A study on Ethnography of communication: A discourse analysis with Hymes 'speaking model'

Dr. Manas Ray

Professor & Head, Dept.of Anthropology, Visva-Bharati University, Sriniketan Campus, 731236, West .Bengal, India E-mail: manas.ray@visva-bharati.ac.in

Mr. Chinmay Biswas

Assistant Professor, Dept. of Anthropology Sree Chaitanya College, West Bengal State University, Barasat, West Bengal, India

E-mail: chinmaybiswas333@gmail.com

Abstract

Ethnography of communication relates ethnography, the description and structural-functional analysis of society and culture, with the 'language' – a cultural behaviour that navigates and helps to share knowledge, arts, morals, beliefs and everything acquired by man as a member of society. Ethnography of communication is an approach to understand society & culture and its reconstruction of an ethnic group in particular and nation in general. To do it 'language', designed and structured by pattern of culture, acts as a communicative tool. Language carries and transmits social/cultural traits through generations. The role of speech behavior, one of the aspects of language, has always been significant in cultural anthropological research. Ethnography of Communication, the concept introduced by Del Hymes in late sixties, is an active action of human way of life. He and his associates constructed a model of 'Speaking model' while tried to understand society and culture of an ethnic group through communication process. The present study intends to test Hymes 'Speaking Model' in a set of homogenous speech community – the academic folk of a department of Anthropology, Sree Chaitanya college,Habra,North 24 Parganas(West Bengal State University, Barasat, West Bengal, India.)

Keywords: *Ethnography, Communication, Language, 'Speaking model'*

Introduction

.In the 21st century exclusively Ethnography of communication is considered a "qualitative method in the field of communication as well as cultural anthropology. It has also been deciphered as the model of analyzing the use of language and communicative process. A famous scholar Del Hymes (1974: 09) emphasized that "the starting point is the ethnographic analysis of communication conduct of community" For the study of communication of a particular culture. Hymes indicated six areas of the culture under the following headings; speech community, speech situation, speech event, common communicative style and ways of speaking. Maldona Matel (2009) described in his paper entitled: The *ethnography of communication* that "the most important frameworks of analysis that could assist the Ethnographer in detecting the functional mechanisms of such items as elaboration of identity or change of identity. The relationship between speech and social class is also discussed and ethnographic research provided. The main argument is that research in the ethnography of communication presupposes the acknowledgement of the inextricable link between language and the extra-linguistic cultural context". It has also been recognized that the most common flavors in-depth research is ethnography. It seeks to understand human behavior within its own social settings. The ethnography of communication model the basic unit of analysis is considered "communicative event" and meanings are conveyed through "speech acts" (Searle, 1969).

There is a research in human-computer interaction (HCI) to provide domestic communication patterns and conduct socially informed design in such settings. So it is emphasized in Social Anthropology to inform as about the complex notions of family and household and patterns of domestic interaction. That is why researchers are interested in Ethnographic methods for doing social research related to communication pattern in such settings (Lofland & Jhon 1984).

Literature Review

Elizabeth Keating had written that in the 1960s Dell Hymes, Jhon Gumperz and their students launched a innovative program for researching language called the Ethnography of speaking later broadened to Ethnography of Communication. In 1962 a paper had been published by Dell Hymes called ' The Ethnography of communication'; in which Hymes proposed combining Ethnography , the description and analysis of culture with linguistics , the description and analysis of language. Traditionally, linguists studied the structure and function of language and try to understand how the people of a given society typically speak getting communication with each other.. In recent years Anthropologists have began to investigate how people in a society vary in how they speak. The Ethnography of Speaking deals with cultural and subculture patterns of speech variation in different social context.

According to Donald Carbough (1989)" Ethnography of Communication is an approach, a perspective, and method to and is the study of culturally distinctive means and meanings of communication".The concept of Ethnography of communication was introduced by Dell Hymes (1962). A natural way of sharing knowledge, maintaining social status with roles or social relationships is communication of an ethnic group. Maldona Matel (2009) said some aspects of communication can vary according to geographical areas ,social class, gender age and level of education. Dell Hymes was the brilliant scholar who developed an praiseworthy approach to the study of language designated with terminology the ethnography of communication whose central unit of study is communicative event. According to Hymes the term "Ethnography of Communication "is deciphered the necessary scope, and encourage the doing, of studies ethnographic in basis ,and communicative in the range and kind of patterned complexity with which they deal. Dell Hymes proposed a general method of Ethnographic descriptive fieldwork (Hymes: 1972b).He was careful to point out that 'sociolinguistic fieldwork is not an end in itself, but rather 'a necessary part of the progress toward models (structural and generative) of sociolinguistics description, formulation of universal sets of features and relations, and exploratory theories" (1972; 43)**.** In analyzing the socio/cultural image of a language is effectively cultivated by the use of Dell Hymes 'Ethnography of communication'. It is the best cognitive tool of Ethnography and Communication research. In this regard Bonvillain (2003) had done Hymes approach in analyzing conversation.

 Sociolinguistics and Ethnography

Linguistics Anthropology has been emerged as a new area in which the language is used in the context of society, and a new term 'sociolinguistics' is appeared in the arena of cultural anthropology. As a matter of fact, 'sociolinguistics' includes understanding the social/cultural cues. This area of study was cultivated by a number of scholars like Hymes (1971), Bright and Ramanujan (1964), Sankoff (1971), Labov (1960), Ervin-Tripp (1969), Cazden (1970) and others. Since Anthropology deals with ethnography of other culture we the students every time enter a new social/cultural setting. We try to sake a new behave. Sociolinguistics includes understanding the social/cultural cues regarding what subjects may be discussed with which individuals**.** Kottak (2004) has described that what people actually say or linguistic performance is always concerned with sociolinguistics. He corroborated the opinion of Eckert and Rickford (2001) that, "The field of sociolinguistics investigates relationships between social/cultural and linguistics variation, or language in its social context. Actually social linguistics enlightened the speaker's social position/status and situation as well as cultural pattern in given system of his community.

Haviland (1996) postulated that "Individuals tend to vary in the ways they use language, and as the proceeding discussion suggests, social variables such as class and status of the speaker will also influence

their use of language.". According Dell Hymes explanation: "There are indeed several underdeveloped intellectual areas involving speech to which anthropology can contribute. All are alike in that they need fresh theoretical thought, methodological invention, and empirical work, and have roots in anthropology's vocation as a comparative discipline. Among these areas are the revitalization of dialectology (perhaps under the heading of "socio- linguistics"); the place of language in an evolutionary theory of culture; the semantic typology of languages; and the truly comparative study of verbal art. Fortunately, all those mentioned have begun to attract attention. For the anthropological study of behavior there is another area of importance, one that seems general, central, and neglected. It can be called the ethnography of speaking."

Hymes Ethnography

In 1964 Gumperz and Hymes edited a special issue of the 'American Anthropologist' which they entitled "The ethnography of communication ". In this study contented with the article by several brilliant scholars in the discipline of Anthropology, Sociology, Linguistics and psychology who contributed or addressed themselves to the issue in the context of verbal communication (Chienjer Charls Lin,jun10, 2004**).** The original publication had been revised, updated and expanded into 'Directions in sociolinguistics: the ethnography of communication' (1986). Hymes was inspired by Noam Chomsky's (1965) 'Theory of Linguistic competence and performance'. Chomsky said, primarily the language of an ideal speaker-hearer in a completely homogenous speech community who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by grammatically irreverent conditions, like as memory imitations, directions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristics) in applying his knowledge of language in actual performance.

Hymes 'The Speaking Model'

According Hymes the following aspects are considered to the ethnography of communication study :

S-setting and scene. Hymes has considered that "the setting refers to the time and place while scene describes the environment of the situation.

P-Participants. This refers to who is involved in the speech including the speaker and the audience.

E-Ends. The purpose and goals of the speech along with any outcomes of the speech.

A-Act Sequence. The order of events that took place during the speech.

K-key. The overal tone or manner of the speech.

]-Instruments. The form and style of the speech being given.

N-Defines what is socially acceptable at the event.

G-Genre type of speech that is being given.

A case study:

A study was conducted in an academic institution, a UG degree college of West Bengal State University in urban setting. The event of interaction was a departmental meeting held in the fall of summer of the current year. The interactive persons were homogeneous in terms of speech character (monolingual: speak in a regional language 'Bengali'), religiosity (Hindu by birth) and profession (teacher). Altogether 16 persons took part in interaction. One permanent regular faculty was not present in the meeting because of her personal work. One non-teaching staff with one part-time employee (teaching) was not also attended that meeting. The conversation of that meeting was continued near about three hours. The following agenda of the meeting were discussed:

1)   Academic affairs; like, class routine, academic calendars, topic choice and work-load distribution.
2)   Academic field-work related matters.
3)   Miscellaneous.

Here is an example of one study that was based on "Hymes" Model.

Settings: The setting was academic department of UG degree college of West Bengal State University of, situated at Habra, .North 24 Parganas. A round table was in the room with wooden chairs. A window with

suitable cover is present. Pictures and academic scenario covered the walls. A clock is on the wall near the door. Head of the department was present in the middle, no definite place was recognized and also no desk.

Participants: There was homogeneous group containing 15 members present. All teaching and non-teaching staffs are requested to express their opinions on the agenda of the meeting. There was an equal opportunity for representing the self opinion for the members. Head of the Dept (HOD), had been addressed as 'respected Sir/Madam' by participants, no other honorable term was used.

Ends: The conversation started with short speech of the HOD. According seniority the members were presented their speech.

Act: The speech acts in the meeting were most frequently discussed in terms of interest of the speaker. Another communicative speech was friendly and joking. The meeting officially started at 12 pm and ended 3 pm.

 Instrument: The members were met face to face. Notes of the meeting were taken by a teacher in a meeting book.

Norms: There were many norms of the meeting. All members were maintained it carefully.

Genre: A non-teaching staff was not clearly stated his opinion, he was in hesitation But another one of his colleagues help him.

Technique Used:

The basic Ethnographic technique like observation was used for conducting the above discourse analysis. According to Kothari, 'observation' is a scientific tool for data collection. When it serves a formulated research purpose, it must be systematically planned and recorded subject to checks & controls and validity & reliability. We often habituated with Participant and Non- participant type of observations in the context of ethnography research. If the observer observes by making himself, or the members of the group he is observing so that he can experience what the members of the group experience is called Participant observation. (Kothari). The participant observation is essential tool for analyzing and interpreting the discourse study in 'Ethnography of Communication'. The present investigation had triggered on this technique. The participant's verbal consent had taken when the study completed. If the participant were informed with the study before, there have a chance to change their behavior or style of speech. So the consent have had been collected after the end of the conversation.

Findings of Conversation:

Findings of the present study are deciphered in Stage-1, with Table -1 & 2 for concerning the participant's occupational status and preliminary cultural profile. To provide in this section in Stage-2 present their statements and Stage-3 stands to the decision making.

 Stage-1

Table-1 :The people

Hence the members of the meeting are represented with symbols according to their designation.

Associate professor	Assistant professor	Guest or Part-time professor(regular)	Skilled or Non Teaching members
A1	A2	A3	W1
B1(H.O.D)	B2	B3	W2
	C2	C3	W3
	D2	D4	

Associate professor = 1.Assistant Professor=2. Guest or part-time (regular)=3.skilled or Non-Teaching Staffs=W

Table-2 : Cultural profile

Participants	Age	Sex	Caste	Designation	Resident
A1	47	M	Brambhin	Associate Professor	Out sides (Calcutta City Area)
B1	39	F	Brambhine	Associate professor	Same As A1
A2	39	M	Namasudra	Assistant professor	Local Residents
B2	36	M	Namasudra	Same as B2	Same
C2	35	M	Kayastha	Same	Kolkata
A3	45	F	Not known	Part-time(regular)	Local
B3	42	F	Not known	Same	Kolkata
C3	32	F	Not known	Same	Local
D3	28	F	Not known	Same	Same
W1	53	M	Brambhine	Skilled-worker	Kolkata
W2	39	M	Not known	Same	Local
W3	49	M	Not known	Same	Kolkata
W4	59	M	Namasudra	Same	Local

Stage-2 : Statement Scenario

Three shift of the college has already been running, therefore M=Morning Girls **(General Course),** E= Evening for Boys (general) and D=Day for regardless of sex (All Honours subject and B.A, General courses.)

B1= Head of the department. She is the second most senior faculty. She proposed the house that" the all field work of different classes have to be combined if you all agree"

1)   A1= He did not give clear cut statement against the agenda. Rather he proposed that all morning session or girls of III yr and Evening boys III yr are arranged to conduct of a field and also respectively II yr of M&E.

2)   A2= His statement was clear-cut. He said that field-work of the concerned classes to be held separately.

3)   B2 = This was the very interesting cords, which broke harmonic situation of the discussion. The participant had not keep any speech. He said that "I agree with the statement of A2".

4)   C2= His statement was very important, he earnestly requested to the all members that kindly give a clear-cut notions. The meeting somewhat silence was that time.

5)   No statement was given by the guest professors.

6)   W1= His statement was for the consideration of combined field work.

7)   W2= He strongly said to the favor of separate field work in tradition.

Stage-3 : Decision Making

HOD had come to the point of solution and also made it clear that no jointly making field likely to be held. The respective fieldworks would be done separately.

Results

The aforesaid study clearly indicates the importance of 'Ethnography of communication'. The communication of participants highly condensed in nature as well as high density of network was signified. The study deciphered the competence of communication. In the above discussion, it was examined that each and every participants had been manifested their self-statements. The all statements of the meeting had built a strong communicative bridge among the all members. At the same time, it can be assumed that the participants are the employee of the Educational Institution for long time and will have been continued. So their level of cognition is praiseworthy. Another important issue is that teaching and non-teaching staff are equally clarified their statement. The total discussion was held in regional language - Bengali. A little amount of English words was used in the total discussion, because to make a clear-cut communication space.

Another achievement was seen that the local and lower castes participants were going to present same mode of statement. But outside, participants though they belonged higher caste strata were presenting contradictory mode of statement. Although both of different castes of people always tried to manifests their demands or wants within the conversation.

Conclusion

The main purpose of the study was to examine the Hymes 'speaking model'. The result of the present study assigned that the language in relation to the cultural and social sediment which influence communication. The present study examined that the participants always presented their demands. The group solidarity and relationships were also found. Their mode of speech and high density of network reflected within the study. Every statements of the studied conversation were delightful and bright. The present study also indicates that social status as well as occupational status influenced by the language or mode of speaking, and variability of communication or perceptibility of communication is depended on those social/cultural traits. Language, communication and ethnography are interlocked with each other. These three issues have played a great role in human cultural space (HCS) to the society. Communication sometimes controls the individualism and the social status with group solidarity.

The present preliminary study revealed that the study of ethnography in times and space played as a cognitive devices to clarify human social/cultural identity. Ethnography of communication stated the rural simple way of life reflected through people's mode of speaking and their sentiment. On the other hand urban settings stand their complexity nature to the mode of communication.

Step in next

The present paper has an animate agent to the study Anthropology of communication. We are interested to propose a research strategy into this field. The prelude of the research has been followed as 1) to select a college with Geographical, political and cultural settings, 2) various departments of the selected college and faculty members and their cultural profile with designations and 3) several meetings or platform of dialogue exchange.

Acknowledgement

References and Further Readings

Bonvillain, Nancy, 2003. *Language, Culture, and Communication: The Meaning of Messages,* (4th edn. Ed.). Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

Bright and A.K.Ramanujan, 1972, 'Sociolinguistic variation and Language change", in *Sociolinguistics*, by J.B.Pride and Janet Holmes (eds), Penguin Education, Penguin Books Ltd, England,

Carbaugh, D.(1989). Talking American: Cultural discourses on DONAHU, Ablex Publishing Corporation.

Cheng Qun, "Absence of Audience's Consciousness" in *Ethnography On Writing of Ethnography from An Audience angle Based on communication*, Asian Social Science , vol-4, No 12, December 2008.

Chomsky, N. 1965, *Aspects of the theory of syntax, MIT Press, USA*

Ember R, M. Ember & Peregrine, 2003, *Anthropology*, Singapore: Pearson, Education, Inc.

Ericksen Thomas & Nielson Finn, 2001, *A History of Anthropology*, London : Pluto Press

Genzuk, Michel, "A Synthesis of Ethnographic Research," University of Southern California, Centre for Multilingual Research.

Gomez Herve & Nitin Sawhney, 2000. "Communication Pattern" in *Domestic Life ; Preliminary Ethnographic Study,* University of Paris, Dept. of Ethnology and comparative Sociology, Draft Report July-Sept,

Gumperz, J.J & Hymes, D. (eds.), 1964, "The Ethnography of communication" in American Anthropologist, vol.66, no.06, part-02,

Gumperz, J.J & Hymes, D. (eds.), 1972, *Directions in sociolinguistics: the ethnography of communication*, *New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston*

Gumperz, J.J,1972, "Sociolinguistics and communication in small groups" in *Sociolinguistics,* by J.B.Pride and Janet Holmes (eds), Penguin Education, Penguin Books Ltd, England,

Haviland A.William, 1995, *Cultural Anthropology,* Harcourt Brace College Publishers,New York.

Hymes, D.,1962, "The Ethnography of Speaking", pp. 13–53 in Gladwin, T. & Sturtevant, W.C. (eds), Anthropology and Human Behavior, The Anthropology Society of Washington, Washington.

Hymes, D. (ed.), 1964, *Language in culture and society: A reader in linguistics and anthropology*. New York: Harper & Row.

Hymes, D, 1967, "The Anthropology of Communication" in Dance (ed) *Human Communication Theory: Original Essays,* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston,

Hymes, D, 1972, 'Models of the interaction of language and social life', in J. J. Gumperz and D. Hymes (eds) Directions *in sociolinguistics: The ethnography of communication*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston. pp. 35-71.

Hymes, D. 1974, *Foundations in sociolinguistics: An ethnographic approach*,

Philadephia:University of Pennsylvania Press.

Kottak C. Phillip, 2004*, Anthropology: Exploration of Human Diversity*, NY, Mc GrawHill

Kothari C.R, 2010, *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques*, New Delhi, Reprint, New age International Limited (Ed-2nd)

Labov, W,1972, "The study of language in the social context" in *Sociolinguistics*, by J.B.Pride and Janet Holmes (eds), Penguin Education, Penguin Books Ltd, England,

Lofland, Jhon & Lyn H, 1984, *Analyzing Social Settings; A Guide To Qualitative Observation and Analysis*, New Work, Wadswoth.

Matel Maldona " The Ethnography of communication". Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Brasov . Vol-2(51)-2009, Series IV; Philosophy and cultural Studies.

Michel D.Myers, "Investigating Information System with Ethnographic Research ", University of Auckland, Communication of AIS volume, Article23.

Ray, Manas, 2006, *Aspect of Rural Communication: A study on ethnography of communication of the Santals of eastern India*, Serials Publications, New Delhi

Searle.J.R., 1969, *Speech acts: An essay in the philosophy of language*. Cambridge [England]:Cambridge Univesity Press.

Young Pauline, 2009, *Scientific Social Surveys and Research*, New Delhi, PHI Learning

Web sources

1.www.cios.org/encyclopedia/ethnography/index.htm

2. people.ku.edu/~nbaym/syllabusethno.html

3.Several web pages.