

Cultural, Linguistic And Sociolinguistic Aspects Of Fiction: A Study On Interpretive Frames

Dr. Rizwan Aftab¹, Dr. Atia Anwar Zoon², Dr. Muhammad Abdullah³

¹Lecturer Department of English, IIUI, Islamabad.

²Assistant Professor Department of English, FUUAST, Islamabad.

³Assistant Professor Department of English, NUML, Rawalpindi.

Abstract: This qualitative inquiry explores the relationship of language, culture and interpretive frames with specific reference to fiction. The phenomenon of interpretive frame concerns the study and interpretation of language in cultural context. The relationship of language and culture is a vital phenomenon in understanding a speech community. This research is an interrogation into the existing norms for the interpretation of the text and meaning making process and the resultant understanding of the text. Our interpretation is usually based on the cultural background that we have and its embeddedness in our thought patterns. Language is an expression of the phenomena around and we use it as a tool to communicate our desired purposes. This makes language an independent phenomenon and an expression of our thoughts. But our way of talking, communicating and interpreting things are culturally situated. Our language is deeply rooted in our culture. It is as difficult to understand language without understanding the culture it is used in, as it is to understand the culture without properly understanding language. The discussion in this review paper guides in this perspective quite comprehensively.

Keywords: study, cultural, linguistic, sociolinguistic, aspect, fiction.

Introduction

The exploration and understanding of the meanings of a text is debated from an ‘inside’ perspective in general. “To put meaning at the heart of human activity is also to place the examination of culture at the top of the agenda of the humanities and social sciences”, says Baker (Barker, 2001:1). Language is a mode of communication but it is not a neutral tool to communicate feelings, emotions and day to day experiences that one comes across in day to day conversation. Language is a particular way of talking and understanding the world. Language in written discourse is about presenting world phenomenon in some specific cultural context depending on

the complex cultural system of the writer. It, then, requires some specific contexts/frames to interpret and understand the phenomenon and meaning within the text.

These contexts are interpretive and culture specific and help the reader to understand the text from a localized context. As a text is culturally embedded, its society and its social, cultural, religious, ethical, economic and political aspects provide different interpretive frames for the interpretation of the text. This construction of the text is influenced by its authors and their cultural, social, ethical, religious, economic, and political background.

The writer is also culturally situated and it becomes impossible for him/her to present the world phenomena to the reader excluding the specific complex system, of which he/she himself is a part. This reflection of complex cultural system remains invisible if a text is studied from an 'outside' perspective. When we analyze the language of a written discourse, meanings come from that specific culture that is embedded in that specific society. It, therefore, becomes necessary to study a discourse from an 'inside' perspective. This 'inside' perspective for the reason that the reader understands the cognitive webs of complex cultural system whose part s/he is. I name these complex cognitive webs as 'interpretive frames' specific to one's complex cultural system, a term which borrowed from Michael Agar, an American Linguistic Anthropologist, who discussed this in one of his research articles *The Biculture in Bilingual*. The socio-cultural context in a written discourse provides the interpretive frames accordingly and these interpretive frames thus become necessary in the meaning making process. Meaning is culturally embedded and cannot be understood without its specific context. This culture specific meaning provides a specific frame for the interpretation of a text and thereby understanding its meaning.

Here it is necessary to discuss post-structuralist stance in understanding language which says that meaning is not linear but multiple and that language is invested in some specific context. The purpose to discuss it here is to draw its relation with my research. This research explores culture in relation to language and its practice through linguistic practices that depend on linguistic and cultural resources of a specific speech community. These cultural and linguistic resources develop with a historical process of socialization within a speech community. Cultural differences are established through various forms of discourse and linguistic practice. This is the idea that Risager (2006) questions in his book *Language and Culture: Global Flows and Local Complexity* and says: "how cultural differences express themselves and are created via various forms of linguistic practice and discourse, how culturally different conceptual systems and world views are contained in the semantic and pragmatic systems of the various languages, and how language development and socialization contribute to the development of cultural identities and cultural models of the world" (Risager, 2006 p.1).

Rational for the Study

This qualitative enquiry explores the relationship between language, culture and interpretive frames in the texts. Throughout this study researchers explore cultural ingrained meanings of the text. For this interpretation and meaning making process they question the study of text from an 'outside' perspective. By outsider they mean the reader who situates himself/herself as a non-indigenous reader and looks at the text from a non-indigenous lens.

The purpose of this study is to explore the inextricable relationship of text and its culturally entrenched meaning with specific reference to interpretive frames. Interpretive frames are cognitive webs which are interwoven inextricably and tied thickly in the culture. These cognitive webs are culturally situated and are in the mind of every person living in that culture.

This research addresses those readers who wish to carry out close and detailed study of the way culture is used in a text, and produced in clearly identified indigenous cultural context. Language is a cultural resource where as a written text is a cultural practice. It attempts to synthesize two broad approaches to the study of text: the ethnographic study of the relationship of language and culture, and specific interpretive frames to study culturally situated text. The study may help the readers:

1. To spark ideas for critical and interpretive study according to reader's own interests, background, and culture specific experiences;
2. To suggest how the readers themselves may enjoy the fiction.

Basic Assumption

Language that is out of cultural frame leads to misreading and results into misunderstanding about indigenous/localized text.

Discussion

Every society has its peculiar indigenous culture. This culture can only be better understood and interpreted by the people who are living that specific culture. Indigenous culture by indigenous people provides a specific frame (i.e. indigenous interpretive frame) for the interpretation of the discourse written or spoken. Every literary work is set in a certain specific background and that background is culturally entrenched and is better understood and interpreted if studied from that specific interpretative context. Indigenous people live their culture and so live the meaning of a text that is culturally implanted better than the people who study indigenous culture as an outsider.

The outsider sees and interprets language from a specific perspective that is shaped by his/her own culture. Culture specific perspective gives specific meaning to the text and so gives a specific worldview specific to the culturally embedded language. The outsider-views give other shades of meaning to the discourse they analyze and interpret as they see and observe the other's culture from a distance. Outsiders' interpretation of a text bears the shades of their own culture and the

result is the variation and change in meaning. Interpretive perspectives change with the change of culture and so the worldviews to see and interpret things from a peculiar context and also different to indigenous and non-indigenous readers.

Many sociologists and cultural and linguistic anthropologists have discussed this intricate relationship of language and culture in different contexts and situations for different purposes. Terms 'language' and 'culture' are not easy to define and interpret. It, therefore, becomes extremely difficult to define and explain their relationship. 'Which affects what?' is the mostly discussed question and still remains ambiguous and needs clarification. Risager (2006) refers to Geertz (1973) who sees culture as an interpretative phenomenon for understanding meaning of the text. He says:

The concept of culture I espouse ... is essentially a semiotic one. Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning. (cited in Risager, 2006: 48)

This leads one to Geertz's concept of culture and its interpretation in the frame of 'thick description' as it 'includes the inner, meaningful aspect' as opposed to the concept of 'thin description' propounded by the behaviorists. Geertz sees culture as 'a coherent whole of a semiotic kind' which needs individual expression for its individual part which are 'constituted by symbols' specific to that culture. This cultural specificity requires the specificity of the interpreter and his/her own cultural situatedness. He reads culture as a text;

As interworked systems of constructible signs culture is not a power, something to which social events, behavior, institutions, or processes can be causally attributed; it is a context, something within which they can be intelligibly—that is, thickly, described (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000: 96).

Language being a part of indigenous system is interpreted in a specific context provided by the culture of that indigenous society. Interpretation of culture leads to the interpretation and understanding of the language that is culturally embedded and situated. Michael Ager, an American Anthropologist, suggests that in order to interpret a text, culture should be placed at the center of analysis as meanings are 'puttied thickly' within cultural framework. Language is a discursive practice, besides this language is a cultural practice too. It is because of this nature of language that cultural interpretive frames are required to interpret and understand the meaning of a text.

It is, therefore, necessary that the basic concepts of these three dimensions and their relationships with each other should be dealt in a detailed way in order to understand their significance and

implications within the framework of the research. Therefore, the same is being focused here. The following discussion moves in a smooth way. At first, it discusses different concepts of language and its definitions in order to get an insight into the construction of language and its functions. These functions are then linked with different contexts, be it lexical, relational, and contextual. About language, it is therefore necessary to discuss different social structures, linguistic behavior, linguistic norms and linguistic system.

The discussion expands to the theory of different linguists who see language from various perspectives and discuss the relationship of language and culture. Boas, Sapir, Whorf and Agar are the main theorists who see and discuss the relationship of language and culture in their works. Researchers have discussed the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis and Whorf's concept of 'linguistic relativity' and 'linguistic determinism'. This hypothesis is very notorious about whom Agar says that it is a problem. Then, researchers have discussed Agar's concept of 'languaculture' in order to explain the inevitable relationship of language and culture.

The Concept of Culture

The cultural study refers to different concepts of culture from dissimilar perspectives. Many theorists have given different concepts of culture and ways of looking at culture and its relation with language. Polish-British sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (1999) has given three dimensions of culture in his book *Culture as Praxis*. These are

- The hierarchical concept of culture
- The differential concept of culture
- The generic concept of culture

The hierarchical concept of culture is value laden and it is something that the individual human being or individual society has in its higher or lower form or its absence in individual's personality. It is a struggle that exist among individual's belonging to one and different societies and within societies to attain its ideal nature.

There is an ideal nature of the human being, and the culture means the conscious, strenuous and prolonged effort to attain this ideal, to bring the actual life-process into line with the highest potential of the human vocation. (Bauman, 1999: 7 as cited in Risager, 2006: 33)

The differential concept of culture differentiates people among different groups of culture from each other on the basis of their cultural individuality and their particular way of behaving. A culture is a self-contained system of norms, style, genius, pattern and the like and it resists mixing with other culture. It is on this basis that we compare one culture with another one and categorize them in different compartments on the basis of cultural differences. It can be viewed from an 'outside in' and 'inside out' perspectives. The former involves understanding and observing behavior from general and universal scale, while the latter involves in-depth understanding of the indigenous culture and its way of doing and knowing things both at conscious and unconscious

levels. Bauman notes that it is easier to differentiate and distinguish individual language from other languages than to distinguish one culture from other cultures:

Contrary to the case of language, the differential concept of culture is not (or, in any case, not as much as the term 'language') implied by the immediately given reality independently of researchers' activities. It is implied rather by the empirical strategy chosen by students of culture. (Bauman, 1999: 25 asquoted by Risager, 2006: 33)

The generic concept of culture finds commonalities among different cultures and distinguishes humanity from nature and all other cultures. There exist many cultures and all are different from one another. All are independent on their own and exist and operate within their own spheres. The generic concept of culture stresses the need to have only one culture common to all everywhere and at all time. Bauman discusses the characteristics of human generic culture:

The continuous and unending structuring activity constitutes the core of human praxis, the human mode of being-in-the-world. To carry on this active existence man is supplied with two essential instruments—... tools and language. (Bauman, 1999: 43 as quoted by Risager, 2006: 33)

Language

Language is a very diverse term that needs to be explained and examined from different angles. Different linguists have tried their best to define language one way or another. But to define language properly and in a comprehensive way is not possible as it is a very broad term and cannot be defined and compartmentalized. However, if one linguist discusses one aspect then he/she leaves the other one, this other one is discussed by another linguist from another angle and the discussion goes on. Here are a few definitions which the most famous linguists have given in order to define language.

1. According to Sapir (1921: 8): "Language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of voluntarily produced symbols." (Lyons, 2005: 3)
2. In their Outline of Linguistic Analysis Bloch & Trager wrote (1942: 5): "A language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group co-operates." (Lyons, 2005: 4)
3. In his Essay on Language, Hall (1968: 158), tells us that language is "the institution whereby humans communicate and interact with each other by means of habitually used oral-auditory arbitrary symbols". (Lyons, 2005: 4)
4. Robins (1979a: 9-14) notes that languages are "symbol systems... almost wholly based on pure or arbitrary conventions". (Lyons, 2005: 6)

5. Chomsky's publication of *Syntactic Structure* (1957: 13) triggered an unending debate on transformational generative grammar. In his work he gave a very different definition of language. He says: "From now on I will consider a language to be a set (finite or infinite) of sentences, each finite in length and constructed out of a finite set of elements." (Lyons, 2005: 7)

The above definitions highlight that language is viewed quite differently by the linguists and is something a very complex phenomenon. Sapir refers to language as a 'non-instinctive method of communication' and is a set of 'voluntarily produced symbols'. Bloch and Trager see language as a 'system of arbitrary vocal symbols; Hall defines it as a way of communication with the help of 'oral-auditory arbitrary symbols'; Robins terms it as a 'symbol system' which is based on pure or arbitrary conventions; whereas Chomsky terms it as a 'set of finite and infinite symbols'. These linguists see only one entity or aspect in a multiple context and depict this human phenomenon differently. These different views infuse the reader to see and interpret language from 'the lines laid down' by these linguists.

The purpose to give different definitions here is not to define language only but to draw attention to the fact that cultural aspect of language is ignored in these definitions. When Sapir says that it is the phenomenon which uses habitually used aural/oral auditory symbols, there is a need to define it further that these habitually used symbols are cultural and peculiar to one speech community that builds its working on this concept. Almost all definitions define language as a communication process but term it as a set of symbols. These symbols are culturally situated and find its decoding within that speech community. This construction of symbol system is arbitrary too and meanings are attached to the signs according to the working of the discourse (written or spoken) in social and cultural context. This leads to the idea of studying language in relation to culture as Fishman and Kramsch discuss as opposed to the idea which have been discussed in this research, that is, culture in relation to language.

Fishman (1996) sees language in relation to culture and maintains that language is a part, an index and symbolic of culture. By this he means that language is an integral part of culture that can never be separated, an index in the sense that it "reveals the way of thinking or of organizing experience that are common in associated culture" and symbolic in the sense that "language movements and language conflicts utilize languages as symbols to mobilize populations to defend (or attack) and to foster (or reject) the cultures associated with them" (Cited in (Risager, 2006, p. 13).

Kramsch (1998) looks at the relationship of language and culture also from the point of view of language. She discusses this relationship in her book *Language and Culture* (1998a: 3) and says that language expresses, embodies and symbolizes cultural reality. She explains this further that language expresses cultural reality and:

The words people utter refer to common experience. They express facts, ideas or events that are communicable because they refer to a stock of

knowledge about the world that other people share. Words also reflect their author's attitudes and beliefs, their point of view that are also those of others. In both cases language expresses cultural reality. (Cited in (Risager, 2006, p. 14)

Discussing the second point that language embodies cultural reality she says that it depends on the way how people communicate and so are understood within that group or the groups belong to same speech community. Outside it, it becomes difficult to interpret and understand the spoken and written discourses as it embodies culture. Kramersch says that "the way, in which people use the spoken, written, or visual medium itself creates meanings that are understandable to the group they belong to. Through all its verbal and non-verbal aspects, language embodies cultural reality. The third aspect of language in relation to culture, Kramersch says that language embodies cultural reality. She explain it further that "...language is a system of signs that is seen as having itself a cultural value" (Cited in (Risager, 2006, pp.14-15).

Both second and third points of Kramersch are same as that of Fishman. Both see and discuss language in relation to culture. But Kramersch moves a step further and sees the relationship of language and culture from a post-structuralist and ecological perspective. She does so by the complex and intricate relationship between language and culture and its interconnectedness in discursive practice (Risager, 2006). The study share this post-structuralist and dynamic view of language and culture in an ecological and historical perspective in the sense that meanings of a text undergo a process of historical construction in a specific ecological system shared only by the people who belong to the same group or speech community. The writer is very much part of that ecological system and his/her works reflect his/her worldviews nurtured within that ecological system. His/her linguistic practices are the reflection of his/her linguistic resources which are build up by the cultural resources within his/her speech community. Here my stance is that the reader who belongs to the same ecological system and nurtured there can best interpret the constructions of the writer's thoughts and belief system. The reason for this stance is that the reader shares the same cognitive belief system as held by the writer. To understand this intricate and complex relation between culture and language, Blommaert comes up with this argument:

An understanding of culture and language requires setting culture and language firmly in the whole of the system in which a group operates, and explaining culture and language not by reference to a universal standard but by reference to the particular environment in which this culture and language occurs. The principle of relativity entails contextualisation, a focus on concrete, actual ways of functioning of cultural forms (Blommaert, 2007: 8).

But this contextualization depends on the linguistic resources of that peculiar society.

Linguistic Resources

Linguistic practice depends on linguistic resources which individuals and groups of people develop with the passage of time. It is a lifelong process that never ends and only ends at the end of one's life. These linguistic resources are both individual and collective. An individual's life history develops different linguistic resources on the basis of interaction s/he has within one society and among different societies. Different speech communities have different linguistic resources and influence the mind and working of the people belonging to same community or a migratory who lives there for some specific time-frame. This specificity of time is very much important in order to develop linguistic resources. There requires a considerable time frame in order to acquire different cultural resources. These cultural resources are dependent on cultural practices which as a whole develop a linguistic system peculiar to that speech community.

The individual moves over the years through a number of more or less variable networks and is thereby influenced when it comes to linguistic practice and the utilization of the linguistic resources that have been developed. This development takes place in complex cultural contexts (societal structures, networks, linguistic and discursive communities, etc. (Risager, 2006: 79).

By 'complex cultural contexts', Risager means those societal structures which exist within one community; the networks of different relations and of different levels that keep one society stand on and keep going; and linguistic and discursive communities which express 'the unconscious and unexpressed forms belonging to the description of linguistic practice, while the conscious, expressed norms belong to discursive constructions of language'. Here comes the concept of 'inside out' and 'outside in' perspective for language resources. In order to fully acquire a linguistic resource one needs to be an 'insider' of that speech community.

Without acquiring linguistic resources one may fall an easy prey to misunderstand and misinterpret 'the other's culture'— different cultural identity, values and norms. Besides individual linguistic resources there are different societal groups such as institutions, organizations, etc. which provide different collective linguistic resources. These resources are peculiar to that societal group— the way of behaving, doing, knowing and implementing on different issues and acts within one speech community. These societal groups have different individuals belonging to different speech communities or in other words from different cultures. When they come in contact with each other, they influence others and are influenced by others. "One ought to think not only in terms of a number of aggregated individual competences but also in terms of cooperative and mutual complementary resources" (Risager, 2006: 81).

This asks us to think deep and scrutinize different linguistic and cultural patterns of a speech community in order to understand it. A text embedded in one's culture is not easy to interpret and understand without knowing and understanding its constructive patterns that construct and run through that society. These linguistic patterns are deeply rooted in one's society and are not visible. One can sense them, feel them, interpret them and understand them only if one is an 'insider' of

these cultural norms and system. It is, therefore, necessary for an 'outsider' to 'go native' and personally feel it on one's own self. According to William Labov:

There is a great deal to be done in describing and analyzing the patterns of use of languages and dialects within a specific culture: the forms of "speech events"; the rules for appropriate selection of speakers; the interrelations of speaker, addressee, audience, topic, channel, and setting; and the ways in which the speakers draw upon the resources of their language to perform certain functions. This functional study is conceived as complementary with the study of linguistic structures. (Labov, 1972)

These different sociolinguistic patterns within one's speech community are not easily understandable. An 'outside in' perspective leads to misreading and misinterpretation of the written discourse embedded in that culture. In order to understand the text one must understand the culture in which it is written, the writer who lives that culture and different linguistic resources and linguistic practices that constitute a linguistic system peculiar to that culture.

There are different and diverse social processes that make this relation link with society and its cultural, social, ethical, moral and linguistic norms and systems. This view of language compels us to study language in its social contexts and cultural rules. This sociolinguistic view of language asks us to construct 'local social relationships' between language and culture besides making an attempt to construct the global ones. As in the world no global social relationship exists between language and culture, so it is not possible to construct or develop a global sociolinguistic theory applicable to all. Due to this diversity of social processes, Coupland suggests that:

not only that a unified theory does not exist, but that it should not. Sociolinguistics needs to theorise local social relationships as well as global social structures, the particular moment of social action as well as the dynamics of large-scale social change. The concept of a unified theory is ideologically alien to sociolinguistics, premised as it is on diversity and resistant to hegemony (Coupland, 1998: 113).

Sociolinguistic view of Language

With language we communicate in social context. This communication takes place in real situation and this real situation is created by the society around bound with culture. The relationship between language and culture is therefore, very important for discussion here in its societal context. This relationship of language and culture can be studied at three levels—linguistic practice, linguistic resources and linguistic system as discursive construction.

Linguistic practice can take place at different levels. These levels can be studied keeping in mind different social and psychological acts. These can be either acts of identity as well as normative

acts that show linguistic practice in action. According to Le Page and Tabouret-Keller, “linguistic practice is seen as ‘a series of acts of identity in which people reveal both their personal identity and their search for social roles’ (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller, 1985: 14). He further says:

The individual’s linguistic resources are a ‘repertoire of socially-marked system’, a repertoire that places him/her in a position to operate extremely smoothly in a whole range of different situations that make various demands.”
(Risager 2006: 75)

This they do with special understanding of the outside world. Individual’s role takes place in the social world with the use of language and social identity. Language provides identity and in order to regulate their behavior they try to gain more solidarity and practice their linguistic repertoire. It is this concept of linguistic identity which Risager calls ‘constitution of identity’. Constitution of identity, he says, ‘describes linguistic practice as a form of cultural practice’ and ‘that linguistic practice in itself embodies culture’. (Risager, 2006: 75)

Linguistic practice can be seen as normative acts which exist in one’s culture to be practiced and performed both at conscious and unconscious levels. “Linguistic practice is a unity of behavior and unconscious norms” says Risager. He further explains linguistic behavior and says that he means ‘actual linguistic behavior that can be observed’ and “is always accompanied by unconscious linguistic norms that regulate and develop it.” (Risager 2006: 76)

Linguistic practice always involves linguistic norms. No linguistic practice could exist without such norms, and each time one uses language, the norms are reproduced and reformed and linguistic identity is constituted. Linguistic prescription is part of social practice, and there is a struggle and a negotiation involved as there is for other forms of social practice.
(Risager, 2006: 76)

The discussion takes another route and discusses that ‘language is not an organism whose natural development ought to be given free rein’. It is something which is highly social and is invested in different contexts. It is highly dependent on its users—the way they use language and in which context. Language development depends on its speakers and their social status makes it possible to acquire the status of a standard language. Language communicates thoughts and feelings of all groups of people regardless of their status. But on different fronts they have to have a common source to communicate. Standardization of language fills this need and involves different historical linguistic norms peculiar and common to that speech community. “Norms relating to the standard language are conceived in general as descriptions of what language is like”, says Risager.

Language as normative act is perceived as prescriptive as it sets the norms not only what language is like but also how language is used. This prescriptive role is very important for identity issue. Now the question arises that do these normative acts regulate human behavior or is it human behavior which regulates different norms? To gain linguistic identity prescriptive norms play a very vital role. A British sociolinguist Deborah Cameron says in her book *Verbal Hygiene* that “prescriptivism thus represents the threatening other, the forbidden; it is a specter that haunts linguists and a difference that defines linguistics”. (Cameron, 1995: 5 as quoted by Risager, 2006: 76)

Sociolinguistics and Linguistics

This concept of sociolinguistics triggers another discussion on the concepts of linguistics and sociolinguistics, their relationships and differences in order to understand these concepts fully, as these concepts are directly linked which my research premise. Therefore, the study has introduced these two basic concepts and their distinct spheres within which they work and how a linguist and a sociolinguist handle these in their study. Hudson describes these concepts in his book *Sociolinguistics* as:

Linguistics differs from sociolinguistics in taking account only of the structure of language, to the exclusion of the social contexts in which it is learned and used. The task of linguistics, according to this view, is to work out ‘the rules of language X’, after which sociolinguists may enter the scene and study any points at which these rules make contact with society – such as where alternative ways of expressing the same thing are chosen by different social groups. (Hudson, 1980: 3)

He further explains the importance of society and its role in the development of thought, to understand the phenomenon around and the social behaviors of the people who live in that society and bear that culture. He says that:

Since speech is (obviously) social behavior, to study it without reference to society would be like studying courtship behavior without relating the behavior of one partner to that of the other. (Hudson, 1980: 3)

It is necessary to define some of the key terms here that have been incorporated in my research and are necessary for the discussion of language, culture and language-culture relationship. ‘Language behavior’ is a particular term that needs explanation. To define and explain this term, Lyons says that:

“To use one particular language rather than another is to behave in one way rather than another. Both language in general and particular languages may be looked at as behavior, or activity, some of which at least is observable, and recognizable as

language behavior, not only by participant observers (i.e. speakers and hearers in so far as we are restricting our attention to spoken languages), but also by observers who are not themselves involved at the time in this characteristically interactive and communicative behavior. Furthermore, although it is of the essence of language behavior that it should be, in general, if not on each and every occasion, communicative, it is usually possible for external observers to recognize language-behavior for what it is, even when they do not know the particular language that is being used and cannot interpret the utterances that are the product of the behavior that is being observed.” (Lyons, 2005: 9, bold in original)

He further says that linguistic competence is different from linguistic performance. Performance presupposes competence. He says that “One’s linguistic competence is one’s knowledge of a particular language.” (Lyons, 2005: 10). Linguistic system is an abstract social phenomenon and is seen in relation with linguistic competence and performance of the people belonging to one speech community. It is, therefore, necessary to see language system in relation with language behavior of the members of a speech community. As in a speech community, language behavior is seen in linguistic practices which every individual member of a speech community practices keeping in mind linguistic resources.

A **language system** is a social phenomenon, or institution, which of itself is purely abstract, in that it has no physical existence, but which is actualized on particular occasions in the **language behavior** of individual members of the language-community. (Lyons, 2005: 10, bold in original)

The above discussion discusses language theories and different cultural theories and their relationship with each other contextually and socially. Whorf further strengthens this idea of the relationships of language and culture and their subsequent connections ‘between cultural norms and linguistic patterns’. He further says that “there is a relation between a language and the rest of the culture of the society which uses it. There are cases where the “fashions of speaking” are closely integrated with the whole general culture, whether or not this be universally true, and there are connections within this integration, between the kind of linguistic analysis employed and various behavioral reactions and also the shapes taken by various cultural developments.” (Whorf, 1956a: 159 as quoted by Lucy)

These connections, as discussed by Whorf, are very much there in every society but specific to their culture and language depending upon their cultural norms and linguistic system specific to that society. Here comes the significance of ‘frame’ in order to interpret and understand their specific meaning which is embedded in their culture. These frames are of different types and of different nature as propounded by Michel Agar. He has given the concept of languaculture in order to make this relationship of language and culture inevitable. He further says that “frames take

language and culture and make them inseparable. The ‘and’ disappears, and we’re left with languaculture” (Agar, 1994: 132, italics in the original as quoted by Risager, 2006: 113).

Conclusion

The above discussion has explored the relationship of language, culture and interpretive frames. It may develop an understanding of the basic concepts of language and culture, and their relationship. What is language, how does it affect the thought pattern of an individual, its place in society, its interpretation within a speech community or outside it, cultural implication and practices on linguistic expressions, contextual interpretation of linguistic expressions and practices, their respective frames for their interpretation and meaning making process have been the topics of discussion. The purpose of the discussion is to inform the reader about cultural implications and deep rooted thought patterns which can take different shapes and forms and therefore require different vantage points to look at human behaviors and actions. Different cultural theories see culture from different perspectives. Some consider it different form nature, some view it as knowledge, some as communication, some as a system of mediation, some as a system of practices, some as a system of participation and some as predicting and interpreting. These different theories have their own distinct point of views and they see culture from a different lens. The purpose of the discussion here was to highlight this concept that due to these theories different people look at and interpret culture from different positions. These different positions, then, compel us to see language from a different angle specific to one group or the other. These different angles then generate diverse shades of meanings and interpretations specific to one culture or the other and subsequently result into different interpretations by different readers of different cultures even of the same piece of fiction. Finally, it may be concluded that Language that is out of cultural frame leads to misreading and results into misunderstanding about indigenous or localized text.

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