Chapter 6

Ethnography
Ethnography Defined

- The study of how speakers use language in interaction with others
- The study of speech communities’ "ways of speaking"
Ethnography Components

Focus on:
- naturally occurring speech
- Context of production
- Meaning & function (*not just distribution*)
- Language as relationship management
- Qualitative analysis
Come & Wait • REST
To Speak or Not to Speak...

- Not simply the absence of speech
  - Apache
  - Finish
  - Igbo
  - Japanese
  - vs. Jewish New Yorkers... Others...?
Just Absence of Speech...?
Deborah Tannen

- Jewish New Yorkers
- Conversational Analysis
- Language and Gender
Politeness Theory

- ‘Face’
  - Saving face
  - Losing face

\[
\text{Balance}
\]

- Indirect $\approx$ Polite
Polite Silence...?
Cultural Relativism

- AAs/WASPs think -
  - Apache silence = rude
  - Jewish NYer’s talking = rude

- Japanese folks think -
  - Drinking noodle soup silently = rude

- Others?
Narratives

- ≠ Neutral facts
- ≠ Self contained (intertextual)
- ≈ Chronological order
- ✓ Constructed to make a point
- ✓ Complex
  - Abstract, orientation, complication, etc.
- ✓ Mutli-voiced
...no speaker is the first one who disturbs the eternal silence of the universe...

Bakhtin
Homework

Pages 197 – 203
Sections 6.4 & 6.5

Details on Conversational Analysis assignment coming tomorrow...
Extra Credit Possibility:

- Choose any ethnographic description article discussed in the text, read it, and do a brief presentation for the class:
  - Main ideas
  - Relation to (extension of) class discussion
  - Relation to your personal experience

Offer will be good for *most* topics/chapters
Analyzing Conversations...

Hymes, Grice & others

(*much extra-textual stuff...*)
Freedom of Speech?

- Possible / 'Impossible' responses?
  - Judge sentencing felon
  - Parent scolding a child
  - Preacher’s sermon to congregation
  - Student presentation in class
Group Activity

- Analyzing Greetings
  - Why do you speak at all?
  - When do you greet others?
  - Who do you greet/not greet?
  - Who speaks first?
  - What can/cannot be said?
  - What else is involved in greetings?
SPEAKING

- Setting & Scene
- Participants
- Ends
- Act Sequence
- Key
- Instrumentalities
- Norms of interaction & interpretation
- Genre
Maxims of Conversation

- Quantity
  - Be as informative as required...

- Relevance
  - Be relevant

- Manner
  - Brief, orderly
  - Not ambiguous nor obscure

- Quality
  - Truthful, Supportable claims
Conversational Analysis Project

- Use SPEAKING model
- Natural *or* Recorded Speech Act
- Choose Situation to Elucidate:
  - Silence
  - Politeness
  - Dialect
  - Voice Variation
  - Style/Register
  - Codeswitching
SPEAKING in Class

- Apply the SPEAKING model to the university classroom
  - Setting & Scene
  - Participants
  - Ends
  - Act Sequence
  - Key
  - Instrumentalities
  - Norms of interaction & interpretation
  - Genre
Do it again:
Getting a Speeding Ticket

- Setting & Scene
- Participants
- Ends
- Act Sequence
- Key
- Instrumentalities
- Norms of interaction & interpretation
- Genre

Your Conversational Analysis should include what happens as well as why these things happen... The 'what' should be separated by the SPEAKING components. The 'why' may be integrated in the components or held the end and placed in a new section of its own...
Vocab

- Turn-taking
- Transition relevance places
- Minimal Responses
  - Back-channels
- Simultaneous Speech
- Asymmetrical Speech
Sacks, et al Model

- One person at a time
- Minimal overlap
- Brief gaps between turns
- Turns are transferred gently

→ ... ethnocentric ... but valuable
In Other Languages

- Relationships indicated in word choice
- Japanese, for example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;I&quot;</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Super Formal</td>
<td>watakushi</td>
<td>watakushi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>watashi</td>
<td>watakushi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>boku</td>
<td>watashi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To subordinate</td>
<td>ore</td>
<td>xxx</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Homework

- Finish Chapter
  - Pages 203-215
- Continue to Consider Research Project
- Look for Conversational Analysis ideas
Whaddya Think?

- Are there links between turn-taking and politeness?
- What issues can/does this cause in intercultural communications?
What Does This Mean…?

- “In engaging in conversation, speakers are necessarily doing a certain amount of ‘identity work’, through their use of conversational style as well as their use of a particular accent, dialect, or language.”

p. 201
Vocab in Action

- Identify each of the following
- Use conversations w/in pages 203-213
  - Turn-taking
  - Transition relevance places
  - Minimal Responses
    - Back-channels
  - Simultaneous Speech
  - Asymmetrical Speech
Preview of Power Talk

- Asymmetrical Speech
  - Dr. \( \leftrightarrow \) Patient
    - Change toward quasi-equality?
    - What do you think?
  - Police \( \leftrightarrow \) Suspect
    - What mistake did the police make in trying to frame the suspect in the text?
- Interviewer \( \leftrightarrow \) Interviewee
  - Moral of the story in the text?

(More to come in Chpt 10...
Power Talk: Your Experience

- Examples of PT not in text?
  - What’s the situation
  - Is language exploited:
    - Intentionally
    - Inadvertently
    - Both (*Define circumstances...*)
  - Has there been change recently (50 yrs)
  - Is change underway now?
Activity (If Time Allows)

- 2 - 4 volunteers
  - Willing to chat in a ‘fishbowl’
  - Already friends

- You talk...
  - We push “pause” occasionally
  - We examine what your saying, how & why...
Homework

- Chapter 7
  - Pages
  - Sections 7.1 - 7.3

- Begin Conversational Analysis...
  - Due 3-13 (*late papers = 10% penalty*)
  - *I’ll preview drafts turned in by 2/27...*