gesture. Consider the following example: Anthony, Jeremy, Sharon, and Wendy have arrived one by one at a desk in the library. Each of them has chosen a book and has begun reading independently. Soon Anthony attracts the others' attention through a verbal summons accompanied by a pointing gesture. It will become clear in the unfolding of the exchange (examined in the next section) that Anthony is reading a book on dogs because his family is planning to buy one:

### Example 2a



1. A: Ehi look  
 ((pointing on the page))

Jeremy sustains his pointing until the recipients direct their gaze towards the focal element in the text; a comment on that element is then produced.

### Example 2b



2. (2.8) ((Jeremy and Sharon move closer to Anthony)); Wendy turns head towards Anthony's book  
 3. A:  
 4. I am not going to buy this.

In this manner, an invitation to come closer, to share the focus of attention, yields a discussion of the text, as Anthony voices his evaluative comment about which dog he will not purchase.<sup>9</sup> Similarly in the next sequence, Jeremy and Paul have reached the table after each choosing a book from the same section of the bookshelf. Both the children start leafing through the books. Shortly after, Paul attracts Jeremy's attention:

<sup>9</sup> The unfolding of this episode is analyzed in Section 4.3.

**Example 3a**

1. P: Look ((*pointing at page*))

Paul invites Jeremy to look at the book he is reading by summoning him in conjunction with a pointing gesture (line 1). As soon as Jeremy directs his gaze towards the open page and they are both looking at the same text, Paul withdraws his pointing finger and verbally presents to Jeremy the general thematic content of the book:

**Example 3b**

2. (1.2) ((*Jeremy moves his gaze towards Paul's book*))  
 3. P: it shows you what  
 4. eagles can do!

It is important to note that in the opening move, the verbal accompaniment to the deictic point is generally lexico-semantically minimal. Both the gesture and the talk are lodged in the *semiotic field* of the textual material (Goodwin, 2000), and it is only by attending to their juxtaposition within a structured matrix that meaning can be grasped. We can thus begin to appreciate how the opening move is strategically designed to create an intimate niche and then trigger more complex involvement in interactional reading. The opening move establishes a symmetric arena of interaction and the peers are treated as co-participating readers.<sup>10</sup>

#### 4.3. *Co-construction of intertextual links*

The opening move is produced after the child has monitored and analyzed the printed material; at the first sign of peer uptake, the child who initiated the sequence usually provided further

<sup>10</sup> The participation framework characterizing episodes of peers' interactional reading is thus significantly different from that of group reading with the teacher. The latter activity typically implies a primary reader, the teacher or a student selected by the teacher, reading aloud and holding the book open towards the group but at a distance from the audience.

information or offered an assessment of the text. This move, in turn, triggered other contributions, and the sequence unfolded through a close interaction among the participants. The unfolding of joint reading episodes is thus multivocal in character: the textual voices are animated in different ways, interwoven with one another, and punctuated by the readers' own voices.

Before illustrating this unfolding, it is important to mention another characteristic of peers' interactional reading that I observed frequently and that arguably fosters multivocal and intertextual meaning-making: the engagement of multiple texts. Prior to reaching spatial proximity with other classmates, each child chose a book or other printed materials. Most of the time children selected texts that were co-thematic and/or co-generic with respect to the ones the other classmates were reading. I would argue that this pointed choice constitutes a further display of children's orientation towards interactional reading. While superficially following the official reading etiquette of individual involvement with text, the children are silently and meticulously preparing the terrain for their clandestine joint activity.

In the following example, we see how children bring multiple texts to the focus of attention and weave intertextual connections among them.<sup>11</sup> Surrounded by three classmates who have spontaneously joined him at the desk,<sup>12</sup> Anthony has taken the initiative and called the others' attention to a picture in the book he is reading. Jeremy, Sharon, and Wendy promptly respond. Once the participatory framework is established, the participants exchange comments, blending the information gathered from the printed material with their background knowledge:

**Example 2 a-c**

1. A: ehi look ((*pointing on the page*))
2. (2.8) ((*Jeremy and Sharon move closer to Anthony; Wendy turns head towards Anthony's book*))
3. A: I am not going to buy this.
4. J: let me see.
5. S: ugly ((*looking at the page*)) these are poodles=
6. J: =poodles. ((*reading from the page*))
7. S: [they're just so-

<sup>11</sup> The inception of this episode was analyzed in Section 4.2 above.

<sup>12</sup> The four children have all chosen books about dogs.

8. A: [I know, [I- I- I read from the book that there are some  
 [((turning to following page))  
 9. that are nice [(and)  
 10. S: [nn- ((making a grimace and shaking head))  
 11. ((Jeremy sits back and resumes reading his book))  
 12. A: but the poodles that have that- those little furry things  
 13. right [there in the legs



14. S: [ʌnd then they- ((mimicking with right hand  
 scissors cutting))  
 15. and then they get shaved ((look of disgust on the face))  
 16. A: e:nn ((of disgust; flipping his hands))  
 17. J: how about this kind of dog? ((pointing at page))



18. (1.0) ((Anthony, Sharon and Wendy look at Jeremy's  
 pointed image))  
 19. J: golden retriever.  
 20. A: mhm, I'm not sure  
 21. J: ((starts reading from his book)) These are lovable,  
 22. well mannered, intelligent dogs with a great charm. (0.2)  
 23. they are easily trained, and always patient and gentle  
 24. with children.  
 25. S: yes, they're nice.  
 26. J: ((turns the page and points to text and then looks  
 27. towards Anthony)) and they also love swimming.  
 28. W: wow, swimming?  
 29. J: ((turns to Wendy)) yeah.  
 30. ((resumes reading pointing to text)) these dogs also love  
 31. to swim.  
 [...]

Anthony's book, left flat open on the desk, offers the other participants space in which to maneuver: Jeremy and Sharon can access the text directly to see the breed of dog indicated by their classmate (lines 5–6). Then, through talk and iconic gestures, Anthony and Sharon *sketch* an additional picture, juxtaposing it to the one offered in the text (lines 10–16). Simultaneously, they co-construct, through language, prosody, gestures, and facial expressions, a negative evaluation of the target of attention (especially lines 12–16). In this way, Anthony and Sharon jointly create a multivocal text, in which the authorial voice is animated and put into dialogue with their own voices as readers.<sup>13</sup> At this point, Jeremy intervenes again (line 17) inviting the others' gaze to the book he has been reading. Jeremy's verbal accompaniment to the pointing gesture provides an interpretive frame for the action that he is soliciting gesturally: the participants are not merely invited to look at a picture, but to also look at it in relation to Anthony's book and as an illustration of a possible alternative to the object previously examined and assessed. In other words, Jeremy's contribution outlines an intertextual link, thereby expanding Anthony and Sharon's analysis and inviting further reading and commentary. In order to convince Anthony that golden retrievers are good dogs, Jeremy proceeds to read an excerpt from his book, which gives a very positive description of the breed.

In summary, this sequence shows that in clandestine episodes of interactional reading multiple texts are read, and interpreted in light of one another. Intertextuality thus emerges as a *modus operandi* through which young readers apprehend text and co-construct meaning. In other words, rather than textual property (*opus operatum*), which is already contained in the text and awaiting to be activated, intertextuality emerges as an interactional process at the core of children's sense-making practices.<sup>14</sup> In addition, this episode shows that numerous forms of participation are possible (e.g., as reader, audience, commentator), reading roles are dynamically exchanged, and texts are animated and negotiated in various ways (e.g., through reading aloud, or reporting). Verbal contributions emerge from and display textual analyses; in dialogue with one another, they foster comprehension through the weaving of complex intertextual relationships.

#### 4.4. *Double-voiced reading*

The active readership exercised by children in clandestine interactional reading emerged also in the form of interpretive double-voicing or double-voiced reading: the young readers actively engaged in dialogue with the text and produced a reading/interpretation that was internally dialogized—that is, one that acknowledged the authorial voice while actively and creatively accentuating or refracting it with their own intention. Bakhtin's theorization is central to this analysis. In his fundamental essay on the novel as a literary genre (Bakhtin, 1981), Bakhtin proposes an approach to text that highlights its internal stratification—that is, the presence of differing voices (*heteroglossia*) in dialogue with each other (ibid., p. 263). More specifically, heteroglossia incorporated into the text is characterized by the Russian theorist as *double-voiced discourse*, a discourse that “serves two speakers at the same time and expresses simultaneously two different

<sup>13</sup> The reference here is to Bakhtin's theorization, especially insofar as Bakhtin's notion of voice highlights the fact that a voice always has “its own timbre and overtones” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 434). Thorough reviews and analyses of Bakhtin's contribution to linguistics and education have been published in recent years in this journal (e.g., Fairclough, 1992; Kamberelis, 2001; Kamberelis & Scott, 1992; Scollon, Tsang, Li, Yung, & Jones, 1998).

<sup>14</sup> In this sense, example 2a–c is representative of a recurrent collaborative modality of text apprehension. Moreover, in highlighting intertextuality as an interactional accomplishment (rather than a pre-established attribute of text), this article is in keeping with recent educational and social semiotics contributions, notably Bloome and Edgan-Robertson (1993), Ivanic (2004), Lemke (1992, 1995) and Maybin (2004).

intentions [. . .] in such discourse there are two voices, two meanings and two expressions. And all the while these two voices are dialogically interrelated, they – as it were – know about each other” (p. 324). While the voices Bakhtin is referring to (i.e., those of the narrator and the character) are contained within the text, I would argue here that a parallel dialogization may be introduced by the reader in the act of reading: as the reader animates and apprehends the textual voice(s), she infuses them with her own perspective, creating an echoing and/or counterpunctual effect.

The following segments are illustrations of double-voiced reading. The extracts belong to a clandestine reading episode that occurred in the classroom during “book time,” a daily 20-min slot after lunch dedicated to individual silent reading. The two protagonists, Jenny and Lupita, are lying on the rug in a hidden corner of the classroom (see below and Fig. 5) and have just begun reading two illustrated books. Both the books are from the series “Zoobooks”. Lupita has taken the initiative and has called Jenny’s attention to her book, called *Wild Horses*. Once Jenny has expressed interest in that book, Lupita proceeds to lead the joint reading. On the open pages, several horses are pictured. Different specimens of horses are represented, and beside each of them is a caption labeling the horse (each of a different breed) and indicating its origin. On the top left corner is a general introduction to the two-page picture (see Fig. 8):

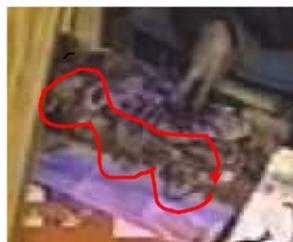
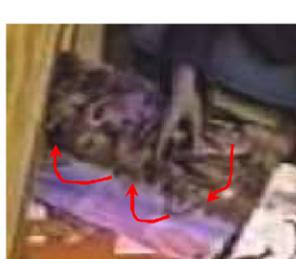
#### Example 4a

1. (2.8) ((Lupita turns the page and examines the new pages while Jenny has moved her gaze back to her book))



2. L: Look at these three-
3. (0.2) ((Jenny turns head towards Lupita’s book))
4. L: oh look at these animals ((moving her pointing finger from left to right and back to left on the open page))

5. zebra zebra zebra ((pointing at three specimens))



6. look at these three kinds of zebras ((moving her pointing through the two open pages and drawing an imaginary circle))
7. J: m-hm.

Using pointing gestures and verbal descriptors, Lupita first presents the image as a whole (line 4), and then singles out just three animals on the page (lines 5–6). By repeating the label “zebra” each

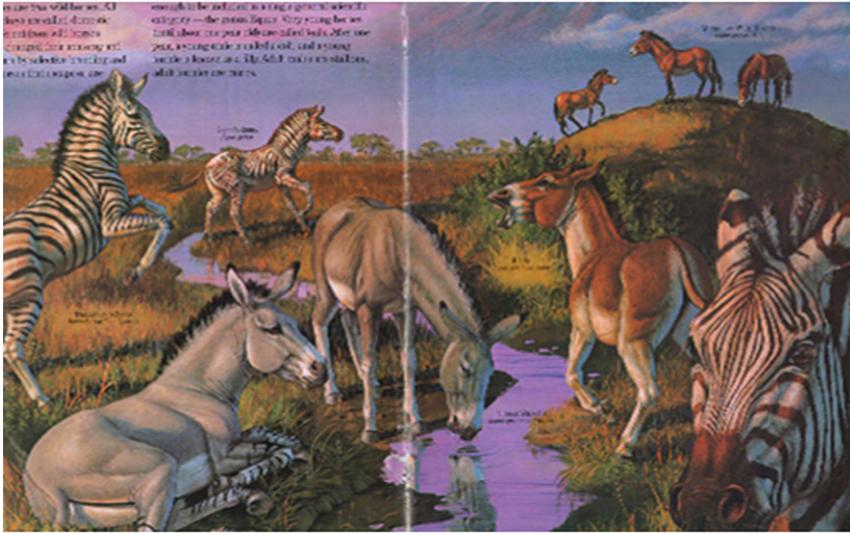


Fig. 8. Wild horses.

time she points, the little girl indicates the similarity between the three target animals, which in the written text are labeled with different names. Both verbally and gesturally, by labeling “kinds of zebras” the three exemplars while drawing an imaginary circle around them, Lupita creates a sub-category of the more general and inclusive category “horses” or “animals.” In her double-voiced reading, Lupita acknowledges the authorial intention by calling Jenny’s attention to the two pages and the whole collection of wild horses; then she inserts her own voice by singling out three items and suggesting the subcategory “zebras.” Thus Lupita’s additional reading builds on the interpretive framework offered in the open pages: it proposes a different instantiation of the same interpretive action, i.e. categorization, encoded in the text multimodal configuration.

Another vivid illustration of double-voiced reading occurred in the same episode: this time Jenny guided the joint involvement with the text. Jenny had selected a book about bears, and the



Fig. 9. Polar bear.

two girls are examining the section dedicated to the polar bear. Text and images highlight the polar bears' magnificence. The image of an adult specimen hunting a seal dominates the page (see Fig. 9).

Through gestures and talk, the two young readers animate the still image with tonalities expressing their sensibility:

#### Example 4b



1. J: Look ((sad voice; pointing at the bear in the image))
2. n: [oh:.. ((sad voice; moving her pointing from the bear to the seal))



3. L: [u:m:: he's gonna eat the seal. ((sad voice))
4. J: oh ((sad voice))
5. L: that's why I hate Polar Bear
6. J: [me too. ((turning over the page))

Jenny's attention-directing marker (line 1) is produced with a sad voice, an expression of the girl's emotional perspective on the focal text. She then moves her pointing finger in the direction of the seal to indicate the bear's act of aggression. Jenny accompanies the gesture with a prolonged exclamation in a sad tone. While animating the text gesturally, she inserts her own voice expressing sorrow about the likely fate of the seal. Lupita cooperates both in the *reading* of the image (line 3) and in voicing a negative opinion of the polar bear (line 5). In sum, the two girls' joint reading emerges as a complex multivocal interaction with the text and with each other.

## 5. Conclusions

I began this article with an analysis of the reading *habitus*. I highlighted the ideological dimension of reading practices in school contexts and showed that only certain kinds of reading are authorized and promoted, while others tend to be neglected or even intentionally excluded. Reflecting a widespread reading preference, in the classrooms where I conducted my study individual silent reading was deemed the preferred way of reading. My observations revealed, however, that children supplemented the prescribed classroom praxis with the clandestine practice of interactional reading. Interactional reading emerged as a central peer cultural practice, whereby children nurtured their friendly ties, shared their experiences and previous knowledge and co-constructed stances toward the world.

This analysis of interactional reading episodes shows the ingenious ways in which children momentarily elude the rules of the dominant order. Spatial orientation, body positioning, and reading materials are tactically organized in order to transform any propitious moment – such as

a visit to the school library or the transition time between prescribed classroom activities – into an opportunity to engage in interactional reading. Thus, as children are being socialized into a certain reading *habitus*, they concurrently and surreptitiously cultivate unofficial variants of the prescribed praxis.

As clandestine practitioners of interactional reading, children are like de Certeau's consumers; that is, they are "unrecognized producers, poets of their own affairs, trailblazers in the jungles of functionalist rationality" (de Certeau, 1984, p. 34). Within the territory of a foreign power, young readers clandestinely produce their own signifying practices. Creative manipulation of the *habitus* is thus intermingled with the *habitus*'s transmission and reproduction.

In interactional reading, children engage in meaning-making practices that transcend the boundaries of individual text and authorial voice. Interactional reading episodes are intertextual and multivocal events, going beyond the oral rendition of printed text for the benefit of a co-present audience. We have seen that in interactional reading episodes children co-construct text meaning and creatively elaborate it by interweaving intertextual relationships. Thus intertextuality appears to be a central process in children's meaning-making activity.

In addition, in interactional reading numerous forms of participation are possible. Children take up and dynamically exchange roles as, for example, primary reader, auxiliary reader, and commentator. In interactional reading, readership is thus quintessentially plural. Furthermore, as they animate the authorial voice, children frequently accentuate it with their own intention, thereby producing a reading that is internally dialogized. Double-voiced reading displays the subtle juxtaposition of voices: that of the text, authoritative and permanent, and that of the young reader, who courageously and sometimes irreverently breaks through the textual boundaries and engages the author in dialogue.

Interactional reading offers an opportunity for children to express and explore their agency and creativity. My analysis suggests that young readers' agency operates in liminal spaces, both within and without institutionally defined contexts. Similarly, children's clandestine reading practice engages an institutionally valued activity while subverting its official format. In this sense a notion of agency that is centered on the idea of resistance to the acquisition of normatively sanctioned practices, does not fully capture the essence of children's creative textual explorations: while transcending the normative praxis, peer interactional reading rests on affordances, both material and intellectual, made available by the institutional context and through the official literacy curriculum.<sup>15</sup>

The activity of interactional reading is a shared venture through which children co-construct complex webs of interrelated meanings, as well as a *heteroglossic* understanding of texts and thereby of the world. It is thus possible to suggest, in conclusion, that literacy learning may be enhanced by children's concurrent engagement in official and unofficial literacy practices. Children's tactical maneuvering *under the desk* may facilitate their accomplishments of curricular goals. Undoubtedly, the interplay between official strategies and unofficial tactics would merit further exploration.

<sup>15</sup> For instance, children are frequently organized in small groups and seated at round tables to work together on math problems and on different kinds of writing assignments. Moreover, when engaged in art activities children are encouraged to move freely in the classroom to find places, perspectives and arrangements congenial to their artistic creations. It is thus possible to link children's proclivity to read interactively to other collaborative practices in their current classroom. In addition, it is plausible to assume that clandestine interactional reading contains vestiges of collaborative reading practices (e.g. round-robin reading aloud to classmates) sanctioned in the earlier years of the curriculum.

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## Appendix A. Transcript notations

.	The period indicates a falling, or final, intonation contour, not necessarily the end of a sentence.
?	The question mark indicates rising intonation, not necessarily a question.
,	The comma indicates “continuing” intonation, not necessarily a clause boundary.
:::	Colons indicate stretching of the preceding sound, proportional to the number of colons.
-	A hyphen after a word or a part of a word indicates a cut-off or self-interruption.
<u>word</u>	Underlining indicates some form of stress or emphasis on the underlined item.
WOrd	Upper case indicates loudness.
° °	Degree signs indicate segments of talk that are markedly quiet or soft.
><	The combination of “more than” and “less than” symbols indicates that the talk between them is compressed or rushed.
<>	In the reverse order, they indicate that a stretch of talk is markedly slow.
=	An equals sign indicates no break or delay between the words it connects.
(( ))	Double parentheses enclose descriptions of conduct.
(word)	When all or part of an utterance in parentheses, this indicates uncertainty on the transcriber’s part.
( )	Empty parentheses indicate an inaudible stretch of talk.
(1.2)	Numbers in parentheses measure silences in tenths of a second.
(.)	A dot in parentheses indicates a “micro-pause,” ordinarily less than 2/10 of a second.
[	Separate left square brackets, one above the other on two successive lines with utterances by different speakers, indicate onset of a point of conversational overlap.
hhh	letter “h” indicates audible aspiration.

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