Polite and Jatki Language: Evidence from Ethnography of Communication, A Case Study of JangliBoli in Pakistan

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Keywords	Abstract
Ethnography, Communication, Speech, Events, Language, Culture	*The study is an ethnography of communication in a village in Jhang District of Pakistan. The present article displays one of the key findings of the study, which is the dichotomy of polite and impolite language usage, as described by the locals. The study employs qualitative ethnographic research methods. The theoretical framework of Dell Hymes has been employed for recording speech events in the locale. The study concludes that the categories of polite and impolite language exist in the speech community. The impolite, or locally called Jatki, language is preferred by the locals. This finding reflects on the social dynamics, cultural norms, and functionality of language as a cultural institution. The study illustrates how what might be considered impolite in one context can hold different meanings and functions in another, emphasising the diversity and richness of linguistic practices across cultures.*

1. INTRODUCTION

This article is part of an endeavour for the ethnography of communication: A case study of JangliBoli in the village of Kanianwali, of Pakistani Punjab. Being students of anthropology, we are fully aware of the importance ethnographic studies have among other disciplines of the field. Ethnographic studies are descriptions of a specific culture in its holistic context. It is the study of different institutions of culture, their structure, functions, and interrelations. None of the cultural institutions can operate independently, so ethnographers in Pakistan and all over the world have recorded numerous accounts of such relationships among institutions of the same as well as different cultures. Language is also a culture-specific institution. It must also relate to other component institutions in one way or another. Aware of this theoretical inference, a student of anthropology can only be surprised at the fact that so far nobody has produced any account of such a relation between culture and language in Pakistan. Above all, this motivated us to give an account of the relationship between culture and language.

Since we were all interested in history, we were aware of Alexander the Great's invasion (327–325 B.C.) having been limited only to the western regions of Punjab and Sindh. Seleucus Nicator visited India in 305 BC, crossed the Indus, and settled a treaty of peace with the mighty Chandragupta Maurya. It was in the 2nd century B.C. that two Greek dynasties from Bactria, the Punjab, had their kingdoms in the western parts of this area. The kingdom established by

Euthydemus lasted until about 156 B.C. While the kingdom established by Eucratides remained in existence even until around 20 B.C (Candotti and Giudice, 2024). Later on, some other intruders, like Scythians, Parthians, Kushanas, and Huns, etc., displaced in India through the northwest (Hupfauf, 2024). Finally, many Muslim invaders, Mahmud of Ghazni and Mughal, came into India through Sindh (Das, 2024). With a historic background of much invasion, the linguistic diversity of western India does not remain a surprise.

> "Punjab lies in the middle of two wholly dissimilar Indo-Aryan linguistic groups. Of these two, one is the outer early known language, which depends closely on the Dardic or possibly derived therefrom and which spread eastward from the Indus Valley. The other is the ancient Midland language, the precursor of modern Western Hindi, which spread westward from the Yamuna Valley. These linguistic spheres were by no means hermetically sealed and interacted really in the Punjab region" (Lahaussois, 2021).

This was the linguistic situation of western India, as given by Grierson. One of the highlights of this diversity is that eastern and western Punjab inhabited numerous dialects. One of which was 'Lahnda'. According to Grierson,

> "Lahnda may be considered a Dardic language infected with western Hindi, whereas Punjabi is a Dardic-infected form of western Hindi. Langah (2020) further explains that the middle and east-central Punjab speak Punjabi, the western Punjab speaks Lahnda, and the extreme eastern Punjab speaks western Hindi".

Such historic, linguistic importance of this region led us into an investigation about the "JangliBoli". Not only JangliBoli but also Jangli culture as well is distinct in comparison to the rest of Punjabi culture. JangliBoli is spoken by the inhabitants of District Jhang, which is situated near the bank of the River Chenab in the Rachna Doab of the province. In the Rachna Doab, the phenomenon of the merger of Dardic and western Hindi is present, as pointed out by Grierson. He argues:

> "We witness Punjabi (western Hindi) merging into Lahnda (Dardic) in this Rechna Doab. There are examples of languages merging together in a different place in India, but nowhere is the merging as slow as that occurring between Lahnda and Punjabi" (Seow, 2017).

The JangliBoli resembles Punjabi in many respects, i.e., vocabulary, grammar, and syntax, but differs with respect to pronunciation, proper nouns, etc. Punjabi is our mother tongue; hence, our interest was aggravated to know more about the Jangli language. As the locale of study is situated in Rachna Doab, it becomes clear with respect to Grierson's classification that JangliBoli belongs to the Lahnda family of languages. He argues,

> "Jangli is spoken by the nomad tribes, who used to roam over the Jangal Bar before the foundation of the canal colony, and who are now settled with definite rights" (Powers, 2017).

Given this unique parlance with Punjabi, JangliBoli for us provided a case study to elaborate and elucidate on the ethnography of communication, to see if culture affects language or vice versa. Hence our concern is twofold: on one level we concentrate on the ethnographic details and on the other, focus on linguistic data. The ethnographic data will provide necessary background for the understanding of linguistic data.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Anthropologists see an ethnographer as one who collects data about the culturally significant behaviour of a particular society. An ethnography is defined as

> "The set of rules for creating, anticipating, and analysing acceptable cultural behaviours in particular settings" (Wolcott, 2014).

In ethnography, a researcher records culture without criticising it. Hence, ethnography deals with problems relating to culture that a researcher transmits 'as it is' to the rest of the world for information. Ethnography is the description of a community, which reflects local ways of life, like anthropology in general. It attempts to draw information from a wide variety of people, their life histories, and culture. These data meant for analysis originate from anthropological fieldwork. Thus, anthropology provides the building blocks for cultural anthropology. Hobel has regarded "ethnography as the building block for cultural anthropology" (Höbel, 1972). Roger Martin Keesing, a linguist and anthropologist, considers that "ethnography is the description of customs, that is, a local way of life" (Keesing, 1958).

Most of the anthropologist's views about ethnography are more or less in agreement, and the Boasian age was the dominant one (Calcagno, 2024). In ethnographic studies, Bronislaw Malinowski is also considered one of the prominent pioneer ethnographers, who lived with the natives and learnt their language. As everyone is aware, ethnography is a discipline that focuses on describing and analysing culture, whereas linguistics is concerned with describing and analysing language (White and Cooper, 2022). Though there is a widespread awareness of interrelations between these two fields, no account of such a relationship was possible until recent times. Even Noam Chomsky stressed that;

> "The initial idealisation of language as an object of study would be rejected if nonlinguistic factors were incorporated into grammar, beliefs, attitudes, etc.; this would imply that language is a chaotic subject that is not worth studying" (Chomsky, 1977).

Hence, linguists worldwide carried on their study of language with "core grammar" as the object of inquiry. Some, like Alessandro Duranti (2023), claim that such research is necessary because language and speech usage in various societies shows unique patterns that are worthy of ethnographic description. These patterns are comparable to and intersect with those in social organisation and other cultural domains (Troike, 1990).

This debate led to the establishment of a new interdisciplinary field with the appearance of Dell Hymes' work, Ethnography of Speaking, in 1962. It is a discipline that studies communicative

behaviours according to their patterns, and its existence is accepted as one of the cultural institutions existing within the "holistic context" of culture and its relations with other cultural institutions. The development of this field draws significantly on sociological work in the fields of interaction and role identity, folklorists' work, and work in natural language philosophy. These different perspectives assist in positioning how the ethnography of speaking would engage the culture-bound schemas concerning the etiquette of the use and non-use of language (Bauman and Sherzer, 1975).

As a result, the description and comprehension of communicative behaviour in particular cultural contexts are the main objectives of the ethnography of communication. One of the basic concerns in the ethnography of communication is: How does a speaker learn the information necessary to communicate effectively and responsibly in a particular speech community? (Troike, 1990).

It discusses both the ethnography of communicative behaviours as well as cultural knowledge and rules, which create the groundwork of context and content in events of communication and in interaction processes. These are both important requirements in bringing forth both personal and social meaning. Any message conveyed during information exchange by any means of communication is, in its essence, cultural; culture is part and parcel of every given language. According to Douglas (1971), if we pose the simple question, "What is being communicated?" about any kind of communication. The answer is information from the social system.

Although it recognises the need to describe both linguistic codes and cognitive processes, it views these areas of inquiry generally as secondary to such topics as, for example, patterns and functions of communication, the nature and definition of speech communities, means of communication, components of communicative competence, the relationship of language to worldview and linguistic social organisation, and linguistic and social universals and inequalities (Troike, 1990).

Although linguists take as their object's variability in pronunciation and grammatical structure, ethnographers' study how communicative and non-communicative elements are structured into broader "ways of speaking" and how these patterns systematically relate to other cultural matters. As discussed further, at a societal level, language serves many uses, including experientive, directive, poetic, contact, metalinguistic, referential, and contextual functions set out by Bauman & Sherzer (1975). At a personal level, it is also performed following the communicational purposes and intentions of participants, such as Hymes (1972), who argues that this will open up the moving stream of society. Ethnography of communication, in its emphasis on speech communities and the organisation of communication within them, highlights the need to define speech communities. It requires a range of criteria, including a shared language use (Lyones, 1970), frequent group interaction (Francis, 1958; Gumperz, 1972), shared speech values and speech performance interpretation (Hymes, 1972), and a shared sociocultural knowledge and assumptions about speech (Bauman and Sherzer, 1989). The societal functions of language will include the boundary functions of stratification, unification, and separation at whatever level of the speech community selected for study (Duranti, 2008).

Hence, in this study, the whole village comprised a "speech community." As stated by Hymes, communicative competency explains how an average child learns sentences that are both grammatically correct and socially acceptable. He or she gains competence in understanding when and how to communicate, as well as what to discuss and with whom (Hymes, 1972).

> "Communicative competence is not only learning the correct grammar but also a competence for use involving the knowledge and ability to speak in culturally specific ways. Understanding the linguistic code is simply one aspect of communication competence; another is understanding what to say, to whom, and how to say it in a particular circumstance. In order to use and comprehend linguistic form, speakers are assumed to have social and cultural knowledge" (Torike, 1990).

3. METHODOLOGY

For collecting reliable and useful data, different research methods and techniques were used, which are as follows.

Participant observation is a basic and important anthropologic technique for data collection. By using this technique, I became a member of the community. I tried to live like them and participate in their daily activities. All these activities helped me a lot in establishing rapport, besides participation. We also used to observe things of interest, which helped us a lot to operationalise our research design and collect data. So far as our rapport is concerned, we faced little problem. We were totally new to the villagers. We used to go to the village playground, Deras, and fields to get to know people, about whom our research was designed. The people, though strangers, were very inviting and friendly.

In-depth interviews are the most important method of data collection. But it is observed that only a formal interview is not much useful for reliable data. So, we applied the method of in-depth interviews by using the technique of open-ended questions. By doing so, the questions were not directly asked, but we made and let our respondent say freely whatever they liked. During the conversation, we just listened and picked related points.

Group discussion is an informal, unscheduled chitchat among the group of villagers in which each one expresses his view freely. In these discussions, no one is formally appointed, and they express their views on the subject as they feel.

The case study method was also used to record the speech events. This allowed us to record the speech events as distinct case studies for ethnographic description.

Units of analysis are necessary to devise with all components of language in order to describe and analyse communication. Hence, the three units of analysis defined by Hymes (1972) are, 1, speech situation, 2, speech event and 3, Speech act. Hymes (1972) further described the components of these three units of analysis with the acronym SPEAKING, where:

a. Setting and Scene (S): Setting describes the actual circumstances in which communication occurs, such as place and time. whereas the term "scene" describes the abstract "psychological setting or the cultural definition of the occasion."

b. Participants (P): The threefold division of a speaker, hearer, and the topic postulates a dyad, speaker-hearer (or source-destination, sender-receiver, and addressor-addressee) (Hymes, 1972).

c. Ends (E): Ends refer to (1) the traditionally acknowledged and expected outcomes of an exchange and (2) the specific goals that participants seek to attain on particular occasions. Outcomes are public, but goals are personal.

d. Act sequence (A): The act sequence describes the exact words used and how they are used to communicate the topic in question. Message form refers to the former, while message content refers to the latter. Act sequences (A) are made up of the message form and message content, which are essential to speech acts and interrelated.

e. Key (K): The term "key" describes the spirit, tone, or manner in which a specific message is communicated (Hymes, 1972).

f. Instrumentalities (I): Communication channels such as oral, written, telegraphic, semaphore, etc. are referred to as instrumentalities. The actual forms of speech that are chosen, like the language, dialect, code, or register, are also referred to. One type of instrumentality is formal, written language used for legal purposes. The mode of communication used within a specific channel is a further distinction that can be made.

g. Norms of interaction and interpretation (N): The term "specific behaviours and properties that attach to speaking—that one must not interrupt" is used to describe norms of interaction. The term "norms of interpretation" describes how someone who does not share the norms of interaction may perceive them.

h. Genre (G): The term "genre" describes different types of speech that depend upon what kind of speech event is being performed. (See also Troike, 1990; Duranti, 1985)

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Nicknames

The widespread use of nicknames, instead of real names, falls in the linguistic data, which is defined as addressing terms. Everybody in the village has a nickname, with a few exceptions. A villager is known by nickname; even they cannot recognise each other by real names. The absence of real names in everyday linguistic behaviour is a profound characteristic of this speech community. The practice is culturally so deep-rooted that the ancestors are also referred to by nicknames. A lesser number of people remember their ancestors by real names. The chart below shows this situation in numbers.

Category	No. of People	% age
Usage of real names	5	2
Usage of nick names	452	97
Usage of both	2	0.5
Total population	**459**	**100%**

There are total five people who have no nicknames. These are people whose real names are used in everyday life. These are persons of high social status. Only two examples of dual usage were recorded, i.e., a nickname and a real name are both used alternatively, which provides the most interesting insight into this practice. There are only two persons out of 62 who are enhancing their social status, but their social position is not apparently noticeable. They are both students and are expected to join reputable government services. Because of this ambiguity, both their nicknames and real names are used, which suggests that the usage of nicknames is related to one's social status. The rest of the population, both male and female, are known by their nicknames. It is a cultural practice that a child is called via a nickname by parents, which is afterward adopted and used by the rest of the villagers as well. This is defined and termed as Jatki language by the locals, as opposed to polite language.

4.2. Terms of Addressing

It is a unique characteristic of this speech community that pronouns of respect are rarely used, if ever. Even the relation of speaker/hearer does not matter. Whatever the gender, age, or social status of a person, he shall be called by 1st person singular, 2nd person singular. The only polite term of address besides kinship terms is Mahr Sahib, used by the landless labourers to address their landlords, and even this is not strictly observed. The landless labourer can also use 2nd person singular in addressing the landowner. This practice is in conflict with the rule that real names are used for higher-status people. It is only with guests and strangers that addressing terms of respect are used (Brown and Gillman, 1960).

"One person may be said to have power over another in the degree that he is able to control the behaviour of the other. Power is a relationship between at least two persons, and it is non-reciprocal in the sense that both cannot have power in the same area of behaviour. The power semantics is similarly non-reciprocal; the superior says T (first person singular) and receives V (first person plural)" (Brown and Gilman, 1960).

Hence, the extensive non-use of terms of respect while addressing means greater solidarity among the members of the speech community as well as part of the Jatki language.

4.3. Polite and Jatki Language

The language is broadly categorised in two parts: 'polite' and 'impolite' language. 'Polite' language, according to the respondents, is a language that is elaborate and ceremonial, with pronouns of respect and an element of flattery in it. Villagers say that urban language has these properties. The usage of such language is not appreciated, and the speaker of such language is termed a hypocrite. This type of language is polite in meaning and utterance.

On the other hand, impolite language is called Jatki language. This type of language is straightforward and harsh, with no pronouns of respect, frank, and to some extent obscene in meaning and utterance. The usage of such language is appreciated; rather, it is the only language that is used in daily life. The speaker of this form of language is called Jatka, a word derived from the word Jatt, the name of a caste.

5. CONCLUSION

Ethnography of communication is a methodological approach in linguistic anthropology that studies how language use varies across different social and cultural contexts. The study scrutinises the influence of social identities, relationships, and cultural norms on communication practices. The study identifies two broad categories of language use in this village:

Polite Language: This refers to the language forms and expressions considered respectful and courteous according to the community's norms. Such language might be used in formal situations, interactions with outsiders, or in contexts where maintaining social harmony is important.

Impolite Language: Locally referred to as "Jatki," this term encompasses the language that is perceived as less respectful or more direct. It might be characterised by a lack of formalities or the use of expressions considered blunt or offensive. Interestingly, the study finds that the Jatki, or impolite language, is actually preferred by the locals in many contexts. This preference can be understood in several ways:

Social Dynamics: The use of the Jatki language may reflect local social dynamics where directness or bluntness is valued or seen as a sign of authenticity and honesty. In some communities, impolite language might be a way to reinforce social bonds or assert one's identity.

Cultural Norms: In the specific cultural setting of this village, what is typically labelled as impolite might not necessarily be seen as negative. It could be an integral part of everyday communication and social interaction.

Functional Aspects: The preference for the Jatki language could also be linked to its functional role in various social contexts. For example, in informal settings, direct language might facilitate clearer and more efficient communication among community members.

The ethnography highlights a complex interplay between language, politeness, and social preference. It reveals that language categorised as impolite in broader contexts might serve important social functions and be favoured within the local language community. This finding underscores the importance of understanding language use within its specific cultural and social setting rather than applying universal standards of politeness.

In summary, the study illustrates how what might be considered impolite in one context can hold different meanings and functions in another, emphasising the diversity and richness of linguistic practices across cultures.

5.1. Implication and Recommendation

This study promotes ethnolinguistics by making clear how language works as a cultural institution in a specific speech community. Further research on Pakistan's regional languages is also made possible by it. An important contribution to ethnography and linguistic anthropology is made by this study.

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