



WAYS WITH WORDS

*LANGUAGE, LIFE AND
WORK IN COMMUNITIES
AND CLASSROOMS*

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HEATH'S CENTRAL QUESTION

HOW DO PRESCHOOL, HOME, AND COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTS AFFECT LEARNING LANGUAGE STRUCTURES AND USES OF STANDARD AMERICAN ENGLISH NECESSARY IN CLASSROOMS AND JOB SETTINGS?

❖ **OBSERVATIONS INFLUENCING HEATH'S QUESTION AT HAND:**

- COMMUNICATION WAS A PRIMARY CONCERN FOR TEACHERS, PARENTS, AND MILL EMPLOYERS OF BOTH RACES
- TRACKTON & ROADVILLE COMMUNITIES ARE BOTH LINKED TO EACH POPULATION'S RESPECTIVE COMMERCIAL, POLITICAL, & EDUCATIONAL INTERESTS
- MAINSTREAM LANGUAGE (SAE) WAS THE EXPECTED NORM IN COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS, ACADEMIC SETTINGS, & WORKPLACES
- BOTH COMMUNITIES DEMONSTRATED DIFFERENT LANGUAGE VALUES & SKILLS IN SUCH ENVIRONMENTS AND SITUATIONS

❖ **"IN ROADVILLE AND TRACKTON, THE DIFFERENT WAYS CHILDREN LEARNED TO USE LANGUAGE WERE DEPENDENT ON THE WAYS EACH COMMUNITY:**

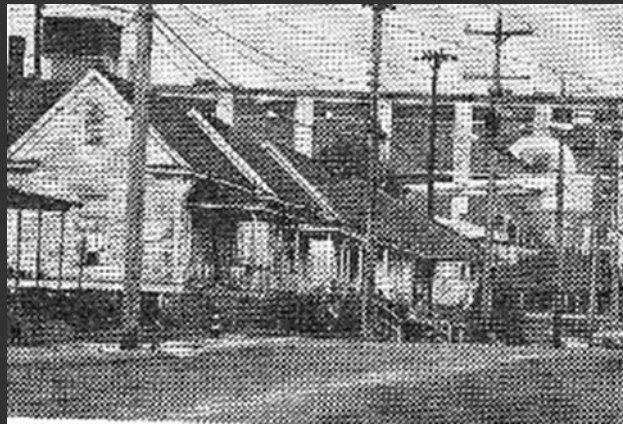
- STRUCTURED THEIR FAMILIES
- DEFINED THE ROLES THAT COMMUNITY MEMBERS COULD ASSUME
- PLAYED OUT THE CONCEPTS OF CHILDHOOD THAT GUIDED CHILD SOCIALIZATION"

AUTHOR'S DISCLAIMER & METHODS:

THE BOOK SHOULD NOT BE REFERRED TO BY EDUCATORS AS A MODEL FOR EXPERIMENTS, CONTROLLED CONDITIONS, & SYSTEMATIC SCORE-KEEPING OF ACADEMIC SUCCESSES & FAILURES OF CHILDREN

❖METHODS

- IDENTIFIED PATTERNS OF COMMUNICATIVE INTERACTIONS
- (BETWEEN CHILDREN/ADULTS, CHILDREN/CHILDREN, CHILDREN/TEACHERS)
- CLARIFIED WHAT SCHOOLS & MILL EMPLOYERS DEFINED AS "COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS"
- INTERPRETED EDUCATORS' NOTES ON LANGUAGE LEARNING HABITS OF CHILDREN



FINDINGS:

- PARENTS IN BOTH COMMUNITIES WANTED CHILDREN TO “GET AHEAD” ACADEMICALLY & ECONOMICALLY
- TRACKTON & ROADVILLE COMMUNITIES DEVELOPED SEPARATE SETS OF TECHNIQUES TO ADJUST TO CERTAIN PHYSICAL & SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS
- EACH GROUP USED LANGUAGE DIFFERENTLY TO ASSERT THEIR SENSE OF IDENTITY
- CHURCH IS THE KEY INSTITUTION FOR ENABLING TRACKTON & ROADVILLE YOUTHS WITH LANGUAGE SKILLS USEFUL IN MULTIPLE SOCIAL SETTINGS

FINDINGS (CONT.):

- TEACHERS NOTED THAT STUDENTS RECORDED ACTIVITIES & ATTITUDES CENTERED AROUND RESPONDING TO AND USING ORAL & WRITTEN LANGUAGE
- STUDENTS HAD DIFFICULTIES WITH FOLLOWING A UNILINEAR PATTERN OF DEVELOPMENT
(IE: RUNNING NARRATIVES ON ITEMS & EVENTS
(ASKING & ANSWERING COMPREHENSIVE QUESTIONS ABOUT NARRATIVES))
- AN INTERACTIVE APPROACH TO HOW EACH COMMUNITY TALKS & EXPRESSES KNOWLEDGE WAS USED BY TEACHERS TO LINK LINGUISTIC HABITS AND CHOICES TO CHANCES FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC SUCCESS



SCHOLARLY RESPONSE #1

SHIRLEY BRICE HEATH WRITES ABOUT HER BOOK, THINGS SHE WOULD'VE DONE DIFFERENTLY, AS WELL AS HOW HER BIASES AS THE AUTHOR AFFECTED HER WRITING.

- HEATH, SHIRLEY B. "THE MADNESS(ES) OF READING AND WRITING ETHNOGRAPHY." *ANTHROPOLOGY & EDUCATION QUARTERLY* 24.3 (1993): 256-68. PRINT.



SCHOLARLY RESPONSE #2

BRIAN STREET DELVES INTO THE ZINNIA MAE STORY IN *WAYS WITH WORDS*.

- STREET, BRIAN V. "SOCIETY RESCHOOLING." *READING RESEARCH QUARTERLY* 47.2 (2012): 216-27. PRINT.



SCHOLARLY RESPONSE #3

SUZANNE DECASTELL AND TOM WALKER DISCUSS HOW TO TEACH HEATH'S BOOK AND HOW IT IS A NARRATIVE.

- DECASTELL, SUZANNE, AND TOM WALKER. "IDENTITY, METAMORPHOSIS, AND ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH: WHAT KIND OF STORY IS WAYS WITH WORDS?" ANTHROPOLOGY & EDUCATION QUARTERLY 22.1 (1991): 3-20. PRINT.

SCHOLARLY RESPONSE #4

CLAIRE KRAMSCH AND SHIRLEY BRICE HEATH HAVE A CONVERSATION ABOUT HEATH'S BOOK, RESEARCH, AND THE LESSONS SHE HAS LEARNED.

- KRAMSCH, CLAIRE. "INDIVIDUALS, INSTITUTIONS AND THE USES OF LITERACY: SHIRLEY BRICE HEATH AND CLAIRE KRAMSCH IN CONVERSATION." JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS 1.1 (2004): 75-91. MLA INTERNATIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY. WEB. 11 NOV. 2013.



SCHOLARLY RESPONSE #5

SHIRLEY BRICE HEATH DISCUSSES THE LANGUAGE SOCIALIZATION IN THE CHILDREN OF TRACKTON & ROADVILLE AND HOW IT AFFECTS THEIR PATTERNS OF ADJUSTMENT TO SCHOOL.

- HEATH, SHIRLEY BRICE. "WHAT NO BEDTIME STORY MEANS: NARRATIVE SKILLS AT HOME AND SCHOOL." *LANGUAGE IN SOCIETY* 11.1 (1982): 49-76. *MLA INTERNATIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY*. WEB. 12 NOV. 2013.



1ST ASSUMPTION: VISUAL OF TWO COMMUNITIES

ROADVILLE

- PAINTED HOUSES
- SHINGLED ROOFS
- SYMMETRICAL FORM
- YARD EDGED WITH FLOWERS
 - GARDEN
 - FUNITURE

TRACKTON

- RUN DOWN
- NO GRASS
- CONCRETE STEPS DAMAGED
- HOUSES NEED PAINT
 - THICKETS
 - NO TOOLS

2ND ASSUMPTION: NO PROVISIONS OR NEW BORN CHILD

ROADVILLE

- STORK SHOWERS
- BIG SOCIAL EVENT
 - BABY CLOTHES
- BABY SUPPLIES/ EQUIPMENT
 - POOLED MONEY FOR
BIG GIFT (CAR SEAT, STROLLER,
BABY BED)

TRACKTON

- NO CELEBRATION
- FEW DIAPERS AND CLOTHES
 - LITTLE MILK
- SLEEP WITH PARENTS
(NO INDIVIDUAL BED)

3RD ASSUMPTION: NO BABY TALK IN TRACKTON

ROADVILLE

- FREQUENTLY ENGAGE IN BABY TALK
- EX: WHA'S A MATTER BOBBY? YO WIDLE TUM TUM ALL EMPTY? TELL DESE FOLKS START FEEDING YOU!

TRACKTON

- NO BABY TALK
- CONSIDERED CHILDISH OR FOOLISH
- RESIDENTS DO NO INTERPRET BABY TALK
- TALK ONLY WHEN GIVING COMMAND, WARNING, RECOMMENDATIONS, OR TEASING.

4TH ASSUMPTION: NO EDUCATIONAL TOYS

ROADVILLE

- BOYS AND GIRLS RECEIVE NUMEROUS EDUCATIONAL TOYS
- MATCHING GAMES, COLORS, AND BLOCKS
- ACTIVITY GAMES
- TEETER POLE RINGS IN RIGHT ORDER

TRACKTON

- NO BOOKS
- NO PUZZLES
- NO BLOCKS
- NO TOYS UNLESS OUTSIDER BRINGS THEM IN

5TH ASSUMPTION: STORYTELLING

ROADVILLE

- ANNOUNCED OR INVITED BY SOMEONE OTHER THAN STORYTELLER
- CERTAIN PEOPLE DESIGNATED AS STORYTELLERS
 - FACTUAL, LITTLE EXAGGERATED
 - CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER
- ACCOUNTS OF WEAKNESS AND LESSONS

TRACKTON

- WIDELY EXAGGERATED
 - FEW STRUCTURED OPENINGS
 - HIGHLY COMPETITIVE
 - NO MORAL/STORYTELLER'S OWN
- STRENGTH
- ONLY SERIOUS STORIES ARE ABOUT RECENT TROUBLE OF RESPECTED INDIVIDUAL IN COMMUNITY OR TO GIVE DIRECTIONS

6TH ASSUMPTION: TEACHERS

- TEACHERS HELD RESPONSIBLE!
- TEACHERS WANT TO HELP!
- TEACHERS AS SCAPEGOATS!



7TH ASSUMPTION: THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE



- ENGLISH FALLS UNDER ONE SET OF RULES.
- ACQUIRING LANGUAGE DIFFERENCES
- CODE SWITCHING!