



**Research Article**

**MULTICULTURAL VOICES: PERSPECTIVES OF 'GLOCAL' IN ETHNOLINGUISTICS**

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**ARTICLE INFO**

**Article History:**

Received 06<sup>th</sup> July, 2018

Received in revised form 14<sup>th</sup> August, 2018

Accepted 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2018

Published online 28<sup>th</sup> October, 2018

**Key words:**

Cultural anthropology, Ethnolinguistics, Glocal, Multicultural classrooms, Multicultural voices, Perspectives, Urban spaces.

**ABSTRACT**

Cultural anthropology studies human societies and development of cultures through multicultural voices expressed through a variety of cultural discourses in both language and literature. The article attempts to analyse the interconnection between the global and local spaces in both rural and urban spaces. The paper attempts to highlight that such a connection is widely recognized in urban spaces where there are multicultural voices which become the basis of study of cultural linguistics or ethnolinguistics. This study explores how ethnology as a branch of anthropology compares and analyzes the characteristics of different people and the relationships between them. It provides a descriptive study of the effect of innumerable aspects of society, including cultural norms, the way language is used and society's effect on language based on different ethnic groups. It studies the relationship between language and culture and how different ethnic groups perceive the ideologies of 'glocal'. The article also determines the perspectives of both ethnology and linguistics with respect to multicultural voices in teaching students in classrooms.

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**INTRODUCTION**

We live in a diverse world and an increasingly diverse society. We communicate with people from multiple states, multiple languages and multiple cultures. The diversity seen in the multiplicity of cultures and languages create the necessity to understand the 'glocal' both in rural and urban spaces. The study of the various developments of cultures through multicultural voices is seen both in language and literature. Cultural Linguistics explores the interface between language, culture, and conceptualization (Palmer 1996). Cultural anthropology deals with the branch of ethnolinguistics which analyses the various ways in which language is seen as a vehicle of culture. It researches on the underlying associations between language and culture. Multicultural voices in urban classrooms have started defining various perspectives of 'glocal', thus becoming an important aspect of study in ethnolinguistics.

**Multicultural Voices**

We hear multicultural voices in classrooms both in rural and urban areas. The urban spaces share a larger portion of multicultural voices when it comes to expressions of multi culturalism and multi linguistic students. Migration is huge in cosmopolitan cities than in the rural places. Therefore, we find that multicultural voices are more in cities than in towns or villages. Each culture has its own ways of perceiving people and dealing with them. Each individual tries to adapt himself/herself to a new culture through a new language learnt

because of migration. The response to the newly acquired culture is formed by the new language that the individual learns. (Duranti1997). A deeper study of the cultural dynamics in linguistic drifts is applied in cultural anthropology.

**Glocalization**

The urban areas today have become areas of glocalisation. The term 'Glocalization' appeared in a Harvard Business Review publication in late 1980's. Glocalization is defined as 'the simultaneity – the co-presence – of both universalizing and particularizing tendencies.' (Roland, 2012)

A language is said to achieve a 'global status' within different cultures when it progresses and is recognized in every country (Crystal 1997). A linguistic investigation by cultural anthropologists reveals that of the ubiquity in language symbolism at a global level. Speech occurs because of associations made by the mind based on experiences with classification and grouping of images. This grouping and classification must be acceptable by specific communities. Linguistic symbolism is seen as the function of a language within ethnolinguistic realms across languages spoken globally. These kinds of linguistic investigations serve as a guide to scientific study of different cultures.

**Melting Pot & Salad Bowl**

In urban spaces, we find the perspectives of melting pot and salad bowl which has started to apply in fields like ethnolinguistics too. The melting pot is a metaphor for a diverse and heterogeneous society which is becoming more and more homogeneous, the different elements "melting together" into a harmonious whole with a common culture. It

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could also mean that a homogeneous society which is becoming more heterogeneous because of extraneous elements infused through other cultures. The melting pot model and the necessity for assimilation are proponents of multiculturalism. The model of salad bowl which talks about mixing of different cultures but at the same time, remaining distinct in few aspects is the model that is being propagated in ethnolinguistics (Kolb 2009).

The language that English language learners use is largely influenced by the salad bowl perspective today. In recent times, learners who are quite heterogenous due to the place they come from, due to the languages they speak and due to the cultures they belong to ensure that the language they talk is quite influenced by the newly acquired place, language and culture but at the same time, they are able to make distinct differentiations between the native language that they use and the new language that they learn.

### **Ethnolinguistics**

Ethnolinguistics, also called as cultural linguistics is a field of linguistics that studies relationship between language and culture and how different ethnic groups perceive the world.

- Ethnolinguistics is a combination between ethnology and linguistics
- Ethnolinguists study the way perception and conceptualization influence language and show how that is linked to different cultures & societies

‘A network of cultural patterns of a civilization is indexed in the language which expresses that civilization.’ So, ethnology can be studied by studying and analyzing linguistic symbolism. A detailed ethnological approach by cultural anthropologists reveals that knowledge of the structures of the language need to be mapped with the culture of the regions. It is essential to correlate both linguistic and cultural aspects.

There are studies made to understand the personalities of people and link it to ethno linguistics. Such studies help in structuring each one’s experiences in the society and how each one functions as a whole in terms of cultural ethos that is created by society. Both verbal and nonverbal behavior of people is observed and researched upon by psycholinguists. Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis positions that ‘there are certain thoughts of an individual in one language that cannot be understood by those who live in another language’. He says language plays a crucial role in the way people think. (Sapir 1929).

### **Disciplines in Ethnolinguistics**

There are several disciplines in ethnolinguistics. Few of them are as follows

- Cognitive Psychology- Study of mental processes such as memory, perception, thinking etc...
- Complexity Science- Study of systems. It is not a single theory but collection from array of disciplines (Benham-Hutchins & Clancy, 2010)
- Distributed Cognition- Analysis done using collection of individuals and artifacts & their relations to one another
- Anthropology- Study of humans & human behaviour and societies in past & present. Study of norms and values of societies.

The various disciplines in ethnolinguistics help in understanding the multicultural voices and to comprehend the various perspectives of global from psychological, scientific, cognitive and anthropological viewpoints. This is crucial to analyze the study from multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives.

In order to understand cultural linguistics in a better manner, it is important for us to look at how it can be studied using several disciplines like complexity science, anthropology, cognitive psychology and distributed cognition (Sharifian 2017). The study of this sort helps in understanding the developments of theoretical background on cultural conceptualisations, cultural cognition and language, and its application on areas such as Inter-cultural communication and cross-cultural pragmatics. It is said that cultural cognition is most of the times conveyed through language. Cultural cognition is transmitted through the language’s content and in the actual use of the language. The reflection of cultural cognition occurs through different ways in the society. Discourse features, pragmatic and semantic meanings etc... is embedded in different conceptualizations of culture (Wierzbicka 1992).

### **Cultural Conceptualizations & Language**

Cultural metaphors, cultural categories and cultural schemas are few of the cultural conceptualisations in languages which form an important feature of cultural linguistics.

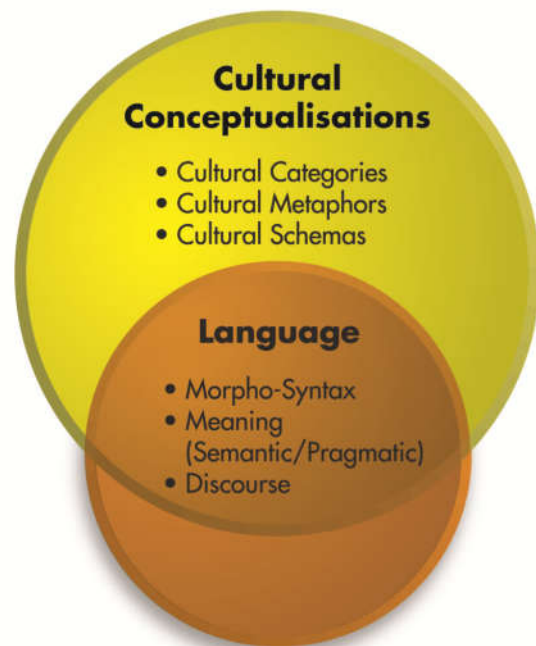


Fig 1 Cultural conceptualisations and language [Source: Sharifian (2017a)]

The intersection between culture, cognition and language weave together Cross Cultural Pragmatics, Anthropological Linguistics and Cognitive Psychology, intercultural communication, intercultural pragmatics, and political discourse analysis.

- Cross Cultural Pragmatics- Compares different cultures based on investigation of certain aspects of language use such as speech acts, behaviour patterns and language behaviour.

- Anthropological Linguistics- Deals with place of language in its wider social and cultural context and its role in maintaining societal structures
- Intercultural Pragmatics- Study of language used in intercultural interaction- explains the way language system is used by people who have different first language, communicate in common language but represent different cultures
- Discourse analysis-Studies number of approaches to analyze written, vocal or sign language

Language is seen as a complex adaptive system (LCAS). Language is seen as 'subsystem of culture which transformatively interacts with cognition at a cultural level is manifested in language' Research has been done in cultural linguistics about teaching of English as global language, world Englishes, political discourse analysis and intercultural communication. Thus, the relationship between language and culture is explored (Bagasheva 2012)

### **Teaching in Multicultural Classrooms**

The multicultural voices in a classroom pave way for more meaningful interactions from varied cultures, languages and students from across the globe. There are multiple premises and models in the ethnolinguistic area of research. Analytical paradigms convincingly prove that an enhanced metacultural competence is required for learners in order to have a successful communication. The apparatus of ethnolinguistics is navigated through multicultural approaches in the field of research. Teaching in a multicultural classroom requires an understanding of cultural pluralism, understanding that oneness is not sameness, multiple perspectives and multiple identities.

### **CONCLUSION**

A harmonization which is comprehensive of the ethnolinguistics and multicultural perspective is the new paradigm of the future. The research delves into the intricacies of a "new linguistic world opened up by the cultural linguistic perspective. This is not a world to be exploited so much as it is a world to be appreciated, and, since it is our everyday world, it is a world desperately in need of mending and healing by greater cross-cultural understanding and tolerance" (Palmer 2006). This study explores the perspectives of 'glocal' in multicultural voices and its relationship in Ethnolinguistics.

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#### **How to cite this article:**

Sumanjari S (2018) 'Multicultural Voices: Perspectives of 'Glocal' In Ethnolinguistics', *International Journal of Current Advanced Research*, 07(10), pp. 16016-16018. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24327/ijcar.2018.16018.2940>

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