AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF COMMUNICATION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR
TEACHERS OF NATIVE INDIAN STUDENTS

by

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Abstract

One urban native Indian community was observed over a period of seven months in order to:

1. Complete an ethnography of communication, describing the sociolinguistic rules of interaction followed by members of one Native community.

2. Examine the school environment to see whether differences between Mainstream rules for interaction and native Indian rules for interaction may cause miscommunication.

3. Discuss ways in which teachers can be better prepared for Standard English as a Second Dialect situations, either in special S.E.S.D. programs, or as classroom teachers.

Data were collected in a wide variety of situations, mainly involving school age children and their interactants, in mainly pedagogical and school settings.

Observation showed considerable diversity in the communication behaviours of community members. This variation occurred in two dimensions: young-old and traditional-Mainstream, and was especially apparent in four areas: volume, intonation, pause-time and eye contact. Degree of intimacy and age of participants seemed to be important in determining whether a situation was classed as speech or nonspeech. In addition, many sociolinguistic behaviours seemed linked to (if not generated by) various value orientations. The value "respect elders" was reflected in rules for interruptions, topic control, and the absence of "why" challenges. Respect for the individual seemed to be the basis for rules regarding introductions,
performance, pulling strings, requesting assistance, and children’s degree of independence. The importance of family appeared to influence topic choice, and naming. An avoidance of drawing attention to oneself seemed to explain rules for greetings, farewells, showing off, praise, and taking oneself seriously. Finally, this community appeared to be more context-oriented than Mainstream society.

A comparison of home-talk and school-talk suggested differences in the use of directives, closed questions, and in assumptions about when to talk, specifically regarding degree of intimacy, focus on task, and getting communicative space.

Findings of this study suggest that teachers can facilitate communication (and thus education) in five ways, by:

1. Getting out of the classroom and into the community.
2. Dealing with parents on their terms.
3. Adjusting classroom atmosphere.
4. Adjusting classroom language.
5. Teaching sociolinguistic rules.
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CHAPTER I: Introduction

This chapter, after considering the British Columbia school system's failure to meet the needs of native Indian students, discusses the principles of "Standard English as a Second Dialect" programs, pointing out that little research has yet been completed regarding the existence and nature of a variety of English known as "Indian English." In addition, the reasons for the sociolinguistic focus of the study are explained, the purpose of the study is delineated, and essential terms are defined.

By most definitions of the word "success," British Columbia's native Indians are not succeeding in the provincial school system as well as their "white" counterparts. Statistics on Native students point out that "the current drop-out rate in B.C. is approximately 80%, down from about 90% in 1977. This compares to a non-Indian rate of about 32%" (More, 1984, p. 49). In addition, Indian students not only leave school sooner, but generally attain a lower level of achievement as well (More, 1984; Hunter & Stevens, 1980).

Especially alarming is research which suggests that the gap between the achievement of Native students and the achievement of non-Native students widens as the students move through the school system. For example, a survey of Native students in Campbell River (1984) found that although Native students in kindergarten started out nearly at par with their non-Native peers (7% repeated), those students fell further and further behind until by grade three, 51% had repeated at least one grade. A survey from
the Okanagan-Nicola area (More, 1984) showed a similar trend. Children from grades one through seven were tested using the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Achievement Tests (G.M.) and the Canadian Test of Basic Skills. With both tests, and especially the G.M., the Native students' scores lagged progressively further behind as they moved from grades one to seven (1984, pp. 44-45). It appears that what is being done in B.C. schools is not working.

There have been many attempts to explain the lack of success in teaching Native students. For instance, More (1985) and John (1972) have suggested that differences in learning style are important. McShane and Plas (1984), and Brooks (1978) emphasize cognitive functioning. Philips (1972) and Arbess et al. (1981) compare our Mainstream teaching methods with those traditional in Native culture. Economic status is likely an important factor. Many other relevant differences and similarities are sure to exist.

One explanation of the schools' failure in Native Education emphasizes the importance of language mastery for success in schools. This is, of course, not a new idea. In the past, educators, working under the assumptions stemming from Bernstein's (1973) approach, had assumed that Native students arrived at school speaking a "deficient" or inferior type of English. However, advocates of the "Standard English as a Second Dialect" approach point out that Native students who speak English as their first language often speak a different, but completely valid, dialect from that which we call "Standard English." Several B.C. school districts have started S.E.S.D. programs, and E.S.L. techniques are being adapted for use in many
classrooms. It is to be hoped that the "deficit" model of perceiving Indian English will be phased out in favour of a "bidialectal" model.

However, even though the concept of Indian English is the basis of these programs, there has been very little research into three very fundamental issues:

- Does Indian English exist as a distinct and separate dialect? And if so . . .
- Are there differences between the varieties of Indian English used by different Native cultural groups?
- What aspects of Indian English are likely to have an impact on a child's success in school?

In Canada, there has been very little research into the first question. Malorie Burton (1982) has described Carrier English, mainly from a phonological point of view. Carole Nakonechney (1986) has examined the sociolinguistic rules in operation at an urban Native alternate school. The Scollons' (1981) work with the Athabaskan people was done largely in the Chipewyan language, but discusses rules for interaction also used in English. Clearly, if the concepts of S.E.S.D. are to be applied to Canadian Native students, more research into Indian English is required.

Even in the United States, very few descriptions have been completed. According to Potter (1981) only fifteen groups have been examined even superficially, and as a review of the literature in Chapter II points out, most of these descriptions are based on a very narrow conception of what a dialect is. This thesis, based on a broader definition of "dialect," will attempt to describe one aspect of one variety of Indian English, in a manner designed to be of the most use to teachers of native Indian students.
Focus of the Study

A complete description of all aspects of a variety of Indian English would be beyond the scope of this thesis. Such a description would include depictions of phonology, intonation, lexicon, semantics, grammar, orthography and social usage. It is necessary, therefore, to focus on one area which might be the most relevant to education.

Toohey (in progress) conducted an extensive review of the literature of S.E.S.D., as applied to a variety of minority groups. She concludes that structural differences have few implications for schooling practice, but that differences in the area of language use offer more potential for "improving educational offerings" (in progress, p. 4).

Heath (1983), after describing one "white" and one "black" community in the southeastern United States, also emphasizes the need for understanding sociolinguistic rules in order to facilitate classroom understanding.

Susan Philips, working on the Warm Springs reservation in Oregon, describes three cultural differences that can cause breakdowns in teacher-student communication, thus causing the teacher to define the child's speech as inappropriate:
1. Dialect differences that may cause the teacher to misunderstand the child, or to define what she hears as unacceptable.
2. Differences in rules for appropriate discourse, or for the ways a speaker builds on or relates to the utterances of prior speakers.
3. Differences in cultural knowledge that can contribute to the breakdown of communication whenever one speaker has no direct knowledge of what
another is speaking about. (1983, p. 127)

As early as 1972, Philips linked cultural variation in sociolinguistic patterning to learning difficulties and feelings of inferiority.

The findings of these researchers are echoed in statements by B.C. teachers. Statements like "The Indian students just don't talk," "they never seem to want to participate" or "I just can't seem to reach them," suggest that Native students may be following different rules regarding social usage. As these teachers point out, Native students must learn more than grammar and pronunciation—they must learn ways of interacting with the Mainstream society while retaining ways of interacting appropriate for their own culture.

The research cited above into the importance of sociolinguistic rules was used to delineate the focus of this thesis. Thus, while this current research attempts to determine whether one Native community speaks a distinct variety of English, it examines that issue only in terms of the social use of English.

**Purpose of the Study**

In a broad sense, the major purpose of this study was to observe Native peoples' language use in order to derive sociolinguistic rules of interaction, to examine the societal norms and values governing speech acts, and the principles and strategies underlying these acts. The secondary goal was to see how these rules affect the Native students' school environment. More specifically, the three goals of this study were:

1. To complete an ethnography of speaking in one Native community, describing the rules of interaction followed by members of the community.
2. To examine the school environment to see whether the difference between Mainstream rules for interaction and native Indian rules for interaction may cause miscommunication.

3. To discuss ways in which teachers can be better prepared for S.E.S.D. situations, either in special S.E.S.D. programs, or as classroom teachers.

**Definition of Terms**

When speaking about cultures other than one's own, it is difficult to choose terminology which will make a concept clear and concise without offending people. For this study the terms "Mainstream" and "Indian English" present the most problems. This researcher has chosen the term "Mainstream" in order to avoid the racist connotations of "white" and the awkwardness of "non-Native." The term "Indian English" was chosen from the linguistic point of view. It is not at all a derogatory term, any more than are the terms "Jamaican English" or "Black English Vernacular."

Thus, for the purposes of this study, the following definitions will be used.

1. **Native Indian, Native, Indian**—all refer to any person who refers to him or herself as a native Indian, either status or non-status.

2. **Mainstream Culture**—the dominant culture of Canada. Although the majority of members of this culture would be "white," this term would apply to any member of the dominant culture, regardless of ethnic heritage.

3. **Standard English**—that variety of [the] language . . . considered appropriate for communication over a wide area (outside local regions), which is used in
institutions, radio, television and newspapers, which is usually taught in schools and which has norms for accuracy written down. (Toohey, in progress, p. 5) This variety is also known as Mainstream Dialect.

4. **Indian English**—one of numerous varieties of English used by various groups of native Indian people.

5. **Ethnography of speaking**—an area of research focusing on societal norms and values governing speech acts, and the principles and strategies underlying the acts. (Siler and Labadie-Wondergem, 1982, p. 95)

6. **Situation**—the physical and *psychological* setting in which a communicative act takes place.

7. a) **Elder**: a Native person who is thus referred to by community members. This term implies age and respect.

   b) **elder**: a person who is older than the person being discussed.

This chapter discussed the need for further research into the existence of a variety of English which might be called "Indian English," in order to provide a more concrete theoretical basis for S.E.S.D. programs. A possible link between sociolinguistic rules and school success is cited as the explanation for the study's focus. In addition, the purpose of the study was delineated, and essential terms were defined.
CHAPTER II: Review of the Literature

To date, little has been written which links the three areas in this study—Native Indians, ethnographies of speaking, and Standard English as a Second Dialect. Because of this, the review of the literature has been divided into three sections:

1. Works discussing the use of S.E.S.D. methodologies with North American Indians.
2. Works on S.E.S.D. (in general) which go beyond phonology and syntax, and discuss patterns of interaction and the use of pragmatics.
3. Descriptions of Indian English.

S.E.S.D. with Native Indians

The first question educators must address is whether it is necessary for Native Students to learn Standard English at all. According to Burnaby in Language in Education Among Canadian Native Peoples, the answer is a unanimous yes (1982, p. 24). This seems to be supported in More's study of the quality of education in B.C.'s Okanagan-Nicola area, where parents' goals for education often stressed reading and writing, and "developing interpersonal skills and knowledge, especially communication skills for use in the Indian and White Community" (1984, p. 39). This of course implies a lot more than the learning of structures.

The concept of describing Indian English as nonstandard as opposed to substandard is fairly recent. Many classroom teachers still implicitly base their methods on Bernstein's "deficit theory," which states that these students come from
deprived language environments and don’t yet have an adequate language for communication. However several writers argue with the deficit theory, and propose adopting a bidialectal approach with Native S.E.S.D. students.

Anthony (1984) surveyed and evaluated the general theoretical characteristics of the deficit model, the literature reporting verbal deficit in Indian children, and three categories of treatments. He concluded that "at each level, theoretical, empirical, and educational, the verbal deficit model is shown to be deficient and lacking vitality" (abstract).

The depth and variety of language work by a five-year-old Cree child is described by Tootoosis (1983), who found that "the child was continually using her language to interpret and infer from her experience, to seek verification of her hypotheses and generate new interpretations in light of this experience (p. vii). Tootoosis contrasts the child’s natural speech with the limited discourse available in the classroom.

The B.C. Ministry of Education’s Language Arts for Native Indian Students handbook, (Klesner, 1982) emphasizes the need for acceptance of the student’s dialect, quoting Kenneth Goodman (1975):

- His language is so well learned and so deeply embossed on his consciousness that little conscious effect is involved for him in its use. It is as much a part of him as his skin. Ironically, well meaning adults, including teachers who would never intentionally reject a child or any important characteristic of a child, such as the clothes he wears or the color of his skin, will immediately and emphatically reject his language. This hurts him far more than other kinds of rejection because it endangers the means which he depends on for communication and self-expression. (p. 17)

The handbook emphasizes the need for teachers to know the local form of English usage so that they can help students without "putting down" their language. In addition, the handbook points out that "Book Language" may be a third dialect the
students are expected to learn (after the home dialect and the classroom dialect).

In *The Ahousaht Education Study* (1980), Ashworth points out that eliminating the first dialect is quite unnecessary.

Most of us learn over the years to *add* different speech styles and different speech functions to our repertoire . . . we *add* different ways of producing and using language to meet certain needs without losing the speech habits we learned as children. Ultimately the language that the individual uses, or the dialect he uses, or the manner in which he uses language is a matter of personal choice. The schools must, when necessary, help children to make that choice . . . (p. C-13)

Burnaby, in her extensive work, *Languages and Their Roles in Educating Native Children* (1980), also criticizes the elimination model, but cautions that teaching the standard dialect using second language methods may be necessary only where there are extreme differences (p. 299). Burnaby also points out that the curriculum for S.E.S.D. programs must be much more locally-oriented than E.S.L. curricula (p. 373). In this as well as in her 1982 book, Burnaby proposes that there is more involved than just learning the language. In general, Indian children must learn "how to go to school" (1982, p. 14).

Working in Burns Lake, B.C., Barth (1979) criticizes teachers who presume that a student’s difficulties are caused by a cognitive disorder without investigating the possibility that the student speaks a nonstandard dialect. He suggests training teachers in linguistics, since "language programs which fail to take into account the linguistic characteristics of native Indian learners may be one of the reasons Indian students often perform poorly on language-related school tasks" (1979, p. 357). Following Burton’s analysis of the Indian English in Burns Lake, Ross Hoffman describes "a Language Development Program for Carrier Children," which attempts to "bridge the gap between the dialect of English which the child speaks and the 'School English' which is spoken in the classroom" (1985, p. 1).
Brilhart (1970) describes some of the problems experienced by Indian high school students and emphasizes the need for developing the student’s feeling of self-worth, skill in spoken communication, and skill at listening to academic discourse. Brilhart’s suggestions for teachers agree with recommendations made by Blair (1984), after she studied teacher attitudes toward the oral language of indigenous people in Saskatchewan, and in Queensland, Australia. For example:

- Extend the range of skills of the child by showing him that in certain situations it is appropriate to use certain forms of language, and in other situations it is appropriate to use a different form of language.

- Teach the features of standard English, that don’t exist in the students’ dialect, in terms of genuine communication needs and get away from teaching features in isolation.

- Pay attention to the differences between the rules of speaking which govern social interaction in the child’s environment and in the standard English environment. This can be studied by informal observation and communication with the family and community.

- Learn as much as possible about the cultural and linguistic traditions of the students. (1984, p. 8)

Also looking at ways teachers can adapt to the communication styles of their students, Fiordio examined the paralanguage of 200 Native and 200 Non-Native university students. After testing speech for volume, dialect, rate, articulation, pronunciation, vocal variety, pauses, and vocal quality, he found that the "soft-spoken" way of describing Native people held true. He describes using a bicultural approach which teaches students to function in another cultural domain, and its success at improving all areas except rate of speaking (1985, p. 6).

John (1972) describes the links between learning style, language and cognition in Navajo children, and criticizes the use of drill and repetition, saying that these techniques are inappropriate for the culture. Tollefson also suggests that English teachers must deal with more than the structures of English:
... most young Native Americans have been brought up in a culture strongly influenced by a language they may have heard spoken only by old people. Yet they speak English at school and, frequently, at home. As a result, they are asked to perform an impossible task: to deal with the world in the particular way which their culture demands and which they themselves usually desire, but to refer verbally to this cosmological structure with a language which superficially at least--implies a different world view. (1977, p. 31)

It thus appears that teaching standard English, even through a bidialectal approach, is a rather complicated matter. The authors mentioned above seem to suggest that S.E.S.D. teachers will need not only information on the linguistic backgrounds of their students, but also on their sociolinguistic cultural background.

Importance of Interaction Patterns and Pragmatics

Historically speaking, the approaches used in S.E.S.D. teaching have paralleled those in E.S.L. Several authors who view the goals of S.E.S.D. as mainly dealing with phonology and syntax include rules for discourse and interaction in their programs. Clark, (1983) suggests including gambits, fillers and sympathetic circularity as a way of providing students with the skeletal framework for Standard English Discourse. Reed (1973) suggests the comparison of Black English Vernacular styles of discourse and Standard English composition rhetoric, as well as the examination of various language functions. Bruder and Hayden (1972) developed these six objectives for their composition class, three of which relate more to use than to usage.

We propose that by the end of the course the students would be able to:

1. Identify the features which distinguish "standard" from "non-standard" usage.
2. Recognize the appropriateness of dialect to situation.

3. Identify the features which distinguish the registers with special emphasis on those of the formal written register.

4. Recognize the functional interrelationship between register and dialects within the speech community.

5. Write compositions in the Standard Dialect on many topics using standard rhetorical form.

6. Organize and carry out a research topic of his choice in acceptable academic form. (1972, p. 5)

Labov (1967, 1969) looked mainly at sociolinguistic variation in phonology and grammar, but suggests the need for analysis of discourse, of rules for commands, requests, quantity of talk, topic choice. He makes this suggestion for motivation:

... it would be wise to emphasize [standard English's] value for handling social situations, avoiding conflict (or provoking conflict when desired), for influencing and controlling people. (1967, p. 10)

Carter (1971) also emphasizes the need for students to understand the usefulness of Standard English in terms of their day to day lives, and discusses four conditions necessary for one culture to accept cultural items from another.

Fishman and Leuders-Salmon (1972) discuss the uses of varieties of English in various situations and stress the need for both repertoire expansion and repertoire retention. Dumas (1974) takes these concepts further, making the following suggestions to teachers:

We can, following the principles laid down by Labov and others, study the linguistic behaviour of our students and put our knowledge in perspective by actively seeking to structure classes so that students become aware of the importance of the difference between competence and performance, so that they understand that all dialects have internal structure and order, so that they listen critically to teachers, so that they are aware of style-shifting as a way of interacting socially, so they are aware of the importance of all nonverbal communication modes. The teacher herself should consider herself a model not of "correct" language or of "the prestige dialect" but of

Discussing some myths about rules for communication used by dialect speakers, Edwards (1983) describes some of the misunderstandings commonly held by teachers. She "explodes" the myths that dialect speakers are non-verbal, saying that this depends on the situation, and that dialect speakers do not value language, pointing out that other cultures have oral traditions, but they are different from ours.

Several writers have argued that the differences between standard and nonstandard dialects involve much more than structures. Kaplan suggests that differences in structures may be the surface manifestation of deeper separations at the level of cognition (1969, p. 388). Barnitz (1981) discusses evidence from ethnographies of communication which points to cultural differences in functional communication styles, and suggests that teachers must understand that a child's language and culture, and the situational context, all affect test performance. Allen (1969) suggests that students be taught to consider "who says what to whom, for what purpose, and to what effect" (p. 6). She also suggests:

Findings from anthropology and the other social sciences belong in a program for teachers of S.E.S.D., not only to acquaint teachers with their students' life styles, but also to call attention to hitherto unnoticed features of cultural context in which the standard dialect is used. Studies of gestures and observations concerning the use of space in interpersonal communication make helpful contributions to the language teacher's preparation. (1969, p. 6)

Silverman describes some linguistic-cultural differences between Blacks and Whites and their effect on the communications process. She suggests that teachers and students (Black and White) "need to be hipped to these differences, and in the process learn some general concepts and principles about language and communication throughout the world" (1976, p. 16).
Toohey (in progress) has completed an extensive survey of the literature of S.E.S.D., in an attempt to answer the question "Minority Educational Failure: Is Dialect a Factor?" She concludes that:

. . . despite 20 years of sociolinguistic investigation concerned with identification of specific structural differences between standard and a variety of non-standard dialects, remarkably few implications for schooling practice have been discovered . . . The examination of differences in the area of language use (functional differences) may be much more productive of pedagogical adaptations which have some possibility of improving educational offerings for minority students. (p. 4)

The need for research into the functions of language in communicative interaction is also suggested by Cromack (1971). He discusses three pragmatic functions (manipulative, expressive and informative) and the ways they are linked to the situation, suggesting that teachers need to avoid "linguistic ethnocentrism, learning the language of the students, especially their world view" (p. 79).

A remarkable work in this vein was published by Heath in 1983. Heath completed ethnographic descriptions of language use and language learning in two working-class communities, one "white" and one "black," in the southeastern United States. She compares the rules of these two dialect communities with those of the nearby town and suggests the use of ethnographic techniques in order to "build a two-way channel between communities and their classrooms" (1983, p. 354). Heath describes the success of this approach, which has both teachers and students working on ethnographies of communication in order to facilitate more effective teaching and learning, a technique also described by McKay (1977).

Heath and McKay suggest that by going out into the community and deriving rules for behaviour from observations, these teachers and students come to a better understanding of how one must operate differently in different situations.
An attempt to provide this type of information was completed by Nakonechney (1986), who described the communication patterns of teachers and students at a native Indian alternative school, studying student speech primarily to determine level of fluency in relation to the variables of turn content and teachers' verbal strategy. She found that

1. Students took significantly more short turns (0-2 clausal chunks) than long turns (3 or more clausal chunks)
2. The majority of short turns had predominantly public/impersonal content
3. The majority of long turns had predominantly personal/private content
4. Turn length varied according to teacher strategy

Nakonechney critically re-evaluates the "talking to learn" methodology, and suggests specific discourse areas where radical readjustment between teacher and student may be needed for this methodology to have the desired effect.

It appears then, that much more than phonology and syntax are involved in the teaching of S.E.S.D. It is important to teach use as well as usage, in order to expand students' repertoires. However, in order to teach new patterns of interaction it is necessary for teachers to understand not only the sociolinguistic rules used in Mainstream culture, but also those used in the students' home culture. This study will attempt to provide the kinds of ethnographic information called for by Toohey (in progress) and others, and although it will be briefer than Heath's (1983) study, it will attempt to provide some of the same kinds of information to teachers of native Indians.
Descriptions of Indian English

There are still relatively few descriptions of Indian English. According to Potter (1981), only fifteen groups had at that time been examined even superficially. He calls for research, and especially research from an holistic perspective, in order to help writing teachers decide whether Indian English is really a hindrance to effective writing by Indian students. He also points out that in some communities two varieties of Indian English may exist, that originally learned from traders, and that originally learned in boarding schools.

Medicine (1981) suggests six areas which need further research. Although several deal with the use of Indian languages, the following applies to English as well:

... there are few data deriving from contemporary Indian societies regarding the actual dimensions and idiosyncratic use of language among various communities on Indian reservations. Equally absent is information on the use of languages--ancestral or English--among Native residents in urban areas.

In speaking of Indian English, we must be cautious, since these varieties are related to various Indian languages. The following studies have examined forms of Indian English according to a variety of criteria, the earlier studies examining phonology, morphology and syntax, the later involving discourse structure, interaction patterns and the relationship of world view to the rules of speaking.

Wolfram, Christian, Leap and Potter (1979) studied the varieties of English used in two Pueblan communities in order to examine the effect of language diversity on the acquisition of certain educational skills. Studying phonology, grammar and convergence in San Juan and Laguna, New Mexico, they found that these two varieties share a number of different characteristics, at least on a
qualitative level. These researchers suggest the similarities between these two varieties of Indian English and other non-Mainstream varieties. Also working in Laguna, Stout (1977) describes the variety of English used by fifth and sixth grade students. He compares the variability in their variety to continua developed in previous inter-ethnic testing and scaling.

Leap (1978, 1982) has described the phonology and grammar of the varieties of English spoken at Isleta Pueblo, New Mexico. He describes five factors which may be characterized by the grammatical structure of a particular sentence:

1. The grammatical processes of Isletan Tiwa (the local Indian language).
2. Grammatical processes common to other alternative processes.
3. Alternative English grammatical processes employed in contrast to standard language conventions.
4. Isletan Tiwa grammatical processes employed in contrast to the standard language conventions.
5. Standard English grammatical convention. (from Wolfram et al., 1979, pp. 8-9)

Another study of phonology and grammar was completed by Burton (1982) working with the Carrier people around Burns Lake, B.C. She discovered that language/dialect interference was only one of several factors influencing school performance:

There are indications that cultural differences have produced a different attitude and approach to learning in the Carrier child. Perhaps our methods of teaching are not compatible with the Carrier child's learning strengths and cognitive style. The Carrier child's learning may also be hampered by extreme shyness, behaviour problems, or social and emotional problems caused by culture shock.

The Carrier child who overcomes the above obstacles may still experience reading difficulties related specifically to language development. The three most common language-related problems are (1) developmental problems, (2) lack of oral language experience, and (3) first language/dialect interference. (1982, p. 4)
Flanigan (1983) studied the phonological, morphological and syntax/discursive characteristics of Lakota English. She states that varieties of Indian English are not caused by interference, but that varieties of Indian English are actually very similar in structure to other non-Mainstream varieties.

Discourse structure was studied in more depth by Cooley and Lujan (1982). They studied speeches given by eight students and four elders from various tribes in Oklahoma. They found that the students’ speeches, rather than being unorganized, were very similar to the speeches of the elders, implying that the students were using a different discourse structure than is common in Mainstream society. Scler and Labadie-Wondergem (1982) describe the structure in terms of the communication rules of Native American culture:

The overall organization of Native American speeches can best be illustrated through a rhetorical model. The subject of the speech can be viewed as the hub of a wheel, with the speaker on the rim. The speaker proceeds through the speech, moving along the rim to offer the audience a series of different perspectives on the subject. The different perspectives, or topics, represent the spokes of the wheel and appear as though they are being presented serially. All of the topics relate to the subject of the speech, but are separate from each other. The listener should determine the extent to which the topics are separate. If this analogy characterizes the structure of the speeches, identifying relationships among topics will be difficult unless the listener is familiar with the style.

In Native American cultures, the speaker is responsible for sharing with the audience knowledge about a subject, and the listener is responsible for determining the worth of the information. Any indication of the relationship among topics might be interpreted as an attempt to lead the audience towards a decision. This rhetorical strategy would be considered inappropriate. (1982, p. 98)

Hall (1969) discusses another cultural difference in sociolinguistic rules—that of listening behaviour. Describing his experience with the Navajo, he points out that to look at someone directly implied anger, and that other methods were used to demonstrate attention to the speaker.
Mitchell (1974), writing of Northern B.C., and Dumont (1972), writing about the Sioux and Cherokee, point out that the rules for when speech is appropriate are different in Indian and Mainstream cultures. Dumont even suggests that the Indian children’s use of silence may be one way of unconsciously manipulating the Mainstream teacher into using more appropriate teaching methods.

Susan Philips (1972), after working on the Warm Springs Indian Reservation in Oregon, defines the communicative contexts in which Indian and Non-Indian participation behaviour differs, and describes the ways in which they differ. These include talk as "performance," (or "demonstration of competence"), a different concept of leadership, traditional forms of education and the concept of self-testing. She concludes that "Indian children fail to communicate verbally in social interaction because the social conditions for participation to which they have become accustomed in the Indian Community are lacking" (p. 392). She warns that:

Educators cannot assume that because Indian children... speak English, or are taught it in the schools, that they have also assimilated all of the sociolinguistic rules underlying interaction in classrooms and other non-Indian social situations where English is spoken. To the extent that existing cultural variation in sociolinguistic patterning that is not recognized by the schools results in learning difficulties and feelings of inferiority for some children, changes in the structuring of classroom learning situations are needed. (1972, p. 392)

Philips (1974) also describes the ways in which participation affects the progression of events, pointing out that although Indians "have the relevant information to recognize the signals," even they will not be able to specifically state when something will start and how long it will take" (1974, p. 98).

A comparison of the ways in which Warm Springs Indians and Anglos show attention to the speaker is documented in Philips’ 1976 and 1983 works. Very briefly summarized, some differences are:
1. Indian exchanges proceed at a slower pace.
2. Longer pause time.
3. Turns at talk vary less in a) length of time, b) number of turns per person.
4. Less shifting of a) body and head alignment, b) body position.
5. More movement in the area around the eyes.
7. Confirmation through nods, or "uh-huh" unnecessary.
8. Indian speakers gaze at each other less of the time.
9. Rarity of distinction between addressed and unaddressed recipients.
10. Much more "tieing" is done in Warm Springs sequencing between utterances that are not within several turns.
11. Answers to questions are not obligatory.

Erickson and Mohatt (1982) attempted to determine whether Philips' participant structures could be generalized to another setting. They studied two classes of native students, one with an Anglo teacher, the other with a native Indian teacher. They found several differences, in areas such as social control required, tempo, and turn-taking. The native Indian teacher also made a distinction between public and private areas of discourse, thus avoiding overt control of individuals.

Basso, Philipsen and Darnell and Black, although working largely in Indian languages, make some observations which apply to English as well. Basso (1970; 1976; 1979) describes the Apaches' use of silence, the creation of metaphor, and the use of linguistic play and cultural symbols. Working with the Navajo, Philipsen (1972) discusses the importance of metaphysical beliefs and epistemological beliefs in
determining patterns of speech, especially on decision making. Black (1973) describes Ojibwe questioning etiquette as one which discourages direct questions, and Darnell (1979) comments on several differences in the rules which Cree children may bring to the classroom, such as:

1. Children should not impose on adults.
2. Skill learning is non-verbal.
3. It is rude to a) ask direct questions; b) tell someone he's wrong; c) refuse direct requests.
4. Avoid face-to-face contact.

It appears that these rules may still apply when the students speak English.

Although much of their work was done in the Chipewyan language, Scollon and Scollon (1981) describe many rules for interaction followed by the Athabaskan people, especially those rules which also occur when these people speak in English. Scollon and Scollon describe some difficulties which arise from different concepts of the presentation of self, the distribution of talk, information structure, and content organization. The concluding chapter on politeness and communicative pluralism makes some suggestions for preventing miscommunication, and provides charts which can help Anglos understand native Indians' sociolinguistic patterns.

Closer to home, Art More (1985, unpublished), in a general article on cultural and value differences, explains several behaviours which may frustrate non-Natives. These include Indians' reluctance to say "no" because they don't want to appear uncooperative, and using long stories as a way of answering questions. More also emphasizes the importance of non-verbal communication for effective inter-ethnic communication.
The description of Indian English has been approached from a variety of viewpoints. Although more research is clearly necessary, the works cited above suggest that for teachers of S.E.S.D., an awareness of all aspects of language--linguistic, sociolinguistic and cultural--is essential.

**Summary and Conclusions**

In Section 1, we saw three major issues addressed. First, the question of whether Standard English was necessary for Native students was answered in the affirmative. Second, the fallacy of the deficit theory was described, and the necessity for a bidialectal approach was stressed. Third, the question of what S.E.S.D. programs should include was addressed, suggesting the need for linguistic information, sociolinguistic information and cultural information.

Section 2 discussed S.E.S.D. in general. It appears necessary to teach *use*, as well as *usage*, in order to expand students’ repertoires. Clearly, communication styles vary across cultures and more research in this area is necessary. This information can be used to help both teachers and students.

Section 3 included descriptions of Indian English from a variety of viewpoints. The structural characteristics of San Juan, Laguna and Isletan English were described, and the variability of Laguna English phonology and grammar was compared to other inter-ethnic continua. It was suggested that linguistic differences alone may not account for Indian students’ difficulties, and that interference from the Indian language may not be important to the structures of Indian English.

Discourse analysis suggested that speeches given by native Indians are not "rambling" but are constructed using different structural rules. Other communication
rules discussed were: the ways in which Navajo and Anglo listening behaviour differs, the meaning of silence, the importance of participant structures, and the concepts of timing and attention giving. Several authors provided cultural insights into rules of interactional etiquette.

The variety of approaches to S.E.S.D. teaching and to describing Indian English suggest that our view of what language is must now include more than phonology, morphology and syntax. For teachers working with native Indian students, this requires research in all aspects of Indian English. Philips and the Scollons suggest that the rules for interaction may constitute the greatest area of difference between Standard English and Indian English. This study, although of only one group, will attempt to provide more of this necessary information.
CHAPTER III: Design of the Study

This chapter describes three methodologies used in the study: Hymes' Ethnography of Speaking, Enright's Interaction Hierarchy, and Schegloff and Sacks' Ethnomethodology. The community and situations observed are described, and the observational procedures used in the various situations are outlined. The difficulties experienced by the researcher are summarized, and the chapter concludes with a description of the techniques used to interpret the data, including a statement regarding the generalizability of this study.

Theoretical Assumptions

Observation and interpretation were approached inductively, using three methodologies. Each of these methodologies provide slightly different techniques for examining language data. In addition, each has its own assumptions about what language is. However, all methodologies had one major assumption in common. All these methodologies assume that the observation of natural language can lead to the description of sociolinguistic rules.

1. Hymes Analysis of "Ways of Speaking"

The analysis of "Ways of Speaking" suggested by Hymes (1974a, 1974b) constructs an ethnography of speaking, assuming that the rules for language use are governed by the following components:
1. The PARTICIPANTS involved
   - senders, receivers, addressees, interpreters
   - spokespersons

2. The various available CHANNELS
   - speaking, writing, body motion, print, touch, etc.

3. The various CODES shared by participants
   - linguistic, paralinguistic, musical, interpretive, interactional.

4. The SETTINGS in which communication is permitted, enjoined, encouraged, abridged.
   - physical
   - psychological

5. The FORMS of messages and their GENRES
   - e.g. single words, speeches, routines, poems.

6. The KEY of the interaction
   - tone, manner or spirit

7. The ENDS involved
   - ends as outcomes (participant viewpoint)
   - ends in view (community viewpoint)

Throughout the study, careful notes were made on each situation. Particular attention was paid to participants, setting, and key, but the interpretation of events included all seven of these factors.

2. Interaction Hierarchy

Susan Philips' (1972) work emphasizes the importance of "participant structures" in governing communication behaviour. She describes the ways in which native Indians and Mainstream cultures differ in terms of where, when, to whom, and how one talks.
Enright (1984), doing ethnography in classrooms, uses the term "participant structure" in describing an interaction hierarchy consisting of a "constitution" (the rules established by teacher in anticipating instruction), "events," and "participant structures":

The Constitution (Rules)
- cuts across almost all interaction
- a priori
- usually accompanied by a distinct, recurring, predictable set of events and participant structures
Examples:
"Stay in your seat."
"Raise your hand if you want to talk."
"Work with the group."

Events
- teachers' own division of the daily flow of interaction into units: "emic"
Examples:
"Show and Tell"
"Reading Group"
"Free Time"
"Seatwork"
"Recess"
"Class Meeting"

Participant Structures
- observers' division of classroom interaction into units: "etic"
- WHERE you talk, WHEN you talk, WHO you talk to, HOW you talk, and WHAT you talk about.
Examples:
Lecture (teacher talks, students listen)
Discussion (teacher controls topic and floor, students permitted to bid for floor)
Free Conversation (teacher supervises students who are permitted to engage in chosen conversations with specific but implicit limitations, e.g. no yelling)

(Enright, 1984, p. 29)
This researcher has assumed that such an interaction hierarchy also exists in the broader context of a community. Assuming that the constitution was set by the community's norms, particular attention was paid to the delineation of participation in the various situations observed.

3. **Ethnomethodology**

Ethnomethodology is a method of analyzing conversation which assumes that conversations proceed in an orderly fashion, because they are governed by rules for interaction, clearly (but subconsciously) understood by the participants. According to ethnomethodology, every utterance has a purpose beyond the semantic or even connotative meaning. Utterances may cue, or even demand, what sort of utterances must follow.

Ethnomethodology is an inductive approach which uses transcripts of taped natural speech. When using this methodology a researcher will generally ignore the history of the conversation as well as the paralinguistic elements which cannot be transcribed, and attempt to describe both the syntagmatic organization of conversation (the way the parts are linked together), and the paradigmatic elements (the background knowledge needed by every speaker). Through these techniques, ethnomethodologists have studied and described such facets as the sequencing rule (turn-taking), opening sequences, closing sequences, and the rules for story-telling.

Although Scheglof and Sacks (1973) caution against characterizing data according to such factors as those suggested by Hymes, Turner (1970) argues that not only do participants "invoke culturally provided resources," but researchers must use their own competence in order to make sense of activities. Making suggestions to future researchers, Turner points out:
1. That all and any exchanges of utterances—defining an utterance for the moment as one speaker’s turn at talking—can in principle be regarded as “doing things with words.”

2. That there is no a priori reason to suppose that syntactical or lexical correspondences exist between units of speech and activities.

3. That in constructing their talk, members provide for the recognition of “what they are doing” by invoking culturally provided resources.

4. That “total speech situations” are to be elucidated as the features oriented to by members in doing and recognizing activities, and assessing their appropriateness.

5. That in undertaking such elucidations, sociologists must (and do) employ their own expertise in employing and recognizing methodical procedures for accomplishing activities.

6. That the task of the sociologist in analysing naturally occurring scenes is not to deny his competence in making sense of activities but to explicate it.

7. That such explication provides for a cumulative enterprise, in that the uncovering of members’ procedures for doing activities permits us both to replicate our original data and to generate new instances that fellow members will find recognizable.

(1970, p. 214)

For this study, the researcher used ethnomethodological techniques as one method of uncovering rules for communication. She used her knowledge as a native speaker of the Mainstream dialect to determine when and how the patterns of English used by members of a particular Indian Band differ from those of the dominant culture.
Subjects

The Community

The community in which this research was completed is the Squamish Indian Band of North Vancouver. The Band is spread over three reserves with a total population of approximately 1,500 members. Two of the reserves are located in close proximity to retail and industrial areas. Located on reserve land are a major shopping centre, a hotel and several industrial sites. The Band is well organized, and has an active economic development strategy.

Employment patterns are mixed, with Band members pursuing a wide variety of occupations. While the Band is generally prosperous, the socio-economic status of particular families varies considerably. Band members may receive support from government and Band sources. One of the ways in which the Band provides economic support to its members is through low-cost or no-cost housing.

Band administration is through a central Band office. Many different projects are organized through the economic development and housing departments. The Social Development Committee is responsible for the well-being of the Band’s social development programmes. Some of the services sponsored by this committee are a Home-School Coordinators Programme, a Family Drop-In Centre, family counselling, an evening study group, a Native language programme, and a drug and alcohol counselling programme.

The Band as a whole is very conscious of the need to maintain its cultural heritage. Two programmes designed to meet this goal are the Native Language and Native Studies classes in the schools. There are on the reserve a very active
Longhouse Society, as well as several productive and recognized artists and craftspeople. In addition, Band members also work with the schools in a program intended to make Mainstream students aware of the value of Native culture.

The Situations

Observations took place in a variety of situations. Some situations involved only Band members, while others involved a mixture of Native and Mainstream people. Due to time constraints, the majority of observation time focused on school age children, and on their interactions with different age groups. Insights gained into the interaction patterns of adults were not ignored. Because access to business and political events was limited, the majority of settings observed were pedagogical or social.

a) The Nursery School. The nursery school is operated by the Band and all staff are of Native ancestry. There are two regular teachers, and two teacher aides who assist at special events and substitute when a regular teacher is away. The Band also provides a bus and driver to transport the children to and from school. Each day there are two classes, one composed primarily of three-year-olds, the other of four-year-olds. There are twenty children registered in each class, but attendance varies considerably.

b) Evening Study Group. This group is designed for elementary students in grades 4-7, although children from grades 2-8 attend fairly regularly. For two hours once a week, the home-school coordinator and the tutor (who is also the researcher) provide supplementary learning materials and assistance with homework. There are two main goals: to provide students with an enhanced environment for
doing their homework, and to develop a positive attitude towards activities that are academically oriented. The group also provides an opportunity for the students to interact socially. Approximately 25 students are involved in the group, and occasionally one or two parents will drop in for a short period.

c) Schools. Classes were observed at two schools, both of which are classified as "community schools." Both schools are very concerned about the success of their Native students, and both work at incorporating aspects of Native culture into the school. Like all schools in the North Vancouver School District, these schools base their primary language arts programmes on the Whole Language approach. At both schools the teachers observed were members of the Mainstream society.

At school A the researcher observed a kindergarten class and a grade one class. The kindergarten class contained twenty students, only three of whom were Native. One of these three students was disabled in terms of motor skills and speech. The researcher's attention focused on the other two Native students in large group, small group, and free play situations. The grade one class contained approximately 26 students, about one third being of Native ancestry.

At school B, the researcher observed a kindergarten class of 26 students, more than half of whom were native Indian. As with kindergarten A, the morning's schedule included a lot of story time, some group writing time, arts and crafts time, free play time and snack time.

d) Native Language Classes. The local Native language is taught by a team of three band members consisting of two young women, and one man who is an Elder. The classes are conducted primarily in English. The researcher observed one woman teaching Nursery School morning classes, and the other
teaching afternoon classes. In addition, she observed the whole team work with a small, largely Mainstream grade one group at school B, and two team members working with a small, all Native junior high Native Studies class.

e) Family Drop-In Centre. The Band operates a drop-in centre for parents and small children. Organized by a Mainstream family counsellor and a Native social worker, the centre provides a "safe" place for mothers to relax and talk while one Mainstream teacher and one Native aide provide educational play experiences for the children. Occasionally, there are guests who speak on issues such as health care, child abuse and discipline. On the days observed, between three and eight mothers, and six to twelve children were present.

f) Meetings. All of the meetings observed were related to education. The researcher attended several meetings of the Native Education team, two parent-teacher meetings, and a workshop. She also often met with one home-school coordinator and with various staff members at the Band office, in formal and informal ways.

g) Social Events. The researcher attended several child-oriented parties—a Christmas party and an Easter party at the nursery school, and the Band Christmas party, held at the Band office. At the nursery school parties, about half the children had parents, grandparents or other relatives in attendance. The Band party was attended by approximately 200 people—children, parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents and friends.

The researcher also observed people in less structured situations such as in the mall, at a local hockey game and a school basketball game. The researcher sometimes had lunch with Band members, especially the nursery school teachers.
The only ceremonial event attended was one funeral, followed by a luncheon. On this occasion, approximately 100 people, mostly adults and pre-school children, were present.

h) The Families. Six families were involved in this project. The researcher made informal visits to their homes, and sometimes went with them to the park or shopping. Most of the children and several of the mothers knew the researcher from other situations. The fathers were not often present when the visits occurred, but members of the extended family, such as a grandparent, married children, or cousins, were often in the homes. None of the mothers worked outside the home, although one was involved in child care within her home. Most of the fathers were employed as tradesmen or labourers. Several of the families lived in newer homes built by the Band; one lived in a townhouse, and two in older homes. All but one family lived on the reserve.

Procedures

The researcher was involved with the community for a period of seven months, although the bulk of observation time was in the last five months. During those months, the researcher spent between ten and fifteen hours per week in specific observation settings and several hours more per week just being around the area. Procedures for observation varied with the situation. Whenever possible, interactions were recorded on a Sony ZX-7 tape recorder. However, in some situations the use of a tape recorder would have been socially inappropriate, and in others it was technically impossible. In these cases the researcher was forced to rely upon field notes and reconstructed conversations. The role of the researcher
also varied according to situation, along a continuum from passive observer to active participant. The following is a description of the procedures used in each situation.

a) Nursery School. The researcher visited the nursery school for four hours per week, for approximately fifteen weeks. For the first seven weeks the tape recorder was operating approximately 60% of the time. More than ten hours of usable audiotape were accumulated.

The role of the researcher varied considerably. On some occasions she sat quietly watching the teachers and children, on others she was actively involved in whatever event was occurring, sometimes learning the Native language or doing crafts. For twenty minutes of each class the researcher conducted a music lesson. As the teachers gradually tired of being "watched" and recorded, the researcher took on more and more of the role of teacher's aide, often reading to children and teaching music.

b) Evening Study Group. This group was observed for two hours per week for 25 weeks. Audiotaping of the sessions proved impractical for two reasons. The students were spread throughout a large room, and there was a high level of background noise. The social interactions before the sessions proved slightly easier to record. However, only one and a half hours of conversation were collected on tape.

In this situation the researcher was very much an active participant. She was involved in assigning the most appropriate kind of work to each student, and for providing assistance with homework. Only during the recess and upon the completion of the session was the researcher able to become a more passive observer.
c) Schools. The three classes were each observed three times, for approximately 90 minutes per visit. Most of the classroom talk was recorded, although this was impossible during physical education time. The researcher participated in all classroom activities, but in a generally passive way. During crafts time and on walks, she interacted with the children nearby.

d) Native Language Classes. A description of the classes at the nursery school is included in section A above. Only one junior high class and one grade one class were observed, and both of these were recorded in full. In both these classes the researcher played the role of passive observer.

e) Family Drop-In Centre. The researcher visited this centre four times, for two hours each time. Because the goal of the organizer was to create a "safe" place for mothers to relax, the researcher decided that the use of a tape recorder would be inappropriate. When possible, detailed notes were taken, although it was often necessary to wait until after a conversation had finished before writing was appropriate. In this setting the researcher was relatively passive, but regularly talked to mothers and played with children.

f) Meetings. The use of a tape recorder at the meetings would have made the participants uncomfortable, thereby precluding the collection of natural speech data. Thus, the researcher was forced to rely on field notes, written whenever an appropriate time could be found. The role of the researcher again varied considerably. She was always considered a participant at the meetings, but unless her input was called for, she remained quiet. However, during the informal and social portions of meetings, she took part in conversation whenever this was appropriate.
g) Social Events. Attempts were made to record the nursery school parties but the results were poor. In other social situations field notes were taken. At these social events the role of the researcher varied. At larger events, she tended towards quiet, passive observation, but when fewer people were present, she participated in conversation and events.

h) Families. The researcher visited two families four times, three families three times and one family twice. The length of the visits varied from one to three hours. After the initial awkwardness was overcome, the tape recorder was turned on. Thus, approximately fourteen hours of family talk were collected. The visits were conducted in a "stop by for coffee" style, although the researcher's schedule required her to make appointments ahead of time. The researcher drank tea or coffee with the mothers and talked about whatever topic the mother brought up. Sometimes the researcher talked with or played with the children. Occasionally the family and researcher left the house to go to the park, or store, or school.

Difficulties

The difficulties encountered during this study are probably common to all ethnographic research. To integrate into a community often takes years. However, despite the relatively short period of time available, the researcher was able to observe numerous situations related to children's language use.

One difficulty facing the researcher was in determining culturally appropriate times for her to be present. The Band members were usually very helpful. Within the Native community, though, modes of invitation seemed to differ from
those of the Mainstream society. In this community, invitations seemed to be of a more casual nature, and this presented the researcher with some difficulties in interpreting norms. Fortunately, one Band member felt comfortable explaining the community's norms, and the assistance was very much appreciated.

Going from "outsider" to somewhat of an "insider" was made more feasible because the researcher had specific roles to play in the community. Thus, she was seen not only as a researcher, but also as a tutor and a music teacher. Many Band members appeared to appreciate the fact that she was contributing something to the community, not just taking. Having the role of tutor did require an ethical decision though, when the Band decided to pay the researcher a small honorarium. The researcher experienced difficulty in accepting this honorarium and eventually most of this money was returned to the Band in the form of educational gifts.

The collection of valid language data was made difficult by the wide variety of situations observed. As mentioned above, there were several situations in which the use of a tape recorder would have been socially inappropriate. When the recorder was used, though, the researcher discovered that participants very quickly forgot that it was there. Children especially, were more interested in what they were experiencing than in the presence of this machine. Because of this, the adults with whom they were interacting were also required to proceed with their activities and ignore the tape recorder. It is the opinion of the researcher that the audiotapes provide valid samples of natural language use.

During the analysis stage the researcher experienced two difficulties. The first involved attempting to validate results with Band members. This checking of hypotheses against the "insider" competence of community members was done in a fairly casual way, often over lunch. The researcher learned that hypotheses in
written form could be misinterpreted to be statements of fact rather than working hypotheses. As a result, questions were presented orally. This validation technique was used sparingly; most hypotheses were tested through further observation.

The second difficulty in analysis and description involved the negative connotations of the word "different." It is very important to explain that "different" was not used as criticism. Although in this thesis it was necessary to comment on the presence or absence of various sociolinguistic rules occurring in Mainstream culture, every attempt was made to describe those differences in neutral terms.

Overall, the researcher found the observation period very enlightening, and because of the helpfulness of the Band members and employees, there were surprisingly few difficulties.

**Analysis**

**The Hypothesis Circle**

The goals of this study were to complete a community language profile (ethnography of speaking) and to see how the rules described affect students in schools. Since the researcher did not begin with any concrete hypotheses, analysis of data took the following forms:

1. Analysis of data to form an hypothesis
2. Gathering further data to support/reject hypothesis
3. Confirmation or disconfirmation of findings with band members by asking questions similar to the following:
"It appears that _____ is happening. Do you feel this is a correct interpretation?"

This, of course, was not a linear procedure, but rather a cyclical one, since several different hypotheses were under consideration at any one time.

**Data Analysis**

In the early stages of the study the audible portions of seven cassettes were transcribed. This resulted in eighty-five pages of transcripts. Examinations of transcripts and field notes led to hypotheses which were examined in further observations. Throughout the study, the researcher periodically listened to portions of tapes, and attempted to clarify issues through further observation and through informal discussions with Band members.

Near the end of the study, detailed analysis of the transcripts and tapes began. The entire thirty hours of tape were examined aurally in order to delineate clearly the main themes and subtopics discussed in chapters 4-6. Although a general outline of the sociolinguistic rules to be discussed had developed gradually throughout the observation period, this stage was necessary in order to focus the coding procedures. At this time, relevant material was transcribed from the remaining tapes.

Throughout this process, and in fact throughout the writing stage, contact with the community was maintained so that the rules described could be verified by observation and through a series of conversations with interested Band members.
Generalizability

The degree to which this description can be applied to other Native groups involves several issues. It is conceivable that other Native groups could display similar behaviours. Historically, interaction between Native groups through trade and intermarriage may have contributed to some degree of sociolinguistic homogeneity. This could account for the similarities between the findings of this work and the works of Philips and the Scollons.

However, it must be noted that this study is specific only to one group—the Squamish Band of North Vancouver. In addition, the situations observed are largely limited to only two areas of community life. Thus, the relevance of this study will not be in the immediate application of its findings to all persons of Native ancestry. Rather, its main importance will be in the delineation of sociolinguistic rules which may be different. Thus a teacher reading this study should not think "Oh, this is how Indians in my community behave," but rather, "here are some ways in which the rules of interaction may be different. It is now my job to get to know my community, to see which rules apply here."

This chapter described the three methodologies employed in the study: Hymes' Ethnography of Speaking, Enright's Interaction Hierarchy, and Schegleff and Sacks' Ethnomethodology. The community and the eight situations were described and the observational procedures used in the various situations were discussed. The chapter concluded with a description of the cyclical technique used to interpret the data, including a statement regarding the generalizability of the findings.
CHAPTER IV: Communication in the Community

This chapter will discuss the tendency of many community members to follow certain sociolinguistic patterns which differ from those of Mainstream society. This community's varied behaviour in the areas of volume, intonation, pause-time and eye-contact are compared with the Scollons' (1981) results. An outline of two factors determining whether a situation is classed as speech or nonspeech is given, and the importance of values in determining sociolinguistic behaviour is emphasized. Rules regarding interruptions, topic control, and absence of "why" challenges are linked to the value "Respect elders." Differences in introductions, performance, "pulling strings," requesting assistance, and children's degree of independence are discussed in terms of respect for the individual. Patterns of topic choice and naming are outlined as reflections of a value system stressing the importance of family, and rules regarding greetings, farewells, showing off, praise and taking oneself seriously are discussed as outcomes of a tendency to avoid drawing attention to oneself. The chapter concludes with a description of the community as more context-oriented than Mainstream society, and of the organization of events.

Introduction

Early in the course of the study, the researcher became aware that many Band members felt that language use within their community differed from that of Mainstream society. For example, one elder, speaking to a meeting of parents and teachers, asked the teachers to remember that Native children don't talk the same as white children. Later, in a conversation with the researcher, he mentioned
differences in the sound system, and also differences in how one person talks to another. One example of this was his statement "We Indians talk to our kids like they were adults."

A mother living off reserve regularly made comments such as "it's really different down there," and spoke about differences in quantity of talk, as well as volume and intonation. In terms of speech patterns, she clearly wanted her son to "see both sides of the fence," meaning both the ways of the Mainstream society and the "[Indian] side of things." In several contexts, mothers and Native teachers joked about the white man's way of doing things.

It became clear that not only did Mainstream people notice this difference, but community members did as well. Because the rules for communication were largely unformulated, the task of the researcher was therefore to try to describe, detect and formulate rules and differences, perhaps noting links between these communicative behaviours and values held by community members.

Limitations in the time and in opportunity to gain access to events affected both the scope and course of the project. Many of the conclusions originated not with conversational transcriptions as much as in conversational impressions. Furthermore, in-depth study of particular aspects of communication, while desirable, was simply not possible. However, this study provided the opportunity to complete a general overview of communication patterns in one Native community—an ethnography of communication.
Communication Systems and Value Systems

When the study began, the researcher did not intend to examine the value system of the community. It was hoped that sociolinguistic behaviours could be described in a less subjective manner, as was possible in the 'Four Stereotypes' section below. However, it became clear that various sociolinguistic behaviours were linked by (if not generated as a result of) an underlying cultural value. Repeatedly, attempts to confirm sociolinguistic rules with community members led to comments such as "that's because we believe . .. ."

Condon and Yousef (1975) suggest that an understanding of value orientations is essential to successful intercultural communication, because

communication includes all kinds of behaviour. We cannot separate culture from communication, for as soon as we talk about one, we are almost inevitably talking about the other too. (1975, p. 34)

These authors describe the usefulness of describing value orientations, but suggest caution.

Value orientations are abstract constructs. They are useful only when tempered by an "as if" caution. People in culture X act as if they believe that materialism is more important than spiritual concerns, as if older persons deserve more respect than younger ones, as if intuition is a better guide than reason. Applied with caution, as a framework in which revealing questions can be asked and a great variety of specific behaviours can be related and organized, value orientations can be most helpful. (pp. 118-119)

Describing the sociolinguistic rules in the linear fashion required by academia was extremely difficult, as all the elements seem interconnected in various ways. Thus the reader must be cautioned that:

Value orientations are meaningful only in combination, not in isolation. To identify and discuss values or value orientations, we must treat each individually, but we will be mislead if we expect that what they represent can be so individuated. (Condon & Yousef, 1975, p. 119)
Although the values described below were discussed by community members in a general way, they are largely reformulated. This task is always difficult for an outsider, but the utility of trying is manifest, as it allows us not only to see the patterns, but the reasons perceived by community members for those patterns. However, it is necessary to caution the reader about the limitations of such descriptions.

Value orientations are incomplete, biased and reflective of the purposes for which they were invented and for which they may be applied. Such are the limitations of labelling anything, but the significance is even more apparent where there is no standardized system and where the referent is as amorphous as the term, culture. (Condon & Yousef, 1975, p. 119)

Four Stereotypes

The Scollons (1981) describe several ways in which cross-cultural communication can be inhibited by different patterns of speech. They mention pause-time in particular, as one factor which can cause a Native person to feel that he or she "can't get a word in edgewise," and cause a Mainstream person to feel that a Native person is being uncooperative. The researcher looked for evidence of longer pauses between utterances, as well as examining three other stereotypical descriptions of the speech of native Indians. Thus, four of the speech components addressed were:

Is it true that
1. Native Indian people speak more softly?
2. Native Indians use a flatter intonation pattern?
3. The appropriate length for the pause between utterances is longer?
Dealing with Variation--Continua in Two Dimensions

Observation immediately showed that there was considerable diversity in the communication behaviours of community members. This was further complicated by the fact that variation occurred in two dimensions, young-old and traditional-Mainstream. The word "traditional" is used here simply to describe a behaviour which is common in the Native community and is different from that of Mainstream society. Whether this behaviour is actually based on traditional Indian ways of behaving cannot be ascertained or proven by this study. In an attempt to describe the community with greater precision, the researcher will use continua whenever possible. For example, regarding the issue of eye contact:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>Mainstream</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>respect shown by lowered eyes</td>
<td>respect and interest shown by maintaining eye contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>adapt eye contact to participants, but tend to maintain contact for shorter periods than Mainstream people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Younger</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adapt eye contact to participants, but tend to maintain eye contact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thus, in reality, any one individual's behaviour could be placed in any one of four quadrants.

Volume

It seemed that there was a tendency for most people in the community to speak at a slightly lower volume than would have been used in Mainstream society. While there was considerable variation within the community and acoustical measurements were not done, examination of the tapes often showed that Mainstream people spoke louder than their Native counterparts. Many children and several adults used loud voices, especially in school situations, but at social events, meetings, and paired co-conversation, the voices of the Mainstream people were often more noticeable.

Observations of mixed school classes showed that children from both cultures varied considerably. A description of volume level might look like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>soft</th>
<th>Native children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>loud</td>
<td>Mainstream children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Intonation Patterns

The researcher's training as a musician made her more cognizant of intonation differences. Again considerable individual variation was noted. However, in this community, many members spoke at a lower pitch level and used a narrower range of pitches than would Mainstream people. In this regard there was a difference between older people and children. Thus, in addition to individual variation, there was also variation related to traditional Native speech patterns, and variation related to age.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Older</th>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>Mainstream</th>
<th>Younger</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lower pitch</td>
<td>lower pitch</td>
<td>higher pitch</td>
<td>higher pitch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>flatter intonation</td>
<td>flatter intonation</td>
<td>wide variation</td>
<td>wider intonation variation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, the speech of many, but certainly not all, Elders could be placed in the upper left quadrant. Likewise, the speech of most children could be placed in the lower right quadrant.
Pause-time

In Mainstream society, the length of time allowed between the end of an utterance by one person and the beginning of an utterance by another has been described by the Scollons (1981) as one second or less. For most younger members of this community, there was little difference in this pattern. The pattern used by older members was not strikingly different, but some members did use pauses which were longer than the Scollons' research indicated was the norm in Mainstream society. For example, the researcher often worked with a woman in her fifties, and regularly had difficulty determining when a conversation was over. During one telephone conversation, the researcher misunderstood a lengthy silence as what Scheglof and Sacks (1973) call "giving notice of intent to close," and tried to close the conversation. The Native woman uncomfortably asked "are you in a hurry to get away?" In this case, as in several others, the silence did not mean that the Native woman was giving up her turn or signalling that no further talk was forthcoming.

It was interesting to note that young people, whose pause-time pattern was usually close to that of Mainstream society, could adapt their style for use with those adults who used longer pause-times. In this regard, many of the children were quite bidialectal.

Among adults, the need for verification of attention by nodding or "mm-hm" seemed to be slightly, but not markedly, different from the Mainstream society. Some Elders seemed to assume the other person was attending, and thus verification was unnecessary. At the other end of the continuum the following
examples point out the speakers’ need for verification of attention.*

**Example 1:** At home

**Present:** Mother, Child (6 years), researcher

Mother: Every time I buy a teapot . . . a teapot? (waits for nod) it means, ah, somebody's comin' along, X have a baby.

Researcher: Oh really // huh

Mother: It always does that, all the time

In this case, the mother waited for verification three times before continuing.

**Example 2:** At home, child tells story about a friend at a gas station

**Present:** Much extended family, Mother and child (4 years)

Child: You know // Ma

Mother: Hm

Child: That X was at Mohawk . . . Jesse lost it there, X over there

Mother: Hm

Child: Probably kept it in his pocket X

Mother: Hm

Child: Then went home XX at Mohawk

Mother: Hmm . . .

* Whenever possible, excerpts from transcripts of taped interaction will be used to substantiate the findings of the study. In order to facilitate comprehension of these transcripts, the reader should note the following symbols and abbreviations.

X: unintelligible word
UI sentence: unintelligible sentence
UI section: unintelligible section (time given if necessary)
. . . short pause
// interruption. The following speaker's utterance began at this point.
[ ] word substituted to clarify meaning or to protect anonymity
{ more than one speaker at one time

In addition, the tape number, the side (A or B), and the counter number, as on a SONY BM-46 transcriber will be provided at the end of each example.
Here, the mother verifies attention regularly, but doesn’t interrupt the child’s narration.

**Eye Contact**

Mainstream culture uses eye contact as a way of expressing interest and respect. In this Native Community most of the members followed this system. However, for some older members maintaining direct eye contact appeared to be difficult. During a conversation with one Elder who worked in the school system, the stress of maintaining eye contact showed clearly. This Elder would maintain contact for a time, then look away, then maintain contact again. Of the younger adults observed, some who followed more traditional Indian ways, also tended to avert their gaze. Thus, as was mentioned above, eye contact behaviour can again be described according to two continua:

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
These findings suggest that in this community children are becoming to some degree both bidialectal and assimilated. Deriving the balance between these two processes is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it appeared that in the four communication areas described above, this community was very much a community in transition.

Speech and Nonspeech Situations

Introduction

As within Mainstream society, the situation (i.e. the physical and psychological setting) was found to be an important factor affecting the use of speech. For example, a boy who was quiet in the classroom, was clearly the leader when a small group was trying to complete a jigsaw puzzle in another room. In his home, he interacted freely and often with his siblings and with the researcher. In another home, a mother described her adult daughter as "shy." Although this daughter did not interact with the researcher at all, she was very involved in talk and joking with the extended family. At the nursery school, the children who rarely attended and were therefore in an unfamiliar environment spent much more time just quietly watching than those who were familiar with the setting. The researcher noted that people's behaviour at social events was different from their behaviour in the home. These speech and nonspeech situations are discussed below.
Factors Influencing the Appropriateness of Speech

In many of the situations observed in this study, community members participated in a variety of verbal interactions, many of which were quite lively. It appeared, though, that the rules for when one talked and when one was silent were different from those of Mainstream society.

These rules seemed to be governed more by the participants involved than by the setting. In determining quantity of speech, who a person was talking to was important. Observation revealed two factors which were involved in determining whether speech was appropriate. These were:

1. Degree of Intimacy
2. Age of Participants

These two factors are, of course, also important in determining Mainstream usage. However, in this Native community, it appeared that the outcomes derived from these factors were different from those in Mainstream society.

The participants' degree of intimacy was important. Among family and close friends, talk was plentiful. However, among strangers, talk was scarce. This seems somewhat reversed from what the Scollons (1981) describe as the Mainstream pattern of talking to get to know someone. This will be discussed in detail below.

The relative ages of the participants also appeared slightly more significant in this community than in the Mainstream society. Talk among peers seemed to be plentiful. However, in interactions between young people and older people, especially Elders, the younger person was often expected to be quiet and listen. Possible explanations of this tendency will be discussed below.
Speech Situations

Adults. Mitchell (1974), in describing traditional Northwest Indian culture, describes two main uses of speech:

There was a time for talking--for having fun with language, for plays on words and for puns, riddles and jokes, for storytelling, and for sharing experiences and ideas in that kind of easy, everyday conversation that exists everywhere among family and good friends.

Words were used, too, for political and ceremonial occasions--for decision-making, for planning group activities, and for potlatching. (Mitchell, 1974, p. 165)

The researcher had no access to political or ceremonial occasions. She did, however, observe many situations in which people caught up on local news and learned about who was doing what. In homes and at community social events, talk was plentiful. The topics discussed were often of a very personal nature, such as who's having a baby when (1A, 199), who's sick, who's getting married. Local political events, and local politicians were also favourite topics.

Adolescents also participated in this social talk about community members.

Example 3: Evening Study Group

Present: Researcher, Home-School Coordinator, approximately 10 students in grades 4-7. Students speaking are 10-13 years old.

S1: [Name 1] didn't come up?
S2: He didn't come last time either
S1: I know
S3: How did you get up, [name 2]
S1: Bus . . . Ma
S2: Don't you live right there? (across street)
S4: No, she moved down behind the Plaza
S2: Oh, X X
S4: Mm-hm . . . Ma, save some

S1: How come [name 1] didn’t come

S3: He wasn’t allowed

S1: He wasn’t allowed to?

Counsellor: No

S4: He said, he’s, I phoned there, and he said he’s coming up . . .
(hurts finger) Ouch!

S1: Wonder if he got into trouble

S4: Mm-hm (10A, 182)

This type of conversation occurred often. When among members of this community (insiders), people talked a lot about themselves and each other. In the home, family members also talked about their day to day experiences.

Example 4: At home

Present: Mother, daughter (13 years), researcher. Daughter shows a dress she’s borrowed.

Researcher: Is there a special occasion coming up?

Mother: She’s gotta go to a funeral tomorrow

Researcher: Oh no (4 second pause)

Daughter: Did Gran go up there tonight?

Mother: Ya . . . I caught her just, uh, when she was go, to go get diapers, at 4:00? She was ready to go then. So she took me down there first

Daughter: Oh, she take X with her?

Mother: Yah?

Daughter: Except for her mom . . . [name] came walkin’ in, she was down at the mall? She’s walkin’ like this, what, what, she says “did you get a haircut?” It, I went like that and it just stayed like that (26A, 082)
Children. Verbal interaction amongst the children was plentiful. While playing, the children used language for a wide variety of functions, such as solving problems, threatening, tattle-taling, teasing, negotiating, playing with words, pretending, bragging. A detailed discussion of the quantity and variety of language use appears in the Appendix.

The children used language for a wide variety of purposes and in a wide variety of situations. With peers and siblings, verbal interaction was plentiful. With parents, and older relatives, participation in the conversation seemed to be appropriate.

Quantity of Talk

One older woman spoke with the researcher about how uncomfortable it was to have non-Natives in her home: "I always feel like I have to talk all the time." This discomfort suggests that, at least in some situations, this community's norms for quantity of talk differ from the Mainstream society's.

In this community, many members appeared to follow the rule "Don't talk unless you have something to say." For example, during one home visit, the grandfather needed the grandson to change a cassette. He needed only one word, the child's name. One day at the nursery school, a girl handed the bus driver a brooch without saying a word. The bus driver said "It's a brooch but it's broken" and handed it back.

In both these examples, the parties concerned knew what was required. Words were not necessary. At the Band Christmas party there were few "ooohs" and "ahs" over gifts. Throughout the community, directions to children were more
often given in the imperative form than by use of "would you like to" or other hidden directives frequently used by Mainstream society.

Parents didn’t seem to feel the need for constant verbal interaction with their children. "Baby talk" was present, but tended to be lower in pitch and volume. Some mothers talked extensively to their babies; some seemed to feel that it shouldn’t be overdone. For example, one mother once warned the researcher who was playing with the baby "you’ll spoil him like that." Affection was shown to the children frequently, but more often through touch than through words. The following example is clearly an exception:

**Example 5:** At the park, children playing on the swings

**Present:** Researcher, Mother, Child 1 (4 years), Child 2 (18 months)

C1: Love you Mom

Mother: I love you, my son

C2: (mumbles)

Mother: He's saying "I love you, [name 1]"

C1: I love you [name 2]

This "don’t talk unless you have something to say" rule aids in understanding why many Mainstream people have retained the stereotype of the silent Indian, a stereotype which is not valid when one examines social talk among intimates.
The above-mentioned discomfort around Mainstream people is also related to the way people get to know new people. In Mainstream culture, people get to know each other by talking. The initial contact is through "small talk." At social gatherings one is obligated to "mingle," making verbal contact with a wide variety of people and talking about trivial topics.

However, in this Native community, a different procedure was often followed. Many, but not all, community members preferred to get to know someone, and then to talk. Being near someone did not seem to obligate speech. At the Drop-In Centre one day, the researcher sat across the table from one mother for twenty minutes before the mother spoke to her. On another day, the researcher gave one of the teacher aides a ride to the store. The aide, who had been quite talkative in the classroom, seemed to feel no need to make small-talk. This watch-before-speaking pattern appeared among many adults in the community.

Another example not involving the researcher took place at the Drop-In Centre. One mother, who didn’t know anyone else there, quietly sat on the side, observing. When she was ready, and had something to say, she joined in. In general, most pre-school children skipped this stage entirely, and got down to the business of playing with each other.

This "get to know someone before talking" rule was not followed by all community members. Some, especially those whose jobs required regular contact with the Mainstream culture, would make introductions and try to initiate some conversation. However, these people also appeared to be bidialectal, willing to leave people alone if the small talk caused discomfort.
Respect for Elders

There were certain situations in which the children were expected to sit and listen quietly. Although the researcher could not observe at formal events such as Longhouse functions or Band meetings, the role of children was described by one well respected older woman. At these formal events adult Band members have the right to speak, but the role of children is to listen. Elders say "Listen now. You'll get your turn when you're an Elder." †

At one parent-teacher meeting that was observed, an Elder spoke. The teenagers and children, who had been talking and joking amongst themselves, stopped to listen respectfully. This is one example of the importance of age in determining whether speech is appropriate.

The researcher observed several communicative behaviours which demonstrated this community's respect for Elders. For example, at the nursery school Christmas party, one woman Elder was seated in a very congested area.

Elder: Am I in the way?
Teacher: Oh no, stay there, you're not in the way, we'll walk around you.

It appeared that it would not have been appropriate to ask this Elder to move. This hypothesis gained further support when the researcher realized that this Elder happened to be sitting in the chair that had been designated for Santa Claus. Rather than asking her to move, the teachers found a different chair for Santa.

† It appeared that Elders held a special status in terms of sociolinguistic rules, especially those regarding monologue and performance. However, limited access to data precludes specific comment here.
The quality of voice used by older people was described above as often being lower in pitch, with a flatter intonation. Within the community, the researcher found that this quality of voice seemed to require attention, to assume respect. No explanation for the power of this voice quality was apparent.

**Interruptions**

The value "respect your elders" also applies to other adults and to parents. One example of this is the use of interruptions. The following example shows that children interrupt each other regularly.

**Setting:** Nursery School, Free Play time

**Participants:** Three four-year-olds (C1, C2, C3)

C1: We have a Santa Claus colouring book and Santa //

C2: My mom //

C3: You know what //

C2: buyed one of those Santa Claus

C?: see //

C?: He wants to give you one. He writes a note // whatever you want.

C2: You know my mom? You know my mom?

This does not appear significant in its own right. Mainstream children also interrupt each other. What the researcher found surprising was that except in the case of physical emergencies, children seldom interrupted adults. In very few cases did a child break in on an adult conversation.
In many situations with intimates, a child was permitted to join in on a topic chosen by adults, but was rarely permitted to determine the topic. For example, in one family, the mother was clearly in charge of topic choice. The child (6 years) would occasionally start talking about his toys, and this would be totally ignored. However, when he joined our topic the mother accepted his participation.

**Example 6:** At home

**Participants:** Mother, Child, Researcher

Mother: Got a cassette tape of a wrestler. . . singing. . . and it's by, I don't know what's his name but he sings *Cara mia*. It sounds . . . ah, okay

Child: Mean it sounds like Roddy Piper?

Mother: Yah, I think that's him.

Child: He's a bad guy, Roddy Piper

Mother: When he's trying to sing. . . (etc.) (21B, 250)

This is not to say that children are discouraged from speaking in the homes. For example, one three-year-old girl participated in a conversation about births:

**Example 7:** At home

**Participants:** Mother, Child, Researcher

Child: You remember I was a little baby?

Mother: Mm-hm. I remember when you were in my tummy.

Child: Ya . . . (to researcher) I was in Mommy's tummy.

Mother: I remember the first day she kicked. July 13th, ’81.
Absence of "why challenges"

Another communication behaviour which seemed to reflect the value "respect your elders," was a relative absence of challenges to adults' opinions. The following two examples of "why" questions were very unusual coming from Native children:

**Example 8:** Nursery School, child accused of eating another student's lunch.

**Present:** Two teachers, child, researcher (other children in room)

Teacher: . . . Don't eat it // yet

Child: Why?

Teacher: Well you gotta wait.

**Example 9:** Kindergarten, circle time

**Present:** Several children, Mainstream teacher, researcher.

Child: Why you have the elastic on here?

Teacher: Because, ah, the elastic shows you that that's the story of the Three Bears. (looking) Somebody moved the elastic, 'cause there's lots of stories in here, and so you wouldn't have to go looking through, for the Three Bears, I put elastic there. Because, see, the story starts on that page and finishes on that page. You don't have to turn any of the other pages, 'kay?

In the next example, the child (6 years) made a comment to his mother which was construed as questioning her judgement. After a look from mother, this child used humour to lighten the situation, claiming his three month old brother made the statement:

Mother: (to researcher) Do you have a car here?

Researcher: Ya
Mother: X X bring me up to the Band and then we can walk up to [the school]

Researcher: Sure, sure . . . when do you have to go?

Mother: Oh . . . probably quarter to

Child: 2:30 (adults look at child) I never said that. (rising intonation) (adults laugh)

Mother: You never said // you didn't

Researcher: Who said that!

Child: Brandon! He said that

Researcher: Brandon said 2:30 (laughter) (to Brandon) I don't believe you . . .

The above discussion is not intended to paint an idealized picture of child-rearing in this community. As in all cultures, it takes time for children to learn the rules. And for each family, the rules were slightly different. However, most children in this community learned the concept "respect elders" at a very early age.

Respect for the Individual: Obligations and Face

Several members of this community suggested that in this community, people seemed to value the right of the individual to do what he or she thought best for himself or herself. People seemed to be valued more as people, and less in terms of what they had done. In general, it appeared rude to obligate someone to do something he didn't want to do, and especially rude to put someone in the position where he'd have to refuse.
Introductions

One communicative behaviour which may reflect this value is the relative lack of introductions. In Mainstream society, one is obligated to introduce two strangers, and then those people are obligated to talk to each other. In this community most adults, except for those who regularly worked in Mainstream society, rarely introduced newcomers. Thus the embarrassment of having to talk to someone who doesn’t want to talk, is avoided.

The following example took place in a home, when the mother’s sister-in-law arrived. The researcher, after 70 seconds, felt obligated to introduce herself, but it wasn’t until much later that any real interaction happened. At that time, the sister-in-law introduced herself.

Example 10

Participants: Mother (M), three children (C1, C2, C3), Sister-in-law (SL), two more children (C5, C6), and researcher

Time (minutes:seconds)

0:00 C1: Hi [name]
  SL: Hi
  C1: What you got

1:10 R: Hi. I’m Jo-Anne (nervous laugh). I know Carl from the Nursery School but (nervous laugh) (explains why she’s there) (kids play, mothers talk occasionally)

5:04 SL: What was your name?
  R: Jo-Anne
  SL: Oh yah . . . Mine is [name]
  R: And this is [child’s name]? . . . How old is // [child’s
Performance

The right of the individual to make his or her own decisions applied, to some extent, to children. Children were rarely coerced into performing. Parents and the nursery school staff encouraged the children to talk, but little pressure was placed on the child. The Native Language class often involved one-at-a-time repetition, but students were permitted to "pass" if they did not wish to participate. During circle time, students were encouraged to respond to roll call and games, but lack of participation did not bring rebuke.

Example 11: Circle time, singing "Hello to [name]"

Present: Teacher, children, researcher

All: Hello to you (3 times), Hello (teacher points to C1)

Teacher: Dear [name 1]

C1: No, not me!

T: (to researcher) oh yah, she always gets mad when you do that (Song goes around circle and comes back to C1, most children sing and clap)

C2: [name 1]

T: Shall we try [name 1] again?

C1: Nooo

T: We gotta sing your name, it's beautiful

C1: (whimpers) I don't want one

T: Why
During this incident, the teacher’s tone of voice was positive, not negative. The researcher observed several other situations when "passing" would have caused even less fuss.

Even though many children followed the "don’t talk unless you have something to say" rule, the encouragement to talk sometimes brought out long stories.

**Example 12:** Nursery school, free time, after one girl had a nosebleed

**Participants:** Teacher, Child 1

C1: Mine isn’t bleeding

T: Mine’s not bleeding, it’s running

C1: You know what, I don’t, I don’t, when it’s summertime, um, when it’s wintertime I don’t have no short, shorts . . . If I had . . . um, shorts on and . . . and me and my mom would go at the beach and I get X X X gonna swim in the water? And I think I would walk and I . . . would . . . fall on my knees in the water. But I don’t, I didn’t, not summer yet // I don’t got no blood.

T: Oh no, it’s // winter. You got no blood?

C1: Blood

T: How come you got no blood?

C1: X fall on my knees

**Pulling Strings**

In Mainstream society the expression “it’s not what you know, it’s who you know” reflects a way of life in which one person has the right to obligate another
to perform an action. "Pulling strings," using one person to get at another person, is an integral part of our political and economic system. However, in this Native community, "pulling strings" in the sense of using one person to meet another, was rare, and appeared to be considered rude. The best example of this is the experience of the researcher.

One method commonly used by ethnographers is to make contacts who then will make more contacts, etc. This technique did not work well in this community. Most Native people, even those who seemed really to trust the researcher, were not willing to risk their relationships by asking friends and relatives to get involved. Instead the researcher was expected to approach people directly, although sometimes Mainstream people working for the Band became involved as intermediaries. Such intermediary behaviour also occurred when a Native person suggested that her sister might like to get involved in this research project and expressed a willingness to make the initial contact. (23A, 306)

Requesting Assistance

In this community, especially among adults, the norms for when one may ask another for help appeared to be different from those of Mainstream society. One day, after the researcher had visited the nursery school several times, one of the teachers asked her to help move a table. At this point the researcher felt the behaviour was different, and realized that up to that point, she had never been asked for assistance. More observation showed that at meetings and large social events, one person rarely asked another to do something. At first, the researcher thought that this might be related to the concept of "right of the individual," not
wanting to obligate a person to perform an action.

However, in the home, family members often asked each other to do things: "Bring me a Pampers, would you, son?," or "Pass me that book," or "Can you take me to ___?"

**Example 13: At home**

**Participants:** Mother (M), Researcher (R)

M: (sigh) Oh boy, it'll be really hard to move. (laughs)

R: You have lots of friends with trucks you can use?

M: Aah, I hope we can . . . take that big Band truck.

R: Oh, I didn’t realize they had one.

M: Mm-hm (2-second pause) take it. (clowning) Can we use it? If they say no I put my knees down. PLEEESE.

R: (laughs)

M: 'Cause it's my cousin

R: Oh (laughs)

M: Oh c'mon, do it for your cousin, 'cause he used to take him to, school // on his bike

R: Mm

In this regard, the degree of intimacy was an important factor. To ask someone for help implied trust, as both parties would feel embarrassed if the request was refused. This may also be influenced by socioeconomic status.

In the following examples from homes, the mothers requested transportation. In the first example, the mother appeared to be experiencing some discomfort, which rapidly disappeared when the request was answered positively.
Example 14: At home 1

Participants: Mother (M), Researcher (R), Child (3 yrs)

M: Do you think, uh, you could run me down to Buy-Low and back?
R: Buy-Low? Sure.
M: (to child) What you lookin’ for [name]?

Example 15: At home 2

Participants: Mother (M), Researcher (R), Child (6 yrs)

M: Do you have a car here?
R: Ya
M: X X bring me up to the Band and then we can walk up to [the school]

It is possible that the first question, "Do you have a car?" may have been a way of checking the researcher's response without losing face, as it is unlikely that the researcher could have arrived without a car.

If this description of this speech function is accurate, the rules in this Native community differ from Mainstream society where children are trained to "Go ask. All they can say is 'no',' implying that it's better to try and be refused than not to try. It is conceivable that in this regard Mainstream teachers might well be regularly asking students to do something which is counter to the student's cultural norms.

Children: Degree of Independence

Within a culture there is likely to be considerable variability in the degree of independence deemed appropriate for a child. In Mainstream culture some
families will actively train preschool children to make their own decisions. In other families, children have few opportunities to make decisions until they are in their teens.

In the Native community observed in this study many, but not all, families trained their children to be more independent at an earlier age than would occur in Mainstream society. As one woman said, "our children run freer here." Children rarely expected to be entertained by adults; rather they would go off and play by themselves. At one home, the six-year-old was responsible for getting his own lunch. At another home, the mother discussed enrolling the child in nursery school "when he's ready" (not when the authorities say is appropriate). One three-year-old regularly walked from her home to the Band Office in order to play with the other children. The mother mentioned previously warned the researcher against pampering her three-month-old: "You'll spoil him like that." At the nursery school three-year-olds were totally responsible for their own toileting. The example below shows one boy explaining to another why he can't do an activity at the moment.

**Example 16: Nursery school (3-year-olds)**

C1: I'm going to bathroom *first* [name]. I go pee. (10, 090)

In the following example the discouragement of tattle-taling seemed to be approached from the position "it's *your* responsibility not to hear dirty words"

**Example 17: Nursery school**

**Participants:** Teacher, Child 1

C1: Teacher . . . [name 2] sweared

T: Don't listen to him

C1: Okay
However, not all families emphasized this independence. At the nursery school Christmas party, three or four children clung to their parents and relatives. One day a mother helped out at the nursery school, and brought her 18-month-old, who was still called "baby."

**Example 18: Nursery school**

**Participants:** Mother, Child 1 (4 yrs), Child 2 (18 months)

M: Baby, no . . . (to other son) sit down, and drink that juice, you know you're not supposed to stand up X X X (C1 clings to mother who wants to chase C2) I'm just going to be over there with baby. (2B, 084)

Some mothers were observed hovering over children, trying to prevent difficulties. At an Easter party, two mothers repeatedly performed services before being asked. On another occasion, a mother offered "anyone else need help?" (2A, 696). However, it seemed that most children did not assume that adults were there just to help them. The researcher once observed a four-year-old sit for fifteen minutes in front of an orange she couldn't peel herself. Eventually she asked for help and got it. Many of the children seemed to follow a rule "ask for what you want or be happy without it."

**Example 19: In playground.** C1 (4 yrs) approached researcher

C1: Will you push me on the swing? (4B, 210)

In many cases, if a child could not have what he or she wanted, he or she accepted the fact quickly, and carried on. This promotion of an accepting attitude seemed to be a conscious decision on behalf of many parents, and by the nursery school teachers, one of whom explained, "The kids whine in September, but it doesn't get them anywhere." Of the six families visited, only one child was observed using whining to manipulate.
Example 20: At home. C1 has lost a ball and wants an adult to find it.

Participants: C1 (two yrs), Mother, Researcher

C1: Where the, where it *is*? (Looks a little) Um
R: Look under the cupboard
C1: Where it is! The cupboard? *Where?*
R: Over here. I think it's under here
C1: No. I don't know where it is, I missed it
R: I don't know
C1: Where what it is (mother arrives), where what it *is*, mommy.
M: What
C1: Where what it *is*
M: You'll have to look for it
C1: Where what it is, I missed it . . . Where X it is. What it *is*
R: I don't know, you'll have to lok
C1: Well X X
R: Go down on the floor, see what you can find (etc.) (24B, 865)

Most children rarely cried as a means to get what they wanted. They were observed crying because they were injured, and adults would give them a hug. One girl began to cry when a boy kissed her.

It should be noted that the researcher observed in only six homes, and that among those six homes, there was considerable variation in the level of independence deemed appropriate for children. The following continua compare norms in this Native community with norms in Mainstream society:
Mainstream Families

Native Families

Dependence Independence

The Importance of Family

Although the nuclear family (mother, father and children) is standard in North American Mainstream society, in this community the concept of the extended family seemed to be alive and well. In terms of housing practice, the nuclear family seemed to be the basic unit, but relatives visited each other often, and children often made extended visits to grandparents, or aunts and uncles. The children were accustomed to having several different adults present from whom they could request attention or affection. This may be the reason for the children's rapid acceptance of the researcher as part of the normal scene.

The researcher's observations at a local hockey game emphasized the importance of family. It seemed to the researcher very strange that all the Native people were all sitting in one section, off to the side. However, this seemed very logical, once she realized that almost everyone in that section was related, thus making a fifty-person family.

Several communication behaviours seem related to the valuing of the family. People often related to others in terms of the family. For example, on a walk with some members of the Native Education team, one younger woman asked an older one "who was your mother?," and "who was your grandmother?" In this context the questions seemed a very normal way of relating to another human
being, but it is the opinion of the researcher that these questions would not have appeared in Mainstream society.

In the following example, the students relate time and history to their family life.

**Example 21:** Study Group, looking at a picture of a lacrosse team

**Participants:** 3 elementary students (S1, S2, S3), Researcher (R)

S1: Lookit the old team. (pause) Looks like everybody had the same hair.

S2: How old was Sonny, do you know?

S1: Oh yeah, Sonny would probably be about four or five years old. Or not even--how old is Sonny?

S3: UI sentence

S1: One two

(mumbling) . . . something like that.

S1: My mom must have gone here.

S3: My mom did. (pause) When was this a school? Do you know?

S1: When my dad was here it was

S3: How old is he now?

S1: Thirty-two

S2: Yah, when Jackie was born, my sister, she came to this school.

S1: So did my dad, and they had to wear these leather tie things.

S2: 'Cause Jackie’s grade 5 right now.

S1: My mom’s twenty-nine

S2: My mom’s thirty-three

R: How old am I?

S1: Thirty
R: Right on
S1: You are?
R: Yeah
S2: My mom's thirty-six
S1: My mom . . .
S3: No, she'd be thirty-four
S2: My mom . . .
S1: My real dad is twenty-eight
S3: Really? (pause) My mom is (pause) fifty-two, or fifty-three.
S1: Fifty-three, [-]
S2: Shoot, my grandmother's forty-nine
S3: My dad is thirty-five
S1: My great grandfather's ninety-one

**Topic Choice**

In the situations observed in this study the most common topic of conversation (by far) was the family. During one 3 1/2 hour visit, at least two-thirds of the conversation revolved around the extended family. On many different occasions one of the first questions asked of the researcher was "you got kids?" In addition, the topics chosen were often more personal than would have been possible in Mainstream society. The researcher heard about various pregnancies, personal histories, difficulties with children and other very personal, family-oriented subjects. This very personal topic choice appears to relate to generalizations mentioned earlier. It may be that, since the small-talk stage is
often avoided by community members, when talk does occur, it has real substance. Or, it may be that once one has been invited into the home, one has made a major leap in degree of intimacy, thus making personal topics acceptable. The researcher was unable to determine whether either of these explanations was accurate.

In this small Native community, families were involved together in a wider variety of activities than would occur in Mainstream society. Children seemed to attend a very wide range of functions, from funerals to Band meetings, and there appeared to be less distinction between places adults could go, and places children could go. Related to this, more topics were suitable for use when children were present. For example, in Mainstream homes and schools, it is not unusual to hear two adults end a conversation abruptly with a comment such as "oh, the kids are here." The researcher did not observe this tendency in the Native community. However, it must be noted that not all subjects are appropriate for children, and various parents use various rules. In this regard, there was considerable variation. However, the Elder's comment, we "talk to our kids like they were grown-ups," seemed to be valid.

Naming

The rules regarding names and titles differed from Mainstream society, and in this area, there seemed to be little variation among community members. Except for two staff members at the nursery school, who were concerned about preparing children for school, the titles "Mr.," "Miss," "Mrs." were never used, although teachers were referred to by role (i.e. "Teacher"). A person was generally
referred to by his or her first name, unless the surname was required to distinguish him or her from someone else. To show respect a term such as "uncle" or "auntie" might be used, even by non-relatives. For example, one ninety-year-old Elder was known as "Uncle" by all Band members and even some Mainstream people.

The use of family terms as names was quite prevalent. Example 5 demonstrated the use of "my son" rather than the child’s name. Siblings sometimes used "brother" or "sister" to refer to each other, as in "Sorry, brother," or "sister’s home." One rather formal speech by an elder seemed to use the term "cousin" as almost synonymous with "person."

There seemed to be extensive use of nicknames for children, although many of these nicknames seemed confined to home use. The choice of nickname varied widely, and the researcher heard many different nicknames such as Newley, Junior, Animal, Chip and Dale (brothers), and Chubb-chubb.

**Drawing Attention to Oneself**

In the situations observed in this study, it appeared that many community members followed a rule "avoid attracting attention to yourself." There was a wide variety of behaviours in this regard. Certainly some children did "show off," and some adults clearly took leadership roles. Certainly, Elders were expected to make speeches at many public functions. However, except for Elders, there was a tendency for community members to try to do what they had to do as unobtrusively as possible.
The researcher observed several Native children in the role of "special person" at the kindergarten level. It appeared that for many of them, this singling out caused some discomfort. Nonetheless, when "sharing time" arrived, most of the children wanted to take part.

Greetings

At large group events, people entering the room never announced their presence with a public statement like "Hello, everybody." Rather, the greeting would be unobtrusive and nonverbal, often a nod or a subtle wave to those with whom one made eye contact. As one lady explained:

When you walk into a place you don’t know what’s been happening, so you don’t say anything. Then when you figure out what’s going on, you join in.

It should be noted that in school situations, the rules for greeting were different again, but no pattern could be ascertained by the researcher.

Farewells

Farewells seemed similar, but not identical. Again, interrupting the proceedings with a "Goodbye everybody" was inappropriate. However, for adults especially, the leave-taking process was a fairly lengthy one. Rather than disturbing the whole group, friends and relatives were often spoken to quietly and either individually or in small groups. Social talk and joking was often a regular part of this process.
Children seemed to be in the process of learning this system. If not with their immediate family, they would sometimes just leave the room. At other times they would get hugs from various aunts and cousins. For adolescents, the process was quite similar to the adult system. For example, after study group, the students would often still be hanging around twenty minutes after the tutor started packing things away.

**Showing Off**

The tolerance for children "showing off" varied from family to family, although much of the community discouraged this behaviour. In one home, a three-year-old put on quite a performance, imitating his mother, even "talking back." However, in another home, the three-year-old's "watch me" was actively ignored in most situations. One mother handled the issue by allotting a specific time for showing off.

**Example 22:** At home, watching cartoons

**Participants:** Mother, Researcher, Child 1 (8 yrs), Child 2 (4 yrs), Child 3 (18 months)

M: When this first comes on, first starts, I usually tell them (yawn) Excuse me please, I usually tell them "C'mon show off now," and they scream and they roll themselves around

R: Oh really (laugh), Oh, that's neat

M: Show off baby?

C3: X X

M: No?

C1: See you (family waves goodbye to cartoons)
Praise

Many of the mothers gave verbal praise to the children, such as "good boy, my son," or "good for you." Especially with younger children, it was acceptable for mothers, aunts and grandmothers to comment on behaviour, art work, completion of a puzzle. However, in many situations the praise was usually spoken directly to the child, rather than interrupting the group's activities to make a statement.

At the nursery school, the teachers and aides regularly praised the children's work with "Good," "Excellent," "Oh, nice picture." The teachers were not quiet in their praise, anyone nearby could hear it, but again, it was directed at the child. The researcher observed no evidence of the Mainstream tendency to make statements such as "Look, everybody, look what Johnny did!"

The Band does give official recognition for good work. There has been a "mother of the year" award, and the Native Education team is instituting a set of awards and scholarships. Dinners are given to thank Band counsellors, and staff who are retiring.

Taking Oneself Seriously

In the course of setting up the study, one Mainstream educator addressed the following statement to the researcher: "You should get along fine with this group. You have a nice manner--you don't come on as if you know everything" (quote reconstructed from notes). On several occasions during the study, several adults made somewhat disparaging comments about people--both Mainstream and
Native, who had too high an opinion of themselves. It seemed that many people in the community observed the rule "Don't take yourself too seriously."

It was not unusual for people in a position of authority to make fun of themselves.

**Example 23:** Nursery school Christmas party. Teacher 1 pretends to throw a temper tantrum.

T1: (to group) I learned that from them (stomps feet)

**Example 24:** Nursery school Christmas party. Children had sung several songs to Santa.

T2: How 'bout Jingle Bells a couple more times 'cause we been practising for a month (much laughter)

In the following example, the mother made fun of herself while refusing to give her child a taste of coffee.

**Example 25:** At home

**Participants:** Mother, Child, Researcher

M: Go play // Stunt your growth

C: I play X?

M: Look what it did to me

R: (chuckles) She would've been twelve feet tall if she hadn't drunk coffee

C: Again? I drink again.

Family members and other intimates often teased each other. Perhaps this was one way to emphasize to children that no-one should think too highly of oneself. The following example took place in a home, with an adult daughter teasing an adult relative.

**Example 26:**

**Participants:** Adult daughter (AD), Female Relative (FR), Mother (M)
AD: I guess you can get used to, eating white bread now. You
won't ever have to eat whole wheat bread again

FR: Right

AD: X that you're not babysitting. She just went and bought her
own bread 'cause she didn't . . .

The only type of teasing observed by the researcher was this good-natured joking
among intimates.

Tootoosis (1983), working with Cree people, suggests that there may be a
cultural tendency to lighten the mood at an event. Perhaps the tendency of people
in authority to make fun of themselves is an example of this tendency. In this
community, there were formal situations, such as speeches by Elders, where it was
appropriate to "be serious" for an extended period. However, at the meetings and
social events observed during the course of this study, the people in charge
appeared to work under the assumption that the presence of laughter was a major
sign that things were going well. The researcher did note, however, that one
woman thought this behaviour was negative:

Example 27:

Us Indians aren't serious. Sometimes we act silly in class . . . [our
supervisor] has to say [name 1]!, or [name 2]! I guess if we act
like kids, she has to treat us like kids. It's a bad habit we have.

High Context Society

Hall (1984) has described cultures as being either "low-context" or
"high-context." Low-context cultures tend to act on set procedures, "getting down to
business." High-context cultures tend to realize that it takes time to develop
relationships. He describes North American Mainstream culture as being
"low-context," that is, as focusing more on a pre-set agenda, plan or task, rather than on the people present or the events occurring at the moment. In this regard, the community observed might be placed in the middle of a high-context-low-context continuum, thus being considerably more context-dependent than Mainstream society.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mainstream</th>
<th>Squamish Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Context</td>
<td>High Context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour determined by</td>
<td>Behaviour determined by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pre-set plan</td>
<td>immediate surroundings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researcher observed several examples of this tendency. When a death occurred in the community, day-to-day business and special events were often postponed, so that Band members could attend the funeral. On several occasions families were not at home when home visits were scheduled. It took the researcher some time to understand that this was not because she was unwelcome, but because family obligations suddenly required the family to be elsewhere.

Organization of Events

Example 27, above, demonstrates a tendency for most community members to behave as though relating to immediate surroundings (especially people) was at least as important as relating to a pre-set task. This was occasionally frustrating for Mainstream people, as to them it would appear that "nothing was happening." Many Native people felt that the Mainstream definition of "meeting" was not desirable. In the following example two Native teachers discuss an upcoming
workshop for parents.

**Example 28:** Nursery school, T2 has been commenting on a child’s poor behaviour

**Participants:** Two teachers, child

T2: (to child) I'll tell you, when we have our workshop, you're not gonna be there

T1: Huh? ... I thought it was just on, ah . . . books

T2: They said it was a workshop, our parents are gonna paste and //

T1: Oh, they didn't tell me, they just told me language . . . The lady was comin' in to speak on language.

T2: Maybe, I don't know, but I thought that, it, workshop X X X parents would be able to participate, to get like a workshop

T1: No, I just heard that they were gonna . . . they were gonna sit there and listen

T2: Well, well, um, we don't want it to be a meeting

T1: Well that's what, ah, Peg was telling me

T2: Parents find out it's some kinda meeting they won't stay. They won't even come - X make it fun.

It seemed that at meetings the business at hand was accomplished. However, the Mainstream emphasis on discussing set agenda was absent. At the meetings observed, the task was usually accomplished, but in a different way. One of those differences was that a longer period for socializing was built into the meeting times.

Both the social events and meetings observed seemed to be organized "like a bell." One woman explained that she had been told to organize meetings like a bell curve, "with the meat in the middle, so that you can account for late arrivers and early leavers."
Many of the events observed were organized this way. At the Band Christmas party people arrived gradually, and talked extensively with their friends. It was 45 minutes before the organized activities began. There was no concrete ending; people left gradually when their children had received their gifts.

At one meeting that was for educators, high school students, and parents, no organized activity took place for over thirty minutes. People arrived gradually, and talked. There was then an attempt by a Mainstream teacher to animate a discussion, followed by a speech by an Elder, and more discussion. Again, there was no real end to the organized activity. Rather, the discussion gradually turned into coffee and socializing, and people left quite gradually.

It should be noted that the researcher had no opportunity to observe meetings of political or economic natures, nor was she able to observe at traditional cultural events. This bell-curve organization may or may not apply to events other than the fairly casual social gatherings and school-related meetings observed in this study.

This study has discussed the tendency of many community members to employ certain sociolinguistic patterns which differ from Mainstream society. Behaviour regarding volume, intonation, pause-time and eye contact varied along two continua: young-old and traditional-Mainstream. The importance of degree of intimacy and age of participants in determining whether a situation was classed as speech or nonspeech was outlined, and the importance of value orientations in determining sociolinguistic behaviour was emphasized. It was suggested that the value "respect elders" was reflected in rules for interruptions, topic control and absence of "why" challenges. Respect for the individual was discussed as a
possible basis for rules regarding introductions, performance, pulling strings, requesting assistance, and children's degree of independence. The importance of family was suggested as influencing topic choice, and naming. An avoidance of drawing attention to oneself was described as a possible explanation of rules for greetings, farewells, showing off, praise and taking oneself seriously. The chapter concluded with a description of the community as more context-oriented than Mainstream society, and of the organization of events.
CHAPTER V: Home-talk and School-talk

This chapter, based on observations of three mixed classrooms taught by three Mainstream teachers who were highly regarded by principals and community members, compares sociolinguistic behaviours in the home and community with those in the Mainstream classroom. Also discussed are the behaviours evident at the Band-operated nursery school, which appeared to function as an intermediate step between home and school. The uses of directives and closed questions are compared, followed by a comparison of assumptions about when to talk, specifically regarding degree of intimacy, focus on task, and getting communicative space.

Introduction

The observation of classes taught by Mainstream teachers began after the researcher had worked in the community for three months. Because home and community observation continued through the period of school observation, comparison of language use in the two environments was facilitated.

It was clear that all students entering the school system had a great deal to learn about the school system's rules for communication. However, because many basic assumptions and language functions employed at the school were considerably different from patterns used in some of the Native homes, it is possible that the Native students had more to learn than their Mainstream peers. In the classroom, the ways in which specific functions (such as directing, questioning, and bidding for communicative space) were accomplished, sometimes differed from the ways used in the home. In addition, assumptions about when
talk is appropriate, and the need for whole-group focus, often differed from those of the home.

One of the goals of the nursery school program was to facilitate students' transition from home to kindergarten. This thesis will suggest that in many ways, the behaviours found in the nursery school were "half-way" between those of the home and those of the school. Thus, this goal may be being achieved.

It should be noted that in all the Mainstream classes observed, there were no instances of major breakdowns in communication. Teachers attempted to adapt school-talk to the needs of their students. Observations indicated both Native and Mainstream children were learning school-talk to some degree. However, it became apparent that it is difficult for teachers to break out of a communication pattern imposed by the Mainstream school system.

**Directives**

The purpose of a directive is to compel another to perform an action. As Ervin-Tripp (1977) points out, in Mainstream society this can be accomplished in many ways. For example, if one person wants another to bring a coat he might say any of the following:

- a) Bring me a coat.
- b) Would you mind bringing me a coat?
- c) Would you like to bring me a coat?
- d) You'll bring me a coat, won't you?
- e) It would be nice to have a coat.
- f) It's sure cold out here.

Choice is generally governed by the status of the participants and the level of formality.
At Home

In the Native community observed, directives were more often put in the imperative form than in a more indirect manner. This was especially apparent when addressing children. In most of the families observed, the use of the imperative form did not necessarily reflect displeasure. Rather, it is an example of economy of speech. It should be again noted that there was considerable variation among families. In this regard, one mother operated under rules very much like those of school-talk, while others were very different.

Example 1: At home

Participants: Mother, Child (3 years)
M: You should go get your pants on there girl.
C: XX
M: [Name] get that thing there. (Baby screams) Well, don’t bother her okay . . . Get your pants on. They’re over there in the box . . . in the box.

(16,405)

At times, a phrase that sounded curt or preemptory to the researcher’s Mainstream ear, had no such negative connotation.

Example 2: At home

Participants: Mother, Child (8 years)
M: (holds out hand) Where the money
C: Oh (gives her change)
M: Thank you.

(17B, 397)

Example 3: At home. Child tells researcher about a toy

Participants: Mother, Researcher, Child (6 years)
C: I can tell which one's a bad one this one. I know this chopper man . . . which plan he's in Mayham // and this is Bear the XXX car's new X.

R: Hm

M: Gonna put you in the funny farm honey. He says so much.

R: Mm

M: Put that book away then.

Although in many families it appeared that directives were often presented in a very direct way, many families made some use of more indirect methods, and one family used mainly indirect methods.

Example 4: At home

Participants: Mother, Child (3 years)

M: You can lay down on the couch.

Example 5: At home

Participants: Mother, Child (2 years)

M: [name] why don’t you get your puzzle?

C: What?

M: Your car puzzle, X lets do your car puzzle

C: What?

M: Pardon? Would you like to do that?

In many families displeasure was shown through intonation differences and repetition, rather than through the syntactic form used.

Example 6: At home

Participants: Mother, Child (15 months)

M: Go sit on your chair
    Go sit on your chair
    On your chair (23, 151)
Example 7: At home

Participants: Mother, Child (4 years)

M: No, No, No, No . . . Sorry,
    You don't hit him . . .
    Sorry Brother.

At School

In school, teachers often used the imperative form for directing groups. In this context, it did not appear to have negative connotations.

Example 8: Kindergarten

Participants: Teacher, Class

T: Now listen carefully. When you're finished, clean up your desk and put your things in the garbage. I'd like you to go and get a bear book please and sit on the floor . . . and wait till the rest of the people are finished and I want everyone to have their own bear book to look at. You have lots to choose from.

(13A, 154)

However, the imperative form was almost never used with an individual except to note displeasure.

Example 9: Kindergarten

Participants: Teacher, Student

T: Put your toy down . . . Put your toy down . . . and X X X

It appeared that in the Mainstream classes, as Ervin-Tripp (1977) has suggested about Mainstream society, it was considered rude to phrase a directive too directly. One rule children had to acquire was that of turning what appeared to be a question (Would you like to . . . ?) into a command.
The examples below are excerpts from different classes. In each case a
teacher or aide was working with a small or large group. The preference for
phrasing directives in indirect ways is clearly demonstrated.

**Example 10:**

S: Me, I'm done.
TA: Are you done?
S: Mm-hm
TA: Okay, why don't you help [name] with the sea.

**Example 11:**

T: Okay [name] why don't you move over to this side of the table.

**Example 12:**

S: It's play time now I guess
TA: No it's not play time X. We need help down here with Y.

**Example 13:**

TA: Here's another red. You can both do it. [Name] move on the
other side of X so you're not X.

**Example 14:**

T: Boys and girls, can you stand up have a *nice* stretch (to S1)
Would you like to get a couple of towels for X
S2: I'd like to
T: No that's okay, X's looking after it. (to group) stretch out the
other way, . . . Can you jump four times?

**Example 15:**

T: I'll fix it, just leave it . . . oh [name] knows what to do . . .
[name 2] would you like to put the cards for me over there by the
calendar.
Length of Explanation

One mother made regular attempts to explain everything to her child. The length of explanation in example 16 below was unusual in the community as a whole.

**Example 16:** At home

**Participants:** Researcher, Mother, Child

[child] throwing boxes around

R: Watch the box on the // stove

M: [name]! Careful okay 'cause there's not things on the stove, you'll get burned . . . okay, so please don't put it up like that, we don't want you to get burned.

(14B,038)

However, in the school settings, explanations were often lengthy.

**Example 17:** Kindergarten

**Participants:** Teacher, Student

T: [Name] . . . this is a quiet time for you and a book, that's all, not you and a friend, you and a book.

(13A,202)

**Example 18:** Kindergarten, calendar time

**Participants:** Teacher, Class

T: Um [name] I don't feel very comfortable dear with you opening and closing your running shoes with your velcro 'cause your velcro makes too much noise. (another students pulls his velcro). No [name 2] that's being very disrespectful . . . I just asked [name 1] not to do that and you did it. Now you have to think of my feelings and the feelings of the rest of the children in the class.

**Example 19:** Kindergarten

**Participants:** Teacher, Student

T: Don't put it up that high. It's gonna fall over.
S: I'll watch it

T: No [name]. If you want to pile blocks up, you pile those ones up. You don't pile those ones up that high. I know that it's gonna end up on somebody's head, that's why we want you to pile up those ones.

(6A,630)

The different length of directives was especially apparent when discipline was examined. In many, but not all, of the Native homes, behaviour was corrected in a soft-spoken way, with few words, "Be nice, my son" or "go play outside" or "stay away from there." Thus, the length of the rebuke printed below might have greater impact for a Native child.

Example 20: Kindergarten, leaving circle time for gym

Participants: Teacher, Class

T: (Softly) It's our early gym day today (etc.) . . . (Loudly) I didn't say go [name]. Get back here. That's exactly what I don't want you to do. Come and stand right here, you know better than that . . . you're going to have to watch everybody go nicely and then you may go last.

The Mainstream teachers preferred to use more indirect forms of directives, such as "would you," "why don't you" or even "we need help." Directives in the form of questions were much less common in the homes. In addition, the average length of a directive and its explanation was generally much longer in the school than in the home. In both regards, the pattern for directives at the nursery school appeared to be between that of the home and that of the school, although perhaps being slightly closer to the home pattern. It should be noted that because recording one-to-one interaction was technically difficult, these examples are mainly from group situations, situations where Mainstream teachers may use the imperative form.
Example 21: Play time
T: [Name] hit the brakes over there!

Example 22: Leaving
T: You gotta zip up . . . Where's your sweater, don't you have a sweater.

Example 23: Circle Time
T: [Name] get over here . . . [name 2], get over here.

Example 24: Crafts Time
T: Okay [name]. I'm coming X X X. You're gonna use the green one.

Example 25: Decorating the Christmas tree
T: On, you have to get a clip from Mrs. [name]. Give it to Mrs. [name].

Example 26: Play time
T: [Name 1] and [name 2], I don't want no fighting though. You'll be back in here again.

Example 27: Circle Time
T: Ok. Everybody sitting in a circle. [Name 1] or [name 2] go take off your boots. X X X black. C'mon, in a circle, c'mon.

Example 28: Circle Time
T1: [Name 1], come on over here. Everybody, when you've take your coats off, come on over here.

T2: We'll have to have a circle over here (UI sentence)

T1: Come on [name 2], Hey [name 3], [name 4] X. Come on [name 5]. Come on [name 6].

(6A,000)
Example 29: Snack Time

T: Hey kids. Be cool now please. Put your lunches away if you're finished.

(6A,530)

Example 30: Snack Time

T: [Name], can you go put your lunch away please. All of you get back at the table.

S1: Back at table.

T: [Name]! Would you put your lunch away, please!

(6A,577)

Example 31: Snack Time

T: Lunch kits on the floor remember! Lunch kits on the floor, remember. (To child who needs apple peeled), I'll do yours.

(later)

T: Aren't you going to eat your lunch?

(6B,577)

Although long explanations of directives were not frequently made at the nursery school, the teachers occasionally followed the Mainstream pattern.

Example 32: Play Time, after a fight

Participants: Two teachers, Child

T1: Take your coat off, you're staying in and tomorrow you get the big blue bike okay.

C: 'kay

T1: Remind me [T2] he gets the big blue bike tomorrow.

T2: 'kay

T1: That's the only way I can settle it . . . (to C) Okay, stay in now.

(3A,281)
It has been demonstrated above that the phrasing of directives can be different in the home and school, with many Native families preferring to use fewer words, and a direct form; Mainstream teachers preferring to use more words, and a less direct phrasing. In the classroom, however, it was unusual to see a child misunderstand a directive. With regards to comprehension, the children seemed able to function equally well in both systems. However, when addressing the teacher and the researcher, many children preferred to use the Native pattern. While short, direct forms may be acceptable from young children, one wonders whether Mainstream adults might misinterpret this pattern and think the children who use this pattern are being slightly rude, or at least, overly taciturn.

**Closed Questions**

Another obvious difference between home-talk and school-talk, was in the use of closed questions, described by Stubbs below.

Many studies also comment on teacher’s characteristic use of “questions” which are not genuine requests for information. These are variously called test questions (by Labov), pseudo questions and closed questions (by Barnes), and convergent and guess-what-I’m-thinking questions (by Postman and Weingartner). It is worthwhile pondering the effect on classroom dialogues when some teachers rarely ask questions because they want to know something. (1976, p. 114)

Closed questions can take several forms, but in all cases the teacher already knows the answer.
In the Home

Chapter IV described a sociolinguistic rule followed by many community members--"Don't talk unless you have something to say." If this rule were strictly applied, the use of closed questions would be absurd, the questionee being obligated to tell the questioner something they both know anyway.

In reality, the use of closed questions varied considerably from home to home. Most of the mothers made occasional use of this form of school talk, especially with young children.

Example 33: At home

Participants: Mother, Child (15 months)

M: Where's your eyes? eyes
C: X X

M: (to researcher) I'm teaching her to point to her face (16,209)

Example 34: At home

Participants: Mother, Researcher, Child 1 (4 years), Child 2 (2 years)

M: He can count to six
R: (to 2 year old) You can count to six?
M: Watch, let's show [name], Baby, one
C2: Two
M: Three
C2: Three
C2: Four
M: Five
Older children were sometimes involved in "playing teacher" with younger siblings.

**Example 35:** At home, C1 and C3 watching rock singers on TV

**Participants:** Child 1 (13 years), Child 2 (11 years), Child 3 (3 years)

C1: Who’s that . . . Motown

C2: Prince!

C1: No, Motown . . . Who’s that

C3: Prince!

C1: No, Madonna

C3: Donna

C1: Who’s that

C3: Prince

C1: No, Jerry Lee Lewis

C2: X What are you listening to
X What are you listening to

C1: Who’s that

C3: Prince

C1: Rod Stewart

C3: Ron Stewart, Ron . . . Stewart . . . Steward . . . Steward

C1: (slowly) No, Rod . . .

C3: Rod
C1:  Stewart

C3:  Stewart . . . (loudly) Hurray!

However, in many homes, the use of the closed question was rare. If a child wanted to share his knowledge, he was often given attention, but the question-response-evaluation pattern was unusual.

At School

Although the teachers made frequent use of questions to get information, or to stimulate thinking, the most common type of question was the closed question.

**Example 36: Kindergarten, Story Time**

**Participants:** Teacher, Class

T: This is a *panda* bear; what colour is a *panda* bear?

Ss: Black and white

(12B,289)

**Example 37: Kindergarten, Story Time**

T: They’re going to go into a shop called Sam’s Pet Shop. What do we see in the window of Sam’s Pet Shop?

Several Ss: Fish

T: And what are those fish called?

Ss: Goldfish

T: Goldfish, good.

The nursery school teachers made use of closed questions, but mostly at specific times, such as calendar time, and circle time. In addition, at those times, room was often left for natural conversation. Unfortunately, these lively sessions were especially difficult to transcribe.
There is a practical use for closed questions. In order to decide what needs to be taught, teachers need to find out what students know. However, as Philips (1972) suggests, it may be time to question the Mainstream belief that something isn't learned unless it can be displayed publicly. Perhaps teachers should be made aware of cultural differences affecting the use of closed questions, so they can make conscious decisions about when and why to use them.

When to Talk

Chapter IV discussed degree of intimacy as one factor governing whether a situation could be classed as speech or nonspeech. Nakonechney (1986), quoting Kleinfeld, has suggested the importance of developing close personal relationships between teacher and student,

Kleinfeld's (1972) work is particularly germane when considering these issues. She emphasizes that the interpersonal dimension is highly valued in indigenous cultures, and classroom participation is contingent on students and teachers forming positive personal relationships. (1986, p. 142)

In the homes, children had many opportunities to talk with intimates. However, if community norms suggest that when dealing with non-intimates talk is inappropriate, this may cause conflict with the norms of a school system which tends to make classroom talk less personal and more abstract as the student moves through the grades.

Regarding the primary classes observed, a relatively intimate relationship between teacher and student was permissible. Teachers used terms of affection, such as "honey," or "lovey," and touch was not uncommon. At one school, the teacher was referred to by her first name. In addition, teachers used humour to
keep the atmosphere light and friendly, using jokes such as "don't bunch like a can of sardines!" (15B,224). However, much of the class time was governed by rules regarding who may talk. Except for talk at recess and lunch, this type of "family chat" was relatively uncommon.

The staff of the nursery school made a conscious effort to teach the rules of school-talk. However, as example 38 suggests, even during circle time there was opportunity for relaxed, friendly conversation.

Example 38: Nursery school, Circle Time, Roll Call

Participants: Two Teachers, Researcher, Many Children

T1: [Name 1], what happened to your eye this time?
C?: [Name 2], [Name 2] kicked her
T1: Who?
C?: [Name 2]
T1: Who's X? Oh, [name 1]
T2: [Name 2] kicked her?
T1: What happened to you kid?
?: UI sentence
:T1: Huh? What happened to your eye?
T2: Were you and [name 2] fighting?
C?: No, [name 3] was
T1: (to students in the distance) Ah-ah . . . put them back. C'mon guys. [Name 1] (calls roll). [Name 4], [Name 5].
C5: Yes
T1: Did you sleep in yesterday?
C5: No
C?: She fall down, um, she falldown from, from //
T1: (to other adults) All the guys blame [name 2] for everything that happens to [name 1]. [name 6]! Are you here?

C6: Yup

T1: Yup. No [name 7]. [Name 8], are you here? Are you here? What happened to your front teeth? . . . eh?

C8: I been, I been to the dentist.

T1: You go to the dentist. [Name 9]. And poor [name 10]? I wonder if he's coming back. [Name 11], no [name 11]. Still sleeping. [Name 12] . . . not here either. [Name 13].

C?: Nope

T1: Where'd you get the pretty // ribbons in your hair?

T2: [Name 12]! No!

T1: Aren't they pretty. Have you got make-up on?

C13: Uh-huh

T1: Uh-huh?

C13: Got mommy's X make-up

T1: Got mommy's make-up on. Yah. (aside) I figured your cheeks were so rosy so early in the morning. (to group) Okay, how many have we got here?

In the mixed kindergarten classes observed there was a slight difference in the amount of talk produced by Native and Mainstream students. Again, there was considerable individual variation, and so the quantity of talk could be diagrammed as follows:

Native students

| little |

Mainstream students

| much |
Focus on Task

Chapter IV described the organization of events in terms of a bell curve. In the home and community discussion of a specific topic often began gradually, evolving out of the general conversations that preceded it. Unless an Elder was speaking, it seemed appropriate for occasional side conversations to be taking place at the same time.

Mainstream teachers are trained to focus group attention, to wait until all students are attending before beginning. The teachers observed in this study were somewhat flexible, sometimes offering students the opportunity to opt out of large-group activities. However, in general, the teachers often tried to get the attention of the whole group before proceeding, a process which, with children of this age, could be quite time consuming.

**Example 39:** Grade 1, Doing a group cloze passage

**Participants:** Teacher, 3/4 of class

T: Let's take it from the top. Ready?

Ss: Today is // (teacher claps)

T: Oh I'm sorry. [Name] are you ready?

Ss: (read aloud)

**Example 40:** Kindergarten, calendar time

**Participants:** Teacher, Class

T: [Name] . . . keep still dear, we've got to print it up here.

Many speakers observed in the community did not seem to require the total attention of the group before beginning, but this requirement was sometimes observed in the homes, especially those homes in which the mothers actively trained
children in school talk.

Erickson and Mohatt (1982), comparing a Mainstream teacher (of Indian students) with a Native teacher (of Indian students) found that the Native teacher spent less time demanding focussed attention before beginning. In the primary classes observed in this study, all the children were in various stages of learning this process, and so differences in this regard were somewhat tolerated. However, it is conceivable that an older student who attempted to follow this Native pattern of interaction at school might experience negative reactions from Mainstream teachers. Conversely, a Mainstream teacher applying the Mainstream pattern to a meeting of Native parents might also be seen as attempting to structure the interaction in a pushy, overbearing or authoritative manner.

Getting Communicative Space

Teachers face a continuous balancing act—how to encourage children to speak without encouraging disorder. Erickson and Mohatt (1982) describe the teacher as a "switchboard operator," deciding who will be given a turn. In order to be fair to everyone, the teacher allots a certain amount of time to each student who requests it. Requests can be made in several ways—by raising hands, calling the teacher's name, or just speaking out. All children, Native and Mainstream, have to learn these rules. It appears, however, that Native and Mainstream students may come from different starting points.

a. Taking a turn to get a turn. Schegloff (1968) has described a pattern Mainstream children are trained to use in order to acquire a turn to talk. This is called "taking a turn to get a turn." In this pattern, even with two people who
are already in contact, it is necessary to use a turn.

Child: Dad
Father: Ya
Child: Who's that?

In the Native community, this pattern was not used as frequently. The children used "mom" or "teacher" to attract the attention of the adult if not in close proximity but usually the child would just begin speaking. Many adults also used this pattern.

However, in the schools observed, it was often necessary for children to use the take-a-turn-to-get-a-turn pattern. The question arises: if children at home don't have to take a turn to get a turn, and at school they can't get a turn without taking a turn or employing a gesture of intent (usually by putting up a hand) how do they ever get to talk? This issue could be further complicated if the children are brought up under a system which suggests that drawing attention to yourself should be minimized.

In the classes observed it appeared that many of the children were eager to talk, and willing to go through the bidding process. Perhaps these children do not follow the rule discouraging drawing attention to oneself, or perhaps the primary school environment is intimate enough that such bidding involves little risk.

b. Three classroom rules. Three of the sociolinguistic rules described by Nakonechney (1986) are:

1. Nobody talks when the teacher does
2. Speakers who are on topic have a right to proceed
3. All legitimate talk is shared talk
For children trained to respect elders, the first rule is not likely to cause problems. Likewise, given that children seemed rarely to interrupt adults, the teacher is unlikely to experience difficulties with the second rule. However, observation in the school, especially of sharing time . . . suggests that this rule only works one way. Although the children may not interrupt, the rule seemed to be "you may choose not to participate, but if you choose to talk, the teacher may interrupt for clarification."

**Example 41: Kindergarten**

**Participants:** Teacher, Class including Child 1 and Child 2 (both Native)

T: Ok, do you want to tell us about your bear [name 1]? (Quietly) Speak up, face the children.

C1: Care Bear

T: Ah, honey, this is [name 1]'s bear (4 second pause) And . . . What kind of Care Bear (7 second pause)

C1: (inaudible)

T: Lovealot Bear. You wanna hold Lovealot Bear up so we can see Lovealot Bear

Class: Ah

T: Lovealot Bear is a Care Bear. [Name 2] (ng) You wanna tell us about your bear? (2 second pause). [Name 2] has a Care Bear too? (2 second pause). And what's your Care Bear's name? (3 seconds). It says "You are my sunshine"! And is your bear a Care Bear?

C2: Sunshine Bear

T: And welcome to the Care Bears today.

**Example 42: Grade 1, Sharing time, Native student reading from journal.**

S: I like X. I like X X //

T: Oh, I'm sorry [name] I know you're trying really hard. Let's be really quiet because [name] does not have a big voice
S: I like X, I like walking, I like X X, I like (can't figure out word)

T: Can you tell from the picture what the word was going to be? Tell us what you think it would be, maybe, you didn't finish that word.

S: I didn’t finish it.

T: Oh, can you, is there some clue there? What’s the beginning letter? X

S: I like purple

T: You like purple. Good [name]

Example 43: Grade 1, Native student showing bicycle lock

S1: This is my . . . lock (shows)

S2: What’s . . . oh your lock

T: Can you tell us how it works? I’ve never seen a lock like that.

S1: It works (3 seconds) X (2 seconds while he demonstrates)

T: So you have to put the key and then what do you do?

S3: You press down

S4: And that locks the bike

T: What’s it made of, [name]

S1: Metal

T: Is it very heavy?

S2: X

T: I see, thank you.

All the teachers observed were sensitive to the needs of their students, and allowed children to opt out of threatening activities. However, at sharing time, most of the Native students wanted to participate, even though it meant being singled out in front of a large group. Among both Native and Mainstream children there was considerable variability in the degree of ease felt about such
performances. Again, comparison of the Native and Mainstream students requires continua.

Native students

Mainstream students

Unease of performance

Ease of performance

In the classrooms observed, the third rule suggested by Nakonechney, "All legitimate talk is shared talk" seemed to apply to all structured activities. Group (choral) responses were acceptable, but talking to one’s neighbour was not.

Example 44: Kindergarten

T: Um, [name] do you have something to say? How do you say it if you have something to share with us?

Several Ss: Put up your hand

T: Put up your?

Ss: Hand

T: Well I didn’t see your hand up and I saw you trying to share with someone. [Name] too.

This rule contrasts sharply with language use in the community, where the organization of social events has a more context-sensitive basis. Side conversations are not unusual, nor a sign of disrespect for the speaker. The overlap of social talk and business seemed to be common.

Again, at the primary level observed in this study, the atmosphere seems relaxed enough and the children so eager to please, that the teacher’s corrections in this regard were not problematic. However, it is possible that the control of all
talk by the teacher may cause some students in later years to feel isolated from other students.

This chapter has compared sociolinguistic behaviours in the home and community with those of mixed classes taught by Mainstream teachers who were highly regarded by principals and community members, and the role of the Band-operated nursery school as intermediary was discussed. A discussion of directives suggested that Mainstream teachers use more indirect and lengthy forms than are used in the Native community. The extensive use of closed questions in the classroom was described. Also discussed were cultural assumptions regarding degree of intimacy, the need for the whole group to focus on a task, and getting (and keeping) communicative space. Observations in these kindergarten and grade one classes did not suggest major breakdowns in communication. However, potential causes of later difficulty were discussed.
CHAPTER VI: Summary and Implications

This chapter will summarize the purpose, methodology and findings of the study. A section on implications for teachers will suggest that teachers might facilitate communication in five ways, by:

1. Getting out of the classroom
2. Dealing with parents according to their sociolinguistic rules
3. Adjusting classroom atmosphere
4. Adjusting classroom language
5. Teaching sociolinguistic rules

In each section, specific suggestions for accomplishing these tasks will be discussed.

Summary

Purpose

The major purpose of the study was to observe one Native community’s language use in order to derive sociolinguistic rules of interaction, to examine the societal norms and values governing speech acts, and the principles and strategies underlying those acts. The secondary goal was to examine how these rules affect the Native students’ school environment. Specifically, the three goals were:

1. To complete an ethnography of speaking in one Native community, describing the rules of interaction followed by members of the community.
2. To examine the school environment to see whether the
difference between Mainstream rules for interaction and native Indian rules for interaction may cause miscommunication.

3. To discuss ways in which teachers can be better prepared for S.E.S.D. situations, either in special S.E.S.D. programs, or as classroom teachers.

Methodology

Three methodologies, Hymes' Ethnography of Speaking, Enright's Interaction Hierarchy and Schegloff and Sacks' Ethnomethodology, were employed in this study. These methodologies had one common assumption—that observation of natural language can lead to the description of sociolinguistic rules.

Observation took place in the Squamish Band community in North Vancouver. This urban band of 1,500 members had well established economic and social development programs, providing a wide variety of services, and a diverse economic base.

Observations took place in a variety of situations, some of which involved only Band members, some of which involved a mixture of Native and Mainstream people. Due to time constraints, the majority of observation time was focused on school age children and their interactions with different age groups. Because access to business and political events was limited, the majority of settings observed were of a pedagogical or social nature. Observations were conducted at the Band-operated nursery school, an evening study group for 7-13 year olds, three primary classes taught by Mainstream teachers, Native Language classes, a family Drop-In Centre, various meetings, several social events, and in the homes of six
families.

Data were collected over a period of seven months. During the latter five months the researcher spent between and ten and fifteen hours per week actively observing. Procedures for observation varied with the situation. Extensive field notes were made, and interactions were recorded on tape whenever this was socially appropriate. The role of the researcher also varied according to situation, along a continuum from passive observer to active participant.

The researcher began with no concrete hypotheses. During the course of the study analysis of data took a circular form:

1. Analysis of data to form an hypothesis
2. Gathering further data to support/reject hypothesis
3. Confirmation of findings with Band members by asking questions similar to the following:

   "It appears that ________ is happening. Do you feel this is a correct interpretation?"

Since this process was cyclical, several different hypotheses could be under consideration at any one time.

Seven tapes were transcribed in full; the remaining 21 tapes were examined aurally, and relevant sections were transcribed. Throughout this process, contact with the community was maintained so that rules could be verified through observation and consultation.
Generalizability

This is a study of one Native community. In addition, the situations observed were limited to only two areas of community life, and exposure to Elders and adult males was extremely limited. Thus, the relevance of this study will not be in the immediate application of its findings to all persons of Native ancestry. Rather, its value will be in the delineation of sociolinguistic rules which may be different. It will be the task of individual teachers to go into their own communities to see which of these rules apply there.

Communication in the Community

Observation immediately showed that there was considerable diversity in the communication behaviours of community members. Thus, many of the sociolinguistic rules described below should be called "tendencies," thus requiring descriptions such as "members of the community tended to behave in X manner." This was further complicated by the fact that variation occurred in two dimensions, young-old and traditional-Mainstream. Thus, behaviours are best discussed through use of diagrams (see Chapter IV).

This variation was especially apparent in the areas of volume, intonation, pause-time and eye contact. Community members who could be described as older and traditional tended to speak more softly, use flatter intonation patterns, employ longer pause-times and avoid prolonged eye contact. Members who could be described as younger and less traditional tended to follow patterns closer to the Mainstream norms. Data suggested that children were, to some degree, becoming
both bidialectal and assimilated; thus, this community seemed to be very much a culture in transition.

Speech and Nonspeech Situations. Contrary to the myth of the silent Indian, members of this community used speech for a wide variety of functions. In homes and at community events, talk was plentiful. It appeared, though, that the rules for when one talked and when one was silent were different from those of Mainstream society, and (as in Mainstream society) governed by two factors—degree of intimacy, and age of participants. In this community, many members preferred to get to know someone before talking to them, rather than using small talk to get to know someone (as in Mainstream society). There was a tendency to avoid “small talk,” suggesting a sociolinguistic rule “don’t talk unless you have something to say.” In addition, the relative ages of the participants was more significant in this community than in Mainstream society.

Sociolinguistic Patterns as Reflections of Value Orientations

It appeared that various sociolinguistic behaviours could be related to underlying value orientations, as suggested by Condon and Yousef (1975). The value “respect elders” seemed to apply to both uses of the word “elder.” The class of well respected old people (called Elders) was often given special attention, and children were usually expected to sit quietly and listen when an Elder spoke. Respect for elders, in the sense of those older than oneself, also seemed to influence sociolinguistic behaviour. For example, children interrupted each other, but most would rarely interrupt an adult. Also, it appeared that in many situations
with intimates, a child was permitted to join in on a topic chosen by adults, but rarely permitted to determine the topic. Compared to children in Mainstream society, children in this community rarely challenged adults' opinions. "Why" challenges seemed to be relatively uncommon.

It appeared that many community members valued the right of the individual to do what he or she thought best. Perhaps because of this, it appeared to be considered rude to obligate someone to do something he or she didn't want to do, and especially rude to put someone in the position of having to refuse. As a result, requests for assistance seemed to imply a greater degree of trust than would be implied in Mainstream society. Introductions, which obligate two strangers to talk to one another, were rarely made, except by those community members used to working with Mainstream people. Children were rarely coerced into performing, although they were often encouraged to talk about their experiences. "Pulling strings" in the sense of using one person to meet another, seemed extremely rare. Finally, many, but not all, families trained children to be more independent at an earlier age than would occur in Mainstream society. As with all the behaviours described above, there was considerable variation within the community.

Most members of this community placed a great deal of value on family relationships, here referring to the extended family, including grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins, etc. This was reflected in several behaviours. For instance, the most common topic choice was "the family." In addition, naming practices also seemed to reflect this value orientation. "Mr.,” “Miss,” “Mrs.” were almost never used. An adult was generally referred to by his or her first name, children often by nicknames or family names such as "my son," or "brother." To show respect,
a term such as "uncle" or "auntie" would sometimes be used, even by non-relatives. One formal speech by an Elder seemed to use the term "cousin" as almost synonymous with "person."

In the situations observed in this study (which included very few Elders) many community members seemed to follow a rule "avoid attracting attention to yourself." Although there was considerable variation in this regard, there was a tendency for community members to try to do what they had to do as unobtrusively as possible. It appeared that group greetings and farewells were considered inappropriate. Rather, greetings were either nonverbal or individualized, with farewells often lengthy and highly personal. Most parents seemed to discourage children from showing off. Praise, which was common, seemed more often directed to the individual rather than announced to the group, although formal recognition of good work was not uncommon.

The community also seemed to follow a rule suggesting "Don’t take yourself too seriously." People who had too high an opinion of themselves seemed to be distrusted. At organized events, it was not unusual for people in authority to make fun of themselves, and family members teased each other in a good-natured way. Although there were formal situations, such as speeches by Elders, where it was appropriate to "be serious" for an extended period, people in charge of meetings and social events appeared to work under the assumption that the presence of laughter was a major sign that things were going well. This may relate to what Tootoosis (1983) calls a cultural tendency to lighten the mood at an event.

Although there was considerable variation, this community appeared to function on a more context-sensitive basis than does Mainstream society.
Observations at social events and meetings suggested that events were organized in a manner which focused at least as much on the people present or the events occurring at the moment, as on a pre-set agenda, plan, or task.

Home-talk and School-talk

Comparison of homes with three mixed classrooms taught by successful Mainstream teachers revealed major differences in the use of directives, closed questions and assumptions about when to talk. In these areas, behaviours used at the nursery school appeared to be a compromise between the two, thus suggesting the importance of the nursery school as an intermediate step in preparing the children for school.

a) Directives. The phrasing of directives appeared to be different in the home and school, with many Native families preferring to use fewer words, and a direct form, and Mainstream teachers preferring to use more words, and a less direct phrasing. In these primary classrooms, however, it was unusual to see a child misunderstand a directive. With regard to comprehension, the children seemed able to function equally well in both systems. However, with regard to production, most children preferred to use the Native pattern.

b) Closed Questions. Closed questions (those questions which are not genuine requests for information) were the most common question type used by teachers. Home use of this form of school-talk varied considerably, but the use of the closed questions was relatively uncommon. If a child wanted to share his or her knowledge, he or she was often given attention, but the question-response-evaluation pattern was unusual.
c) When to talk. It appeared that in the home and community, degree of intimacy was a major factor governing whether a situation could be classed as speech or nonspeech. It seems possible that if community norms suggest that when dealing with non-intimates, speech is inappropriate, this may cause conflict with the norms of a school system which tends to make classroom talk less personal and more abstract as the student moves through the grades. However, the relatively intimate atmosphere of the primary classes observed seemed to be one in which many Native children felt free to speak. Even so, much of the class time was governed by rules regarding who may talk, and the relaxed "family chat" was uncommon.

In the community, events seemed to be organized in the shape of a bell curve, with the "meat" of the event in the middle. Discussion of a specific topic often began gradually, evolving out of the general topics that preceded it. Side conversations were more tolerated than they would be at Mainstream functions. This practice contrasted sharply with the Mainstream teachers' tendency to expect all students to attend before beginning. It seemed that all the school children observed were in various stages of learning this process, and so differences in this regard were somewhat tolerated. However, it is conceivable that an older student who attempted to follow this Native pattern of interaction at school might experience negative reactions from Mainstream teachers. Conversely, a Mainstream teacher applying the Mainstream pattern to a meeting of Native parents might also experience some difficulty.

The manner of getting communicative space at school often differed from that in the home. In school, children were often required to bid for space, vocally or by putting up a hand. The "take a turn to get a turn" pattern was relatively
rare in the homes, and drawing attention to oneself seemed to be considered inappropriate. In the classes observed, however, many (though not all) Native children were eager to talk, and willing to go through the bidding process. Perhaps these children do not follow the rules discouraging drawing attention to oneself; perhaps the primary environment is intimate enough that such bidding involves little risk.

Three classroom sociolinguistic rules described by Nakonechney (1986) were examined in terms of congruence with community norms. These were:

1. Nobody talks when the teacher does
2. Speakers who are on topic have a right to proceed
3. All legitimate talk is shared talk

It appeared that for children trained to respect elders, the first of these classroom sociolinguistic rules presented no problem. Likewise, because children were unlikely to interrupt adults, the second rule as stated seemed unlikely to cause difficulties. However, analysis of sharing time suggested that this classroom rule only applied to the teacher. For students the rule was: "you may choose not to participate, but if you choose to talk, the teacher may interrupt for clarification," a process which caused discomfort to several Native (and Mainstream) students. The third sociolinguistic classroom rule appeared to be the most incongruent with the Native community, where the organization of events seemed to have a more context-sensitive basis. Although this rule did not appear to cause these primary children difficulty, the control of all talk by the teacher might cause some students in later years to experience feelings of isolation.
Conclusions

This ethnography of communication has demonstrated that, sociolinguistically speaking, members of the Squamish Band community speak a variety of English considerably different from that of Mainstream society. In addition, examination of three areas of classroom discourse suggests that the sociolinguistic rules employed in the classroom may be very unfamiliar to some Native students. These findings suggest a need for teachers of Native students to understand the sociolinguistic norms of their local Native community, in order to a) accommodate differences and b) aid students in developing the ability to communicate successfully in both cultures.

Implications for Teachers

This study suggests that teachers can facilitate communication (and thus education) in five ways, by:

1. Getting out of the classroom and into the community
2. Dealing with parents on their terms
3. Adjusting classroom atmosphere
4. Adjusting classroom language
5. Teaching sociolinguistic rules.
Getting to Know the Community

In the course of the study, many Native parents made comments such as "the teachers don't understand our kids": a sentiment likely shared by other parents around the province. The findings above show the ways one community's communicative behaviours differ from those of Mainstream society. Although it is likely that sociolinguistic rules in other Native communities differ from Mainstream rules, these differences will vary from community to community. The usefulness of this thesis will be in the provision of a set of rules which may be examined by individual teachers. As mentioned previously, a teacher reading this study should not think "Oh, this is how Indians in my community behave" but rather "here are some ways in which the rules of interaction may be different. It is now my job to get to know my community, to see which rules apply here."

There are several reasons teachers should determine the norms of their local Native community. First, if we are to avoid the feelings of failure and rejection caused by comments about "bad" English, it is necessary for the teacher to understand the rules under which a student is functioning. To a degree, all teachers of Native students are teachers of Standard English as a Second Dialect, and as such, need to become familiar with the students' home dialect. Second, as was suggested in Chapter V, students using some patterns from the Native community can be misunderstood by teachers as being rude, or withdrawn, or inattentive. Differences in communicative patterns can result in lower teacher expectations. Third, since degree of intimacy seems to be an important factor in determining whether speech is appropriate, it appears very important for teachers to get to know students outside the classrooms, where relaxation of roles can occur.
Finally, if we are training children to survive in a school system predominated by the "talk to learn" methodology, the inclusion of more personal and locally oriented materials could be a good starting point (see Burnaby, 1980). Use of locally developed materials requires a familiarity with and understanding of the local Native community.

For overworked teachers, the suggestion that they spend time getting to know the local community may seem unreasonable. However, the insights gained in regard to better communication with students and parents, and the availability of data regarding student needs for becoming bidialectal, outweigh the loss of time.

This is a task that can be accomplished by the average Mainstream teacher (this researcher had little training in anthropology or ethnography). It is a task which can at times be intimidating, but also rewarding. The following suggestions were derived through the researcher's own experiences in getting to know a Native community. However, because the norms of each community will be different, the reader should note that these are only suggestions, not guidelines.

1. One should remember that the Native community may be more closely knit than that to which one is accustomed. It will take time for a teacher/observer to be seen as anything but an outsider.

2. Acceptance by the community can be facilitated by taking on a role other than teacher. During this study one home-school coordinator suggested that this researcher help with cooking, or bring food to social events. Sports, church or hobbies can help one be seen as something besides "teacher."

3. One should be sure that one is not perceived as just taking information from the community. It appears that some Native people are suspicious of "nosy outsiders." Community members must perceive the teacher/observer's
involvement as something more than self-interest.

4. One should never assume anything. Watch, and listen.

5. As much as possible, one should try to behave according to local norms. If one is lucky, a bicultural guide may help to prevent some mistakes.

6. It is important to remember that drawing attention to oneself, and taking oneself too seriously may be culturally inappropriate. It may be best to present oneself as humble, unobtrusive, and soft-spoken. Community members will have much to teach a good observer.

7. One should be aware that pause-time, eye contact, volume and intonation may be different, and expect to be uncomfortable when trying to adapt to local patterns.

8. One must be careful not to sound negative. Some Native people have had bad experiences with supposedly neutral observers, and to them, the word "different" may have negative connotations.

9. In the community, the manner of getting to know someone new may be different than that to which one is accustomed. It is easier to accept not being introduced around, or not being spoken to at social events, if one realizes the need to give people time to "size you up."

10. It is probably necessary to find an "insider" to explain where one is welcome and where one is not. The way in which invitations are given may be different, and waiting for a formal invitation may result in wasted time.

11. One should not expect too much too fast. This researcher found that patience usually paid off. There were several long periods when it appeared that no progress was being made. However, periodically something would
happen which clearly showed major gains in trust and respect.

It can be very difficult for a Mainstream person to enter an Indian community. However, it is hoped that the suggestions above may make it easier for Mainstream teachers to cross the boundary and, to some degree, come to understand another culture.

Dealing with Parents

Becoming familiar with the sociolinguistic norms of the local Native community can be especially useful in improving communication with parents. With good teaching, children may become bidialectal, but those parents who have little contact with the Mainstream society may only feel comfortable with the Native sociolinguistic rules. A teacher employing communication patterns closer to those of the parents may avoid the problems in interethnic communication so well described in Scollon and Scollon (1981). The following suggestions for improving relationships may prove useful to some teachers.

It is important to remember that many parents have had bad school experiences. Many parents may have been educated in boarding school, and so have no idea of what public school is like. Many parents will have experienced failure in the school system. Also, many parents may have only heard from their children’s teachers when there was bad news. These parents are unlikely to take the first step in getting to know the teacher. Therefore the teacher must make the initial contact, preferably in an unstructured way, and preferably with positive comments about the child.
In the community observed in this study, delivering information in written form was often ineffective. The best way to reach parents was through personal contact, preferably face-to-face contact (see Darnell, 1979). In addition, it seemed that calling parents to the school was not nearly as effective as meeting them in the community, in informal settings. Again, it appears that parent-teacher communication could be improved if teachers were to make personal contact. Since most school districts employ home-school counsellors, teachers can make initial contacts through them. Unfortunately, many teachers do not yet realize the value of the home-school counsellor, possibly the teacher’s greatest resource.

In the community observed, many parents disliked "meetings." As one nursery school teacher pointed out, "if you call it a meeting nobody’ll come." It may be necessary for teachers to find informal ways of meeting with parents; dinners, for example, were often well attended. Proper timing may be essential. Because the Native community may be closely knit and more context-sensitive than Mainstream society, teachers may benefit from consulting an "insider" so that school events do not interfere with community events. Some conflict though, will be unavoidable. For example, an unexpected funeral may disrupt the entire community for several days.

When meeting with parents in any situation, it is necessary for the teacher to slow down, to expect more socializing, less attention to a pre-set task. The organization of events in the community may seem unfocused to the Mainstream teacher, but to the Native person, the Mainstream organization of meetings may seem brusque and impersonal.

In addition, the quantity of talk normally used by Mainstream teachers may cause some Native parents to feel uncomfortable. However, if the Mainstream
teacher tries to adapt pause-time, turn-taking and control of topic to the Native norms. Communication may be facilitated. In short, teachers probably need to be quiet and give the Native person a chance.

**Adapting Classroom Atmosphere**

Starla Anderson (personal communication, March, 1986) has suggested that one possible explanation of the decline in school performance which appears at about grade four, is the increasing formality and impersonality in classroom talk. She suggests that it is important to provide students with the opportunity for casual conversation with the teacher and peers, as well as training them in the more formal style of academic discourse. This agrees with Kleinfeld's emphasis on the student and teacher developing positive personal relationships.

This study has suggested two reasons why the creation of a positive atmosphere is more important when working with Native students than when working with Mainstream students. First, degree of intimacy is an important determiner in the appropriateness of speech. If we expect children to "talk to learn" we must at least provide them with a psychologically safe environment in which to do so. Second, in the Native community, requests for assistance seemed to imply a greater degree of trust than they would in the Mainstream society. Thus, it is conceivable that Native children in a somewhat impersonal environment might find it very difficult to ask for help, especially if it means publicly bidding for communicative space.

It seems possible for teachers of all grades and of all subjects to make the classroom environment more personal. Kleinfeld (1972) emphasizes a cheerful
manner and having high expectations. The use of humour to lighten mood seems a simple addition. The elimination of "Mr.," "Miss," and "Mrs." would make sense, especially when one considers their decreasing usage in Mainstream society, and almost total absence in the Native community. The inclusion of family members (especially siblings), and bidialectal role models in some classroom events would help create a more relevant atmosphere for speaking and learning.

For students involved in special S.E.S.D. programs, the creation of a personal environment seems more important. These students may feel isolated from friends and peers, either through timetabling, or through physical absence (in the case of those students who must come to the city to complete school). These S.E.S.D. students have to deal with some degree of culture shock, as well as separation from parents. The S.E.S.D. teacher thus not only has to create a warm, personal relationship between himself or herself and the student, but must also provide opportunity for students to develop those relationships with their other teachers, a rather difficult task.

Adjusting Classroom Language

As Burnaby (1980, 1982) points out, Native children (like all children) have to learn "how to go to school." Likewise, Philips (1972) points out, Educators cannot assume that because Indian children . . . speak English, or are taught it in the schools, that they have also assimilated all of the sociolinguistic rules underlying interaction in classrooms and other non-Indian social situations where English is spoken. To the extent that existing cultural variation in sociolinguistic patterning that is not recognized by the schools results in learning difficulties and feelings of inferiority for some children, changes in the structuring of classroom learning situations are needed. (1972, p. 392)
It appears that teachers of Native students, either in formal S.E.S.D. programs, or as classroom teachers, face a balancing act. An ultimate goal is to provide students with the skills necessary to communicate successfully in both cultures. However, in order to avoid problems caused by conflicting sociolinguistic patterns, the teacher must also modify his or her behaviour in order to facilitate communication, so that the student will not feel that his or her language and culture are in any way inferior.

There are several ways in which teachers can modify classroom language to make it more sociolinguistically appropriate. First, teachers should spend less time talking. Chapter IV showed that in the Native community observed, many people were uncomfortable around non-Natives, because they felt they had to talk all the time. The Scollons (1981) point out that when around Mainstream people, many Native people feel they "can't get a word in edgewise." Nakonechney (1986) describes the experiences of her students:

At times Outreach students feel that their white teachers are endless talkers who have a perverse, inexplicable appetite for more and more words. (1986, p. 76)

A second way teachers might adapt their classroom language may be simply to talk more softly. In this study, many community members spoke more quietly than would be the norm in Mainstream society. This finding suggests that the loud volume level employed by many teachers many be intimidating to some Native students. In addition, the louder the talk, the more difficult and risky it is for a child to bid for communicative space. A few Native children observed seemed to suffer two disadvantages, when compared to Mainstream children. Although the teachers tried to provide opportunities for all children to speak, the children who had soft voices, and were unwilling to bid aggressively for communicative space,
were sometimes inadvertently ignored.

A third way teachers might adapt classroom language, is to avoid singling children out. As Chapter IV pointed out, in the Native community, children were never coerced into performing. In addition, it appeared that community members operated under a rule which discouraged drawing attention to oneself. During "sharing time" at school, even though all children seemed eager to participate, it appeared that more Native children felt discomfort than did Mainstream children. Erickson and Mohatt (1982) found that the teacher of Native ancestry distinguished between public and private areas of discourse. In the public area, (or "on the record") students were most often involved in choral responses, and no comments were addressed to an individual child. Individualized comments were "privatized" by the close proximity and low voice volume of the teacher (p. 159). The children observed in the current study varied considerably in their ease at being singled out in front of the class. For some, it was very comfortable, for some not. In addition, all the teachers permitted children to "opt out" of some activities. However, since much of the questioning and controlling done by the teacher could have been done in the private area of discourse (one-to-one) this language change seems worth investigating further.

Teaching Sociolinguistic Rules

Teachers of Standard English as a Second Dialect operate under the assumption that the various dialects of English are neither "good" nor "bad." Rather, they are acknowledged as two different, but equally valid, dialects. Sociolinguistically speaking there should therefore be no "right" behaviour or "wrong"
behaviour, but only behaviours more appropriate in one culture or another.

If children are to maintain their cultural identity, yet achieve school and economic success, a conscious effort should be made to teach the rules of both systems. Philips describes the need to teach school-talk for educational and economic success:

If . . . the people's main concern is to enable Indian children to compete successfully with non-Indians, and to have the choice of access to the modes of interaction and life-styles of non-Indians, then there should be a conscious effort made in the schools to teach the children the modes for appropriate verbal participation that prevail in non-Indian classrooms. (1972, p. 393)

The potential problems caused by the major differences in home-talk and school-talk described in Chapter V could be avoided, if teachers were a) familiar with the norms of the Native community, b) willing to explain the ways in which sociolinguistic rules functioned in both societies. Although primary children might not grasp these concepts, intermediate students would find this valuing of their home culture a highly motivating experience. At the secondary level, students should be involved in investigating dialect, register, situation, and in translating discourse from one culture to another, thus opening up what Health (1983) calls a "two-way channel of communication" (p. 354).

A Comment

It is unfortunate that Native students are expected to function in a school system developed for a different culture. In many ways this system is not flexible enough to accommodate the value systems and communication behaviours of its Native students. Perhaps when more Native teachers become part of the school system and more Mainstream teachers really understand the norms of Native
communities, more flexibility and better communication can be established.

**Implications for Further Research**

This thesis has shown that the sociolinguistic rules followed in one Native community differ from those in Mainstream society as a whole, and that some interaction patterns used in this community differ significantly from the patterns used in the Mainstream school system. More research into the sociolinguistic aspects of Indian English is necessary in order to determine which, if any, of these rules also apply to other Native communities.

In addition, although a link between sociolinguistic differences and school failure has been suggested by researchers such as Heath (1983) and Toohey (in progress), this link has not yet been thoroughly investigated. This thesis has shown that a separate variety of English, which might be called Indian English, does exist. A logical next step would be to investigate the influence of differing communication patterns on educational success. More specifically, there is an urgent need to answer the question "Do the differences in the communication patterns of Indian English and Mainstream English contribute to the school system’s failure in the education of Native students?"
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Appendix
Children at Play

Tootoosis' (1983) study of a five-year-old Cree child's "Language for Learning" points out that when interacting with intimates, the child used a wide variety of functions, and was clearly not at all "deficient" in her ability to communicate her thoughts. More specifically

It was found that the child was continually using her language to interpret and infer from her experiences, to seek verification of her hypotheses and generate new interpretations in light of this experience. It was also found that through interaction with others, the child was often involved in a collaborative construction of meaning through talk. In addition, the child was observed using talk to herself (what Vygotsky calls "egocentric speech") in order to focus upon, familiarize herself with, plan, prepare and evaluate her experiences. (1983, p. vii)

In this study extensive observation of three to five year olds also showed that, at play, talk was plentiful, and based on a wide variety of functions. All the functions observed by Tootoosis were observed, although not all were recorded on tape. The following short excerpts demonstrate the quantity and variety of uses of language.

a) Comparing

Comparing Lunches

Example 1: Nursery school, snack time

Present: Four three-year-olds, called C1, C2, C3, C4)

C1: He got baby orange

C2: I got big one

C3: I got big one too

C2: I got two of 'em

C3: I got one
C4: I got juice . . . X X X
C2: I'll have this X X . . . He has has . . . We do!
C3: Me too
C?: X X
C2: No, we do 'cause we got Japanese orange
C3: Ya, we got Japanese orange too
C2: [name] got same not you
C?: Ha Ha Ha (loud)
C1: I got little baby orange . . . I got Japanese orange
C2: You guys . . . [name 2] you don't got same orange as us
C1: No (1B, 045)

b) Negotiating

Negotiating Play

Example 2: Nursery School Free Time

Present: Two three-year-olds
S1: Wanna do that?
S2: 'kay

Negotiating Roles

Example 3: Nursery School, playing house

Present: Two four-year-olds
S1: I'll set the table up
S2: I wanna be the mom

Negotiating Ownership and Role

Example 4: Nursery school, playing house

Participants: Two four-year-olds
S1: I got this pair of shoes on
S2: Hey those ones are mine
S1: 'Cause you're the little girl
Is this your purse, Mom
S1: Yes, whoops. Thank you, daughter

c) Problem-Solving

Solving a Problem

Example 5: Back room at kindergarten, doing a jigsaw puzzle

Present: Three Native Boys (NB1, NB2, NB3), one Mainstream Boy (MB1), all five or six years old

NB2: That doesn't go there
NB1: I know where, right down there
NB3: X X X somebody
MB1: See, look what he X there
NB1: X that really does go?? X
?: UI sentence
NB3: That goes there
NB2: Let me, let me see under it . . .
: Ya that goes . . . No, it doesn't belong there
NB1: No, it doesn't go like that
NB2: Could be . . . (various noises)
MB1: C'mon let's try //
NB1: Must be, yah! That belongs there, that goes in
NB2: (soft) Wait, wait X man
NB1: He man, X. What is I doin! . . . Oh, [name], you the record?
NB2: No

NB3: Dog goes there

NB1: This dog goes //

NB2: Oh, look what he did

MB1: Lookit what I found

NB1: Hey that's mine!

NB3: Can I just, I just findin a piece where it goes

MB1: There cards (pieces) are mine

NB3: Hey, this belong?

NB2: That's mine

NB1: (whisper) X X I can't find it

?: Hey

NB1: Tryin to rip up this puzzle

?: I never ripped it up you!

MB1: There . . . Hard puzzle

NB2: X, look

NB2: Lookit this

MB1: That goes like that (15A, 025)

This puzzle took approximately 15 minutes to complete. In that time, the longest period of silence was 10 seconds. It is also interesting to note that NB1 and NB3 were described by their teacher as quiet.

d) Word Play

Word Play and Repetition

Example 6: Nursery School, Snack Time

Present: Four four-year-olds
S1: Hey, donut face
S2: Hey, donut face
S1: Hey donut booga, hey donut noley
S3: Hey donut eye
S?: We all goin fast (4B, 530)

Word Play: Leader-response

Example 7: Nursery school, snack time

Participants: Four four-year-olds (C1, C2, C3, C4)

C1: I know. X took my Barbie’s clothes off her
C2: Did somebody take his shoes and socks off and smell their feet?
All: No!
C2: Did somebody just take their shoes off and smell their socks?
All: No!
Did girls do that? . . . Do X take their shoes and socks off and smell their feet?
C3: I don’t know
C1: No!

Teasing

Occasionally, the children would tease the researcher. A favourite game was “who ate the cookie.” The children would accuse each other, then all turn at once, point at the researcher and say “you did.”

Example 8: Nursery school, snack time

S1: (pointing to others) You did! You did! You did!
S2: What do you mean, “you did”?
S1: (pointing at researcher) No. You did!! (much laughter) You!
S2: You!
S3: You did it!

S1: Stupid mouse (laughter) Stupid mouse.

e) Other

Organizing Play

Imagining

Example 9: Nursery school, free play

Participants: Two four-year-olds (C1, C2)

C1: C'mon! G.I. Joe!

C2: Hey, pretending these are G.I. Joe [name], pretending these are G.I. Joe.

Comparing Possessions

Sharing Experiences

"Egging On"

Planning Play

Example 10: On the swings

Present: Three four-year-olds

S3: Okay

S1: Hey I see he got the wunners in at K-Mart

S2: Who?

S1: That people

S2: Say

S1: I seen an eagle at K-Mart. I'm slowin' down

S2: See Rachael? Whoa. Whoa. Ha, ha.

S1: I didn’t wanna go on there. Too scary

S2, S 3: (laughter & silliness) Don’t
S2: Okay get off. Scary huh?
S3: Yup
S2: Why'n'cha try it Rach?
S1: No, I don't think so
S2: Scared huh. X X teeter-tot go up 'n' down, up 'n' down. Joseph you wanna try on the big one? (4B, 250)

Establishing Relationships

Example 11: Nursery school, free play

Participants: Two three-year-olds (C1, C2)
C1: Are you my friend [name]
C2: No
C1: you're not my friend [name]

Fighting

Example 12: Nursery school, playground

Participants: Two children (age 3 or 4)
S1: Push that out X
S2: Don't. That's mine
S1: Wanna have a fight?
S2: No
S1: 'na have a fight?
S2: That's mine!
T1: [Name]!