Module: Discourse Analysis   level: Master1   Semester2
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Lecture 04: Ethnography of Speaking (Communication)

Definition: Ethnography of communication (EOC) also referred to as ethnography of speaking refers to a method in linguistics whose major concern is **the analysis of communication within the wider context of the social and cultural practices and beliefs of the members of a particular culture or speech community**. EOC takes into consideration both the communicative form and function in a given culture.

- **Speech community**: group of people sharing a set of linguistic norms and expectations when they use language.

Aims of EOC: this method aims at **being able to determine**

- What communication acts or codes are significant to diverse social groups
- How different meanings are allocated to various communicative events by members of the same social group.
- The way in which different members of a group acquire these codes, so as to offer understanding into specific communities

Major Contributers: Dell Hymes (1962) was the founding father of the term 'ethnography of speaking or ethnography of communication'. He developed the **SPEAKING** model which is a framework that is used for the analysis of a speech event within its cultural context.

S: stands for Setting or scene.(time and place where of the conversation take place)

P: Participants (members who take part in the speech event speaker, addressee eg: teacher, students, friends…) language use differs according to participants

-Do you use the same words with a friend and with a teacher?

E: Ends (for what purpose is that conversation held and what are the expected results (outcome) from it)

- Is the purpose to give information, to tell a joke, to convince someone

A: Act sequences (form and order of the events) what speech acts make a certain speech event

K: Key (tone or manner of speech. It might be serious, sarcastic, humorous, joking, angry

I: Instrumentalities refers to the medium of communication used eg: speaking, writing, using sign language, or even whistling.

N: Norms: social rules governing the events and the participants' actions and reactions

G: Genres: type of speech act (lecture, interview, speech, conversation.

Example: Applying SPEAKING to a High School Biology Lecture

S – Setting and Scene

- **Setting:** A high school biology classroom at 10:00 AM.
- **Scene:** A formal, structured environment where students are expected to listen, take notes, and occasionally ask questions.

P – Participants

- **Speaker:** The biology teacher.
- **Listeners:** 11th-grade students, some active, others passive.
- **Roles:** The teacher as the primary knowledge provider; students as learners, occasionally discussion participants.

E – Ends

- **Purpose of the lecture:** To teach the process of **photosynthesis**.
- **Outcome:** Students should be able to describe the photosynthesis process and apply it to real-life biological contexts.

A – Act Sequence

- **Beginning:** Greeting, agenda for the lesson, brief review of the last topic.
- **Middle:** Explanation of photosynthesis using visuals, storytelling (e.g., a "day in the life of a plant"), and scientific terms.
- **End:** Summary of key points, Q&A session, and assigning homework.

K – Key

- **Tone/Manner:** Mostly formal and instructional, but with occasional humor and friendly tone to maintain engagement.
- **Mood:** Encouraging and enthusiastic to foster interest in science.

I – Instrumentalities

- **Channel:** Spoken word, supported by PowerPoint slides, diagrams, and occasional board writing.
- **Forms of speech:** Standard English with scientific terminology; sometimes simplified for clarity.

N – Norms

- **Rules of interaction:** Raise hands to speak, respect turn-taking, listen quietly during explanations.
- **Expectations:** Students should take notes, ask relevant questions, and complete follow-up tasks.

G – Genre

- **Type of communicative event:** Educational lecture.
- **Sub-genre:** Scientific explanation with informal moments of storytelling and real-world connections.

Criticism of Hymes' SPEAKING Model

Although Hymes' SPEAKING model is a significant device for analyzing the components of communicative events, it received some criticsm:

1. **Descriptive, not prescriptive**: The model deals with *what* to observe in a speech event but does not guide *how* to evaluate effectiveness or appropriateness.
2. **Lacks hierarchy or prioritization**: equality among all the components, though in practice, some (like participants or norms) may carry more weight in determining communicative success.
3. **Culturally specific bias**: Although intended for cross-cultural analysis, it was developed within a Western academic framework and may not fully capture nuances in all cultural contexts.
4. **Static view of communication**: It can oversimplify dynamic, evolving interactions by classifying them into fixed categories.