Course 2: Basic Terms, Concepts, and Issues

Patterns of Communication

It has long been recognized that much of linguistic behavior is rule governed: i.e., it follows regular patterns and constraints which can be formulated descriptively as rules (see Sapir 1994). Thus, sounds must be produced in language-specific but regular sequences if they are to be interpreted as a speaker intends; the possible order and form of words in a sentence is constrained by the rules of grammar; and even the definition of a well-formed discourse is determined by culture-specific rules of rhetoric. Hymes identifies concern for pattern as a key motivating factor in his establishment of this discipline: "My own purpose with the ethnography of speaking was . . . to show that there was patterned regularity where it had been taken to be absent, in the activity of speaking itself" (2000: 314). Sociolinguists such as Labov (1963; 1966), Trudgill (1974), and Bailey (1976) have demonstrated that what earlier linguists had considered irregularity or "free variation" in linguistic behavior can be found to show regular and predictable statistical patterns. Sociolinguistics and the ethnography of communication are both concerned with discovering regularities in language use, but sociolinguists typically focus on variability in pronunciation and grammatical form, while ethnographers are concerned with how communicative units are organized and how they pattern in a much broader sense of "ways of speaking," as well as with how these patterns interrelate in a systematic way with and derive meaning from other aspects of culture. Indeed, for some, pattern *is* culture: "if we conceive culture as *pattern that gives meaning to social acts and entities* . . . we can start to see precisely *how* social actors enact culture through patterned speaking and patterned action" (Du Bois 2000: 94; italics in the original).

Patterning occurs at all levels of communication: societal, group, and individual (cf. Hymes 1961). At the societal level, communication usually patterns in terms of its functions, categories of talk, and attitudes and conceptions about language and speakers. Communication also patterns according to particular roles and groups within a society, such as sex, age, social status, and occupation: e.g., a teacher has different ways of speaking from a lawyer, a doctor, or an insurance salesman. Ways of speaking also pattern according to educational level, rural or urban residence, geographic region, and other features of social organization. Some common patterns are so regular, so predictable, that a very low information load is carried even by a long utterance or interchange, though the social meaning involved can be significant. For instance, greetings in some languages (e.g. Korean) may carry crucial information identifying speaker relationships (or attitudes toward relationships). An unmarked greeting sequence such as "Hello, how are you today? Fine, how are you?" has virtually no referential content. However, silence in response to another's greeting in this sequence would be marked communicative behavior, and would carry a very high information load for speakers of English. Greetings in many languages are far more elaborate than in English (e.g. Arabic, Indonesian, Igbo), but even a lengthy sequence may convey very little information as long as it is unmarked. In all cases, patterned variations can be related to aspects of the social structure or value and belief systems within the respective cultures.

The potential strength of a pattern may be illustrated by the opening sequence of a telephone conversation in English (Schegloff 1968). The ring of the telephone is a summons, and the person who answers must speak first even though the caller knows the receiver has been picked up. (Many people will not pick up the telephone in the middle of a ring because they feel it is an interruption of the summons.) Even an obscene telephone caller generally waits for the person who is answering to say something before the obscenities begin. If someone picks up the telephone and does not say anything, the caller cannot proceed. He or she can either say something like "Hello, hello, anybody there?" as a second summons, or else hang up. The caller may dial back again to repeat the sequence, but not continue if there has not been an appropriate response. The relationship of form and function is an example of communicative patterning along a different dimension. Asking someone in English if he or she has a pen is readily recognized as a request rather than a truth-value question, for instance, because it is part of the regular structural pattern for requesting things in English; the person who answers "Yes, I

do," without offering one is joking, rude, or a member of a different speech community.

Finally, communication patterns at the individual level, at the level of expression and interpretation of personality. To the extent that emotional factors such as nervousness have involuntary physiological effects on the vocal mechanism, these effects are not usually considered an intentional part of "communication" (though they may be if deliberately manipulated, as in acting). An example of a conventional expression of individual emotion (and thus part of patterned communication) is the increased use of volume in speech conveying "anger" in English. A Navajo expressing anger uses enclitics not recognized as emotion markers by speakers of other languages, and a friendly greeting on the street between Chinese speakers may have surface manifestations corresponding to anger for speakers of English. Similarly, American Indian students often interpret Anglo teachers' "normal" classroom projection level as anger and hostility, and teachers interpret students' softer level as shyness or unfriendliness. Perceptions of individuals as "voluble" or "taciturn" are also in terms of cultural norms, and even expressions of pain and stress are culturally patterned: people in an English speech community learn withdrawal or anger, in Japanese nervous laughter or giggling, and in Navajo silence. Although I have listed societal, group, and individual levels of patterning separately, there is an invisible web of interrelationships among them, and indeed among all patterns of culture. There may very well be general themes that are related to a world view present in several aspects of culture, including language.

There are societies that are more direct than others, for instance, and this will be manifested in ways of speaking as well as in belief and value systems. The notion of a hierarchy of control seems to be pervasive in several cultures, and must first be understood in order to explain certain language constraints as well as religious beliefs and social organization (see Witherspoon 1977; Thompson 1978; Watkins 1979). The concern for pattern has always been basic in anthropology, with interpretations of underlying meaning dependent on the discovery and description of normative structure or design. More recent emphasis on processes of interactions in generating behavioral patterns extends this concern to explanation as well as description.

Communicative Functions

At a societal level, language serves many functions. Language selection often relates to political goals, functioning to create or reinforce boundaries in order to unify speakers as members of a single speech community and to exclude outsiders from intragroup communication. For example, establishing the official use of Hebrew in Israel functioned to unify at this level in building the new nation-state, while the refusal of early Spanish settlers in Mexico to teach the Castilian language to the indigenous population was exclusionary. Members of a community may also reinforce their boundaries by discouraging prospective second language learners, by holding and conveying the attitude that their language is too difficult – or inappropriate – for others to use. Many languages are also made to serve a social identification function within a society by providing linguistic indicators which may be used to reinforce social stratification, or to maintain differential power relationships between groups. The functions which language differences in a society are assigned may also include the maintenance and manipulation of individual social relationships and networks, and various means of effecting social control. Linguistic features are often employed by people, consciously or unconsciously, to identify themselves and others, and thus serve to mark and maintain various social categories and divisions. The potential use of language to create and maintain power is part of a central topic among ethnographers of communication and other sociolinguists concerned with language-related inequities and inequalities. At the level of individuals and groups interacting with one another, the functions of communication are directly related to the participants' purposes and needs (Hymes 1961; 1972c). These include such categories of functions as *expressive* (conveying feelings or emotions), *directive* (requesting or demanding), *referential* (true or false propositional content), *poetic* (aesthetic), *phatic* (empathy and solidarity), and *metalinguistic* (reference to language itself).

The list is similar to Searle's (1977a) classes of illocutionary acts (representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, declarations), but there are differences in perspective and scope which separate

the fields of ethnography of communication and speech act theory. Among these are the latter's primary focus on form, with the speech act almost always coterminous with sentences in analysis; for ethnographers, the functional perspective has priority in description, and while function may coincide with a single grammatical sentence, it often does not, or a single sentence may serve several functions simultaneously. Further, while speech act theorists generally exclude the metaphorical and phatic uses of language from basic consideration, these constitute a major focus for ethnographic description. Phatic communication conveys a message, but has no referential meaning. The meaning is in the act of communication itself. Much of ritual interaction is included in this category, fully comprising most brief encounters, and at least serving to open and close most longer encounters (Goffman 1971). Not accounting for such functions of communication is ignoring much of language as it is actually used.

The distinction between *intent* and *effect* in function (Ervin-Tripp 1972) is comparable to the difference between *illocutionary* and *perlocutionary* acts in pragmatics (Searle 1969, 1977b). The difference between the functional intent of the speaker and the actual effect on the hearer is part of the notion of functional relativity (Hymes 1972c). Both are relevant to the description and analysis of a communicative event. While many of the functions of language are universal, the ways in which communication operates in any one society to serve these functions is language specific. The same relative status of two speakers may be conveyed by their choice of pronominal forms in one language; in another, by the distance they stand apart or their body position while speaking; and between bilinguals, even by their choice of which language is used in addressing one another.The social functions or practices of language provide the primary dimension for characterizing and organizing communicative processes and products in a society; without understanding why a language is being used as it is, and the consequences of such use, it is impossible to understand its meaning in the context of social interaction. To claim primacy of function over form in analysis is not to deny or neglect the formal structures of communication; rather it is to require integration of function and form in analysis and description. Sentences and even longer strings of discourse are not to be dealt with as autonomous units, but rather as they are situated in communicative settings and patterns, and
as they function in society.

Communicative Competence

Hymes (1966a) observed that speakers who could produce any and all of the grammatical sentences of a language (per Chomsky's 1965 definition of *linguistic competence*) would be institutionalized if they indiscriminately went about trying to do so without consideration of the appropriate contexts of use. *Communicative competence* involves knowing not only the language code but also what to say to whom, and how to say it appropriately in any given situation. Further, it involves the social and cultural knowledge speakers are presumed to have which enables them to use and interpret linguistic forms. Hymes (1974, 1987) augmented Chomsky's notion of linguistic competence (knowledge of systematic potential, or whether or not an utterance is a possible grammatical structure in a language) with knowledge of appropriateness (whether and to what extent something is suitable), occurrence (whether and to what extent something is done), and feasibility (whether and to what extent something is possible under particular circumstances). The concept of communicative competence (and its encompassing congener, social competence) is one of the most powerful organizing tools to emerge in the social sciences in recent years.

Communicative competence extends to both knowledge and expectation of who may or may not speak in certain settings, when to speak and when to remain silent, to whom one may speak, how one may talk to persons of different statuses and roles, what nonverbal behaviors are appropriate in various contexts, what the routines for turn-taking are in conversation, how to ask for and give information, how to request, how to offer or decline assistance or cooperation, how to give commands, how to enforce discipline, and the like – in short, everything involving the use of language and other communicative modalities in particular social settings.

Clear cross-cultural differences can and do produce conflicts or inhibit communication. For example, certain American Indian groups are accustomed to waiting several minutes in silence before responding to

a question or taking a turn in conversation, while the native English speakers they may be talking to have very short time frames for responses or conversational turn-taking, and find long silences embarrassing. Conversely, Abrahams (1973) has pointed out that among African Americans conversations may involve several persons talking at the same time, a practice which would violate White middle-class rules of interaction. And as mentioned earlier, even such matters as voice level differ cross-culturally, and speaker intent may be misconstrued because of different expectation patterns for interpretation. The concept of communicative competence must be embedded in the notion of cultural competence, or the total set of knowledge and skills which speakers bring into a situation. This view is consonant with a semiotic approach which defines culture as meaning, and views all ethnographers (not just ethnographers of communication) as dealing with symbols. The systems of culture are patterns of symbols, and language is only one of the symbolic systems in this network. Interpreting the meaning of linguistic behavior requires knowing the meaning in which it is embedded. Ultimately all aspects of culture are relevant to communication, but those that have the most direct bearing on communicative forms and processes are the social and institutional structure, the values and attitudes held about language and ways of speaking, the network of conceptual categories which results from experiences, and the ways knowledge and skills (including language) are transmitted from one generation to the next and to new members of the group. Shared cultural knowledge is essential to explain the shared presuppositions and judgments of truth value which are the essential undergirdings of language structures, as well as of contextually appropriate usage and interpretation. While referential meaning may be ascribed to many of the elements in the linguistic code in a static manner, situated meaning must be accounted for as an emergent and dynamic process. Interaction requires the perception, selection, and interpretation of salient features of the code used in actual communicative situations, integrating these with other cultural knowledge and skills, and implementing appropriate strategies for achieving communicative goals.

The phonology, grammar, and lexicon which are the target of traditional linguistic description constitute only a part of the elements in the code used for communication. Also included are the paralinguistic and nonverbal phenomena which have conventional meaning in each speech community, and knowledge of the full range of variants in all elements which are available for transmitting social, as well as referential, information. Ability to discriminate between those variants which serve as markers of social categories or carry other meaning and those which are insignificant, and knowledge of what the meaning of a variant is in a particular situation, are all components of communicative competence.

The verbal code may be transmitted on oral, written, or manual (signed) channels. The relative load carried on each channel depends on its functional distribution in a particular speech community, and thus they are of differential importance in the linguistic repertoire of any individual or society. Full participation in a deaf speech community requires ability to interpret language on the manual channel but not the oral, for instance; a speech community with a primarily oral tradition may not require interpretation of writing; and a speech community which relegates much information flow to the written channel will require literacy skills for full participation. Thus, the traditional linguistic description which focuses only on the oral channel will be too narrow to account for communicative competence in most societies. Although it may cause some terminological confusion, references to *ways of speaking* and *ethnography of speaking* should be understood as usually including a much broader range of communicative behavior than merely speech.

The typical descriptive focus on oral production has tended to treat language as a unidirectional phenomenon. In considering the nature and scope of communicative competence, it is useful to distinguish between *receptive* and *productive* dimensions (Troike 1970); only shared receptive competence is necessary for successful communication. Knowledge of rules for appropriate communicative behavior entails understanding a wide range of language forms, for instance, but not necessarily the ability to produce them. Members of the same community may understand varieties of a language which differ according to the social class, region, sex, age, and occupation of the speaker, but only a few talented mimics will be able to speak them all. In multilingual speech communities, members

often share receptive competence in more than one language but vary greatly in their relative ability to speak one or the other. The following outline summarizes the broad range of shared knowledge that is involved in appropriate communication. From the ethnographer's perspective, this inventory also indicates the range of linguistic, interactional, and cultural phenomena which must ultimately be accounted for in an adequate description and explanation of communicative competence 1 Linguistic knowledge.
(a) Verbal elements; (b) Nonverbal elements; (c) Patterns of elements in particular speech events
(d) Range of possible variants (in all elements and their organization)
(e) Meaning of variants in particular situations
2 Interaction skills
(a) Perception of salient features in communicative situations
(b) Selection and interpretation of forms appropriate to specific situations, roles, and relationships (rules for the use of speech)
(c) Discourse organization and processes; (d) Norms of interaction and interpretation; (e) Strategies for achieving goals
3 Cultural knowledge
(a) Social structure (status, power, speaking rights); (b) Values and attitudes
(c) Cognitive maps/schemata; (d) Enculturation processes (transmission of knowledge and skills)

Communicative competence within the ethnography of communication usually refers to the communicative knowledge and skills shared by a speech community, but these (like all aspects of culture) reside variably in its individual members. The shared yet individual nature of competence reflects the nature of language itself, as expressed by von Humboldt (1836):

While languages are in the ambiguous sense of the word . . . creations of nations, they still remain personal and individual creations of individuals. This follows because they can be produced in each individual, yet only in such a manner that each individual assumes a priori the comprehension of all people and that all people, furthermore, satisfy such expectation.

Considering communicative competence at an individual level, we must additionally recognize that any one speaker is not infrequently a member of more than one speech community – often to different degrees. For individuals who are members of multiple speech communities, which one or ones they orient themselves to at any given moment – which set of social and communicative rules they use – is reflected not only in which segment of their linguistic knowledge they select, but which interaction skills they utilize, and which aspects of their cultural knowledge they activate. The competence of non-native speakers of a language usually differs significantly from the competence of native speakers; the specific content of what an individual needs to know and the skills he or she needs to have depend on the social context in which he or she is or will be using the language and the purposes he or she will have for doing so.

This further emphasizes why the notion of an "ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech-community" (Chomsky 1965: 3) is inadequate for ethnographic purposes. Also, multilingual speakers' communicative competence includes knowledge of rules for the appropriate choice of language and for switching between languages, given a particular social context and communicative intent, as well as for the intralingual shifting among styles and registers which is common to the competence of all speakers. An extension has been made to "intercultural communicative competence," which requires an additional level of metacompetence involving explicit awareness of differential usages and ability to adapt communicative strategies to a variety of cultural situations (Kim 1991). Liu (2001) further extends the construct to "adaptive cultural competence" as a goal for second language learners, which also encompasses social identity negotiation skills and culture sensitivity knowledge. He argues that such a higher level competence is needed for appropriate and effective social participation of non-native speakers who are in roles of international students or immigrées.

Accounting for the nature of communicative competence ultimately "requires going beyond a concern with Language (capital L) or a language. It requires a focus on the ways in which people do use language . . ." (Hymes 1993: 13). Problems arise when individual competence is judged in relation to a presumed "ideal" monolingual speech community, or assessed with tests given in a limited subset of situations which do not represent the true range of an individual's verbal ability (Hymes 1979b). The problems are particularly serious ones when such invalid judgments result in some form of social or economic discrimination against the individuals, such as unequal or inappropriate educational treatment or job placement. Awareness of the complex nature of communicative competence and the potential negative consequences of misjudgments is leading to major changes in procedures and instruments for language assessment, but no simple solutions are forthcoming (see Philips 1983a; Milroy 1987a; Byram 1997).

Units of Analysis

In order to describe and analyze communication it is necessary to deal with discrete units of some kind, with communicative activities that have recognizable boundaries. The three units suggested by Hymes (1972) are *situation*, *event*, and *act*. The *communicative situation* is the context within which communication occurs. Examples include a religious service, a court trial, a holiday party, an auction, a train ride, or a class in school. The situation may remain the same even with a change of location, as when a committee meeting or court trial reconvenes in different settings, or it may change in the same location if very different activities go on there at different times. The same room in a university building may successively serve as the site of a lecture, a committee meeting, or a play practice, and a family dwelling may provide the venue for a holiday party. A single situation maintains a consistent general configuration of activities, the same overall ecology within which communication takes place, although there may be great diversity in the kinds of interaction which occur there.

The *communicative event* is the basic unit for descriptive purposes. A single event is defined by a unified set of components throughout, beginning with the same general purpose of communication, the same general topic, and involving the same participants, generally using the same language variety, maintaining the same tone or key and the same rules for interaction, in the same setting. An event terminates whenever there is a change in the major participants, their role-relationships, or the focus of attention. If there is no change in major participants and setting, the boundary between events is often marked by a period of silence and perhaps a change in body position. Discontinuous events are possible, if one is interrupted and then resumes without change in major components. A conversation between student and professor in an office may be interrupted by a telephone call, for instance. The professor then participates in a different event with the caller, leaving the student "on hold." They may say "Now where were we?" before resuming the first event, but participants can usually continue from the point of interruption. In this case the student has not been an active participant in the intervening event, generally looks elsewhere, and at least pretends not to listen. He or she has essentially left the situation, although physically still present. Discovering what constitutes a communicative event and what classes of events are recognized within a speech community are a fundamental part of doing ethnography of communication. The designation of some events may be inferred from the fact they are given different labels in the language, and may be identified as categories of talk, but some are not neatly differentiated. However, an important first step in research is determining the existing inventory of labels in the language for such events.

The *communicative ac*t is generally coterminous with a single interactional function, such as a referential statement, a request, or a command, and may be either verbal or nonverbal. For example, not only may a request take several verbal forms (*I'd like a pen* and *Do you have a pen?* as well as *May I please have a pen?*), but it may be expressed by raised eyebrows and a "questioning" look, or by a longing sigh. In the context of a communicative event, even silence may be an intentional and conventional communicative act, and used to question, promise, deny, warn, insult, request, or command (Saville-Troike 1985). The same observable behavior may or may not constitute a communicative act in different speech communities. A belch at the end of a meal is not a communicative act if it is merely a sign of indigestion, but it is a communicative act in societies where one burps to symbolize appreciation

and thanks for the meal; the ways stones, shells, or bones configurate when thrown are considered communicative in many parts of the world, but they are not considered potential elements of communication in others. The study of speech acts within linguistic theory is the basis for this level of analysis, but must be extended to account for a broader range of phenomena within the ethnography of communication, and to allow for possible differences with regard to what segments of language are considered basic functional units by members of different speech communities.

The following examples illustrate the three different units of analysis. I observed and videotaped a group of limited-English-speaking elementary school students each week over the course of an entire school year in a *communicative situation* that occurred when these children left their regular English-medium classrooms for 30 minutes each day for a common class in English as a Second Language (ESL) (Saville-Troike 1984; Saville-Troike, McClure, and Fritz 1984). Although the composition of the group changed as the result of student illness or family trips and the appointment of a new teacher at midyear, and the specific activities changed with seasonal interests and the students' developing English language proficiency, the overall structure and purpose of the sessions remained the same. Selecting a simple communicative situation such as this in longitudinal and/or comparative research provides a consistent frame wherein the effects of minimal variation in components of communication (e.g. setting, participants, goal) can be observed and interpreted. Within the ESL situation, the class periods were found to divide into a regular sequence of recurring *communicative events*:

1 Unstructured play
2 Claiming a seat at the large table where the lesson was conducted
3 Opening routines (e.g., *What day is it today?*)
4 Teacher-directed lesson on a targeted language form
5 Follow-up activity (usually involving arts and crafts or a game)
6 Closing routines (e.g., *Time to clean up, See you tomorrow*, etc.)

The event as a unit for analysis is important in part so that observations made at different times will be comparable, and so that generalizations can be made about patterns of communication within a constant context. In the ESL situation I studied, for instance, patterns and forms for communication varied greatly from event to event, and yet they stayed relatively constant for each type of event throughout the year. It was possible, therefore, to analyze the development of students' competence in English and the strategies that they used to achieve different communicative functions within each event; any comparison of student or teacher language forms and rules for language use at different points of the lesson (or in other situations) would have been quite misleading without taking this unit into account. For example, the word *is* in such sentences as "Today is Monday" or "This is a table," which was used consistently in the ESL opening routines and teacher-directed lessons beginning during the first week of school, was still absent in the speech of several students in all other events (and in the other situations) after weeks and even months of English instruction. Without reference to different event structures, it might appear that this grammatical form occurred randomly, rather than as part of memorized patterns that were used only during teacher – student interaction when the focus was on the form, and not on the content, of communication. Students and teachers also (unconsciously) recognized that organizational rules, such as raising hands and talking one at a time, operated only during certain segments (events) of the class.

In this research, analysis at the level of the *communicative act* made it possible to determine the relative frequency of different communicative functions for students in different events and across time (e.g., warnings and threats to other students declined significantly, and requests for clarification increased) and to compare the linguistic form that was selected within events across time for each type of act (e.g. from gestures and nonspeech sounds used for warnings and threats at the beginning of the year, to holistic routines, to increasing syntactic complexity in English). A second communication situation I have regularly observed is a Christian religious service. It typically includes these communicative events:
1 Call to worship 2 Reading of scriptures 3 Prayer 4 Announcements 5 Sermon 6 Benediction

Even though a single set of participants is involved (perhaps even a single speaker), and the setting and general purpose remain the same, the change between events is clearly marked by different ways of

speaking, different body position for both leader and congregation, and periods of silence or musical interludes. Within the event labelled "prayer," the sequence of communicative acts predictably includes the summons, praise, supplication, thanks, and closing formula. Robbins describes the clear boundaries of this event as it is enacted in a Papua New Guinea Society:

Urapmin prayers have discrete beginnings. To begin a prayer, one first asks all of those present to close their eyes. Once people have closed their eyes and thus marked a discrete break with the flow of social life up to that point, the person praying will use one of several formulae to call out to God and mark the formal beginning of the prayer . . . Along with these openings, prayers also have patterned closings, wherein the person praying intones that "I have spoken (or asked) sufficiently and what I have said is true". . . With this ending, eyes open, marking the return to life outside of prayer. (2001: 906)

Categories of Talk

As with the identification of communicative events, labels used by a speech community for categories of talk provide a useful clue to what categories it recognizes and considers salient. The elicitation of labels is one aspect of *ethnosemantics* (also called *ethnolinguistics*, *ethnoscience*, *ethnographic semantics*, and *new ethnography*). These may be coterminus with some notions of genre, in that they may serve "as a nexus of interrelationships among the constituents of the speech event and as a formal vantage point on speaking practices" (Bauman 2000: 84).

As a procedure to discover categories of talk, on various occasions when verbal interaction is observed, the ethnographer may ask an informant the equivalent of "What are they doing?" Frake (1969) provides an excellent example in his study of the Philippine Yakan. Their native categories of talk elicited in this manner include *mitin* 'discussion,' *qisun* 'conference,' *mawpakkat* 'negotiation,' and *kukum* 'litigation.' Frake then analyzes each of these categories in terms of their distinctive communicative features, which in this case contrast on the dimensions of focus, purpose, roles, and integrity (the extent to which the activity is perceived as an integral unit). In a collection of studies on categories in the domain of political oratory (Bloch 1975), ethnographers have elicited labels as part of their procedure for segmenting and organizing political activities into meaningful units for analysis. A listing of some of these illustrates the diverse dimensions along which such units occur: the Melpa speakers in Mt. Hagan, New Guinea, reportedly categorize types of oratory as *el-ik* 'arrow talk' or 'war talk' (the most formal), *ik ek* 'veiled speech' or 'talk which is bent over or folded,' and *ik kwun* 'talk which is straight' (Strathern 1975); communicative event labels for the Maori of New Zealand include *mihimihi* 'greeting speeches,' *whai koorero* 'exchange of speeches,' and *take* or *marae* 'discussion of serious matters' (Salmond 1975); and labels for speech acts in Balinese include *mebetènin ngeraos* 'self-abasement,' *nyelasang* 'statement of common knowledge,' *ngèdèngang pemineh pedidi* 'statement of current speaker's opinion,' and *nyerahand tekèn banjar* 'commitment to follow what the assembly decides' (Hobart 1975). Listings of category labels in English include *conversation*, *lecture*, *oratory*, *gossip*, *joking*, *story-telling*, and *preaching*. Categories of talk in each language have different functional distributions, and most are limited to a particular situation, or involve constraints on who may speak them, or what topic may be addressed. Their description is thus of interest not only because of the linguistic phenomena which distinguish one from another, but also because these categories may provide clues to how other dimensions of the society are segmented and organized.

Language and Culture

The intrinsic relationship of language and culture is widely recognized, but the ways in which the patterning of communicative behavior interrelates with that of other cultural systems are of interest both to the development of general theories of communication, and to the description and analysis of communication within specific speech communities. Virtually any ethnographic model must take language into account, although many relegate it to a separate section and do not adequately consider its extensive role in a society. The very concept of the evolution of culture is dependent on the capacity of humans to use language for purposes of organizing social cooperation. There are still questions regarding the extent to which language is shaping and controlling the thinking of its speakers by the perceptual

requirements it makes of them, or the extent to which it is merely reflecting their world view, and whether the relationship (whatever it is) is universal or language specific. There is no doubt, however, that there is a correlation between the form and content of a language and the beliefs, values, and needs present in the culture of its speakers. The vocabulary of a language provides us with a catalogue of things considered important to the society, an index to the way speakers categorize experience, and often a record of past contacts and cultural borrowings; the grammar may reveal the way time is segmented and organized, beliefs about animacy and the relative power of beings, and salient social categories in the culture (e.g., see Whorf 1940; Hill and Mannheim 1992; Gumperz and Levinson 1996). Hymes suggests a second type of linguistic relativity which sees in grammar evidence not only of static social categories, but also of speakers' social assumptions about the dynamics of role-relationships, and about what rights and responsibilities are perceived in society. While the first type of linguistic relativity claims that cultural reality in part results from linguistic factors, Hymes contends that:

people who enact different cultures do to some extent experience distinct communicative systems, not merely the same natural communicative condition with different customs affixed. Cultural values and benefits are in part constitutive of linguistic relativity. (1966b: 116)

The interrelationship of patterns in various aspects of culture is pervasive enough in many cases for us to call them *themes*, or central organizing principles which control behavior. Opler (1941) exemplifies this concept with the Apache theme of male superiority, which is realized in patterns of communication as well as in religious and political domains. At tribal meetings, for instance, only a few older women may speak before all of the men have been heard, and it is very unusual for a woman to pray out loud in public. The Manus of New Guinea have been characterized in part as having an anti-sex theme in their culture: there are no purely social dances, no love songs, no romantic myths – and no word for 'love' in their language (Mead 1930).

Where directness or indirectness are cultural themes, they are always language-related. As defined in speech act theory, *direct acts* are those where surface form matches interactional function, as "Be quiet!" used as a command, versus an *indirect* "It's getting noisy in here" or "I can't hear myself think," but other units of communication must also be considered. Indirectness may be reflected in routines for offering and refusing or accepting gifts or food, for instance. A *yes* or *no* intended to be taken literally is more direct than an initial *no* intended to mean "Ask me again." Visitors from the Middle East and Asia have reported going hungry in England and the United States because of a misunderstanding of this message; when offered food, many have politely refused rather than accept directly, and it was not offered again. English speakers have the reverse problem in other countries when their literal no is not accepted as such, and they are forced to eat food they really do not want. An indirect apology is illustrated by Mead (1930), who reports a situation where a Manus woman fled to her aunt's home after being beaten by her husband. His relatives, coming to retrieve her, engaged her relatives for an hour of desultory chatter about such topics as market conditions and fishing before one made a metaphorical reference to men's strength and women's bones. Still without saying a word, the wife joined the husband's relatives in their boat, and returned with them.

The use of metaphors and proverbs is a common communicative strategy for depersonalizing what is said and allowing more indirectness. Criticism is often couched in this form, as when chiefs of the San Blas Cuna Indian tribe of Panama express opinions in metaphoric songs (Sherzer 1974, 1983), or when an English speaker reproves another with "People who live in glass houses shouldn't cast stones." Joking is also a common way of mitigating criticism that might not be acceptable if given directly. This has reached the level of art in Trinidad, where ritual verbal protests culminate in the song-form of the calypso. "It is a means of disclaiming responsibility for one's words. It is only because the norms of the event are shared by members of the community – political leaders included – that many a calypsonian does not end up with a law suit filed against him" (Sealey).

COMPONENTS OF SPEECH: THE SPEAKING MODEL

In order to organize the collection of data about speech events and speech acts in numerous societies with an eye towards cross-cultural comparison, Hymes formulated a preliminary list of features or components of these events to be described. The list was intended to be a 'useful guide' (Hymes, 1964) towards identifying components of speech considered to be universal. Eight particular components of events were chosen based on Hymes' study of ethnographic material. The model is also based on Jakobson's (1960) paradigm of six factors or components in any speech event: addresser, addressee, message, contact, context and code, each of which corresponds to a different function of language: emotive, conative, poetic, phatic, referential and metalingual. Hymes' model includes the following dimensions, which he formulated as the 'mnemonically convenient' (Hymes, 1972b: 59) title 'SPEAKING', where each letter in the word 'speaking' represents one or more important components of an ethnography of speaking. The features of the list can be grouped generally into a concern with describing setting (time and place, physical circumstances) and scene (psychological setting), purposes (functions and goals), speech styles and genres, and participants (including speaker, addressor, hearer, addressee), as well as the interrelationships among them. The SPEAKING model is an etic scheme but meant to be made relevant to individual societies and eventually result in an emic description that prioritizes what is relevant to the local participants. The goal of this descriptive tool is to force attention to structure and reveal similarities and differences between events and between ways of organizing speaking. From the investigative categories represented in the model, Hymes proposed ethnographers would develop a universal set of features that could easily be compared in order to learn about differences such as important relationships between rules of speaking and setting, participants and topic, and begin to define the relationships between language and sociocultural contexts. The components of the SPEAKING model – setting, participants, ends, act sequences, key, instrumentalities, norms and genres – are discussed in turn.

Setting: Aspects of setting to be described in an ethnography of communication include temporal and spatial aspects of speech – time of day, season, location, spatial features – and includes the social valuing of these aspects of setting. An ethnographer asks: how do individuals organize themselves temporally and spatially in an event? Frake's discussion of the Yakan house in the Philippines is emblematic of some of the culture-specific complexities of spatial and temporal arrangements. He shows that a house, even a one-roomed Yakan house, is not just a space, but a structured sequence of settings where social events are differentiated not only by the position in which they occur but also by the positions the actors move through and the manner in which they have made those moves (1975: 37). In some cultures it is common to find different settings for many kinds of speech events – rooms for classes, structures for religious observances, buildings for litigation, entertainment, etc.

Participants: The composition of the social group participating in different speech events is part of an ethnography of speaking. Aspects to be described include, for example, age, ethnicity, gender, relationships of persons to each other. Hymes expands the traditional speaker–hearer dyad to four categories of participants: speaker, addressor, hearer and addressee.

Ends: An ethnography of communication includes descriptions of the purposes of the speech event, such as outcomes and goals. As Hymes states: 'communication itself must be differentiated from interaction as a whole in terms of purposiveness' (1972b: 62). Ends are differentiated from personal motivations of social actors in a speech event, which can be quite varied. What Hymes has in mind are the 'conventionally expected or ascribed' outcomes, important because rules for

participants and settings can vary according to these aspects (see also Levinson, 1979 on goals and social activities).

Act sequences: According to Hymes (1972b) this term refers to the way message form and content interdependently contribute to meaning, or 'how something is said is part of what is said' (1972b: 59, emphasis in original). Act sequences can include silence, co-participants' collaborative or supportive talk, laughter, gesture, as well as restrictions on cooccurrence of speech elements (Ervin-Tripp, 1969: 72). Irvine (1974) and Salmond (1974) discuss how act sequences are related and negotiated among participants. Saville-Troike (1982) and Duranti (1985) interpret act sequences to refer to sequential aspects of communicative events, and as separate from form and content.

Key: This refers to the tone, manner or spirit in which a speech act is performed, or the emotional tone of the speech event, indicated by choice of language or language variety, gesture or paralinguistic cues such as intonation, laughter, crying. Acts which are similar in terms of setting, participants and message form can differ in terms of key, for example mock vs. serious (Hymes, 1972b: 62). Key signals can be simple or complex; complex types tend to occur at the boundaries of events (Duranti, 1985: 216).

Instrumentalities: This term also relates to message form, but on a larger scale than act sequences. It refers to form in terms of language varieties, codes, or registers. Instrumentalities includes 'channels' (Hymes, 1972b: 62), media of transmission, such as oral, written, or gestural. Two important goals of recording instrumentalities, according to Hymes, are descriptions of their interdependence and the 'relative hierarchy among them' (1972b: 63).

Norms: This aspect is divided into norms of interaction and norms of interpretation and concerns shared understandings. Examples of community norms are whether it is appropriate to interrupt or not, the allocation of speaking turns, etc. The full description of norms necessitates an analysis of social structure and social relationships (Hymes, 1972b: 64). The question of 'norms' has proven to be problematic in sociolinguistic studies (particularly studies of 'gendered' language behavior), where one group is posited as the norm and others are evaluated against this framework.

Genres: Genre refers to categories such as poem, tale, riddle, letter, as well as attitudes about these genres. Although genres often coincide with speech events, Hymes conceives them as analytically independent.