Practice Approaches and the Ethnography of Communication: Investigating for the Possibility of a Mutually Beneficial Relationship

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Abstract

In this essay, I explore the areas of accord and discord between two efficacious modes of research: practice approaches and the Ethnography of Communication (EOC). As an interpersonal and intercultural scholar, I carefully analyze these approaches in order to find innovative ways to describe the diversity that I see in modern social interaction. Working against paradigms that suggest using either one approach or another, I engage this project hoping (expecting?) to find and/both alternatives for communication study. I argue that, in spite of their differences, practice and EOC traditions co-exist in a mutually beneficial relationship for the study of communication in 2002.

Keywords

Ethnography of Communication, Practice Approaches, Ethnography, Pluralist Research, and Qualitative Methods

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"Practice" Approaches and the Ethnography of Communication: Investigating for the Possibility of a Mutually Beneficial Relationship

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In this essay, I explore areas of accord and discord between two efficacious modes of research: "practice" approaches and the Ethnography of Communication (EOC). As an interpersonal and intercultural scholar, I carefully analyze these approaches in order to find innovative ways to describe the diversity that I see in modern social interaction. Working against paradigms that suggest using "either" one approach "or" another, I engage this project hoping (expecting?) to find "and/both" alternatives for communication study. I argue that, in spite of their differences, practice and EOC traditions co-exist in a "mutually beneficial relationship" for the study of communication. Key words: Ethnography of Communication, Practice Approaches, Ethnography, Pluralist Research, and Qualitative Methods.

There are many different ways to study human behavior. How do I make sense of two viable approaches to the study of interpersonal and cultural communication? In what ways does the description of social "practices" relate to the research interests of the Ethnography of Communication (EOC)? Is this a relation of connection, distance, or both? As a scholar who is interested in maximizing, rather than reducing, the layers of understanding available in qualitative research, I pursue answers to these questions in this essay.

In my research experience, I primarily use phenomenology and ethnography to study the intrinsic connection between communication, culture, and identity. These scholarly traditions stress heavy description of communicative phenomena, an emphasis that compels me to foreground contingency in varying degrees. We can never fully describe all that we experience. Therefore, rather than seeking "closure, certainty, and control" (Stewart, 1991, p. 356), I assume that communication research is more "partial, partisan, and problematic" (Goodall, 2000, p. 55; see also Eisenberg and Goodall, Chapter 2). There will always be alternate ways of describing communication.

Working from an assumption of contingency involves numerous opportunities to categorize with binaries. I frequently must answer whether phenomena are "personal" or "political," or whether "micro-" or "macro-" social phenomena influence communication, etc. I make choices between research approaches. For example, I chose hermeneutic phenomenology over standard rhetorical criticism and written scholarship instead of staged performance. Once I select an approach, I feel obliged to perform in some ways over others. For example, I write by using more modernist and standard forms of representation instead of those that are more postmodern and esoteric. This experience of choice within binaries is likely influenced by the reality that many scholars assign greater "rigor" and "validity" to privileged approaches. A comprehensive treatment of why we choose certain methods, and the subsequent complications

of these choices, is beyond the scope of this essay. To be sure, endemic to research is some aspect of choice and, to varying extents, a need to negotiate with binaries. This negotiation takes many forms. Instead of foregrounding "either" practice approaches "or" EOC, I engage both in one conversation to better understand their areas of accord and discord. There are a variety of benefits related to this form of analysis.

First, my goal to analyze these approaches in tandem does not mean that I hope to find a superior method for studying communication. Each has specific aspects that make the approach more helpful than the other. However, I offer this essay as a model of how to constructively study two research traditions with an overall goal of seeking connection, rather than distance. Second, and similarly, I describe *how* such a connection might be performed. This enables an understanding of the ways scholars can use these traditions to enrich each other. Thus, I suggest communication research to be an open-minded search for possibilities, rather than a hostile, mean-spirited critique.[1] Next, this essay indirectly illustrates how qualitative research is pursued as an outgrowth of researchers' lived experience. For example, I am comfortable with practice approaches (a tradition, incidentally, related to ethnomethodology and phenomenology) and EOC because of my experiences of marginalization as a gay man. These approaches offer avenues on which I analyze unique, everyday, often unvoiced ways of communication. Other researchers will conduct different analyses that relate to their lived experience.[2] This engages communication scholars to be self-reflexive so that they can engage in personalized, meaningful projects. Finally, I previously suggested that, in contrast to potentially constraining either/or perspectives, the both/and assumption that guides this analysis makes available greater possibilities for academic performance. On the basis that what we do powerfully shapes our identities, exploring practice approaches and EOC in such a way affords more numerous options for performance and being, both inside and outside our academic milieu.[3]

In this essay, I argue for a mutually beneficial relationship between practice approaches and EOC. I first describe how Harold Garfinkel's (1967) ethnomethodological position that logical practices of human conduct shape everyday life informs EOC and practice scholarship. Next, I describe practice arguments by Theodore L. Schatzki (2001b), Barry Barnes (2001), and Stephen Turner (2001). These sociological perspectives vary in scope. However, each assumes that exploring and respecifying generalized theoretical accounts are valuable scholarly moves. I follow with a description of EOC, as founded by Dell Hymes (1967, 1968, 1972, 1974) and expanded by Gerald Philipsen (1977, 1992) and Tamar Katriel (1986). This comparative research tradition involves the study of contextually bound functions of particularized modes of communication. Regarding the scope of this project, I could bring together any two or more research approaches, whether they are similar or radically different. However, I select these approaches because of their commitment to the qualitative study of diverse communicative

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[1] Calvin O. Schrag (1986) and Dennis K. Mumby (1997), among others, largely influence the first two benefits. Each views the relationship between modernist and postmodernist research as existing on a continuum. Both philosophical traditions offer valuable resources with which to describe human behavior. While these scholars influence my performance as philosopher/cultural analyst, I do not propose that practice and EOC approaches necessarily fall within modernism and postmodernism. Furthermore, I do not wish to argue that analysts who solely employ one approach (rather than multiple) are "hostile" or less than earnest.

[2] See Edmund Husserl's (1954/1970) notion of the phenomenological "lifeworld" for a more detailed discussion of the constitutive nature of lived experience.

[3] See Schrag's (1986) consideration of how "communicative praxis" implicates subjectivity. Also see Lenore Langsdorf's (2002) notion of "communicative poiesis" which suggests that, within the thoughtful doing of communicative praxis, we perform and creatively make and remake ourselves.

experience. Bringing them into dialogue increases the ways we can interpret and respect diversity in communication style and identity. This embracing move extends the list of previously mentioned benefits. What gets lost in my using similar approaches is the potential for clash that would likely be found if I were to bring together blatantly disparate approaches (e.g., narrative and forms of statistical analyses).

I propose that EOC and practice perspectives intersect in these ways: they foreground the importance of practices and the constitution of meaning within those practices, discuss practices as collective action, and emphasize "neutral," non-evaluative description of social phenomena. I argue for a reciprocal relationship between the two approaches. On the one hand, inspired by Donal Carbaugh and Sally Hastings' (1992) "BASE" mnemonic for ethnographic research, I contend that practice scholars enrich EOC scholarship. Turner's (2001) consideration of heterogeneous lessons offers an alternative approach to EOC that enables the researcher to examine idiosyncratic communicative experiences that reside within the shared experiences of a speech community (Hymes, 1967). Additionally, Schatzki's (2001b) notion of "teleoaffectivity" encourages a more fluid, changing emphasis on communities' communication styles. On the other hand, EOC provides an exemplar with which practice theorists can concretize their theoretical perspectives in situated cultural "scenes" (Carbaugh, 1996).

Garfinkel's Mundane Practices

Garfinkel (1967) proposes a radical approach to the study of human conduct. He foregrounds the contingency of "practical activities [and] practical circumstances" by giving "the most commonplace activities of daily life the attention usually accorded extraordinary events" (p. 1). The author writes, "I use the term 'ethnomethodology' to refer to the investigation of the rational properties of indexical expressions and other practical actions as contingent ongoing accomplishments" (p. 11). Thus, ethnomethodology entails primarily focusing on the logic and purposes behind mundane phenomena (statements and actions) "in their own right" (p. 1). For example, ethnomethodologists might examine the social practices of elevator passengers, or baseball game attendees, to examine what purposes their communication serves.

Garfinkel's (1967) emphasis on practical, mundane activities identifies what he views as a void in research on social order. He finds value in examining the "unexamined"; that is, "the socially standardized and standardizing, 'seen but unnoticed,' expected, background features of everyday scenes" (p. 36). These "background" phenomena serve as "scheme[s]" of interpretation" (p. 36). It would seem to follow that to study background expectancies is to explore the ways in which individuals interpret their everyday experiences.

"9/11," and the more recent United States military action, "Operation Iraqi Freedom," are effective illustrations of background assumptions. It is hard to miss the passionate, yet often uncritically examined, performances of "patriotism" related to these events. A closer look at the functions of commonplace pro-war interpersonal communication and mass communication messages shows how this communication constitutes an influential background narrative—a "seen but unnoticed" interpretive lens—through which communicators organize human behavior. In effect, this background narrative renders possible social interactions in which individuals who have differing paradigms (e.g., those who are opposed to war, or problem solving through violence) are tacitly and actively responded to as being "less patriotic," "unpatriotic," or even "traitorous."

In his discussion of *Agnes*' rigorous, traumatic practice of being a "natural" woman, Garfinkel (1967) proposes a method rooted in detailed, non-evaluative description of the "actual appearance" (p. 78) of social practices. Scholars wishing to examine everyday activities, or, in his terms, "organized artful practices" (p. 34), can begin by studying "familiar scenes and ask what can be done to make trouble" (p. 37). Making trouble, in this sense, makes the rules of everyday practices visible. These rules guide what, how, and when communication should occur.

There are several implications of Garfinkel's (1967) argument that are particularly relevant to this essay. First, he implies an emphasis on practice over theory. He also suggests that social order is patterned and human activity is practical. It is open to description and, in turn, ongoing interpretation. Each of these issues will play a role in my search for a "mutually beneficial" connection between practice theory and EOC. I begin by describing both approaches.

A "Practice" Approach

[T]he prominence of practical understanding underwrites the proposition that the maintenance of practices, and thus the persistence and transformation of social life, rests centrally on the successful inculcation of shared embodied know-how. (Schatzki, 2001a, p. 3)

Practice theorists, such as Schatzki (2001a), study communicators' logical, "bundled activities" often as a means of respecifying "general and abstract [theoretical] account[s]" (p. 3). He argues, "A central core . . . of practice theorists conceives of practices as embodied, materially mediated arrays of human activity centrally organized around shared practical understanding" (p. 2). In other words, practice scholars focus on the ways in which communicators (verbally and somatically) enact activities in order to accomplish things. This approach, Schatzki (2001a) holds, entails theory that "departs from both the once dominant conception that ties theory to explanation and prediction and the more colloquial and still prevalent notion that theories are hypotheses" (p. 4). Thus, practice theory attempts to *describe*, rather than control, situated social phenomena.

He suggests that practice research is a field without unification. And yet, two common areas of interest include examining the ways in which social order is constituted in social interaction (e.g., rules, tacit knowledge) and the relationship between micro- and macro-social phenomenon (social interaction and societal influences respectively) and social order. I focus on theoretical perspectives of Schatzki (2001b), Barnes (2001), and Turner (2001) and their considerations of social order as constituted within practices.

"Social orders," according Schatzki (2001b), "are arrangements of people and of the artifacts, organisms, and things through which they coexist, in which these entities relate and possess identity and meaning" (p. 53). Practices, or the "context of social order" (p. 54), are "organized nexuses of activity" (p. 48). Social orders then are constituted "within the sway of social practices" in which "teleoaffective structure" (p. 42) is central:

[Teleoaffectivity entails] a range of acceptable or correct ends, acceptable or correct tasks to carry out for these ends, acceptable or correct beliefs (etc.) given which specific tasks are carried out for the sake of these ends, and even acceptable or correct emotions out of which to do so…. [I]t is by virtue of expressing certain understandings, rules, ends, projects, beliefs, and emotions (etc.) that behaviors form an organized manifold. (p. 52-53)

In other words, the teleoaffective structures with which individuals engage in everyday activities influence those practices. In Schatzki's (2001b) sense, social practices entail practical activities related to individuals' "ongoing involvement with the world" (p. 49).

Schatzki's (2001b) assertion leads me to consider my work with a high school speech team, whose members often refer to themselves as "speechies." I believe that speechie interpersonal practices, such as demonstrating tremendous amounts of support in times of competition, not taking jokes from fellow speechies personally, and expressing themselves via creative, unique ways, function to construct a social order characterized by acceptance and achievement. Speechies engage these social practices ("tasks") with respect to their desire to achieve the "ends" of the social order. In line with Schatzki (2001b), both the "ends" and "means," are open to speechies' "ongoing involvement" (p. 49) within their social processes.

Barnes (2001) argues that "shared practices" constitute social order (p. 22). He states, "What is required to understand a practice of this kind is not individuals oriented primarily by their own habits, nor is it individuals oriented by the same collective object; rather it is human beings oriented to *each other*" (p. 24, emphasis in original). While individual habits have provisional relevance, Barnes (2001) emphasizes that social order is a "collective accomplishment" (p. 23). Thus, he argues, "Let practices be socially recognized forms of activity, done on the basis of what members learn from others, and capable of being done well or badly, correctly or incorrectly" (p. 19).

College students often engage in particular kinds of shared practices. Consider the scenario where students are inactive in classroom discussions. For me, these moments typically include teachers asking questions of their classes. This practice is often followed by a pause; some pauses are dreadfully longer than others. I have been on the teacher and student ends of this hesitation. My experience as a student taught me that if we allow a long enough pause to persist in between question and answer, teachers would likely fill the gap with something. In this particular shared practice, which admittedly probably varies depending on teacher, class, and difficulty of question, students co-construct the climate of the classroom. Silence may mean that no one knows the answer, or perhaps, that no one wishes to actively participate in discussion. By not responding to questions, students create a sort of tension. In turn, they create the need for teachers to "rescue" them from the silence.

Alternatively, students might co-construct a freer flowing, less tense classroom climate. This practice might occur when students demonstrate noticeable signs of listening to one another by nodding their heads and answering with statements that seem to cohere with the conversation. In turn, students might "turn take" in order to not interrupt their colleagues. Certainly, active listening and turn taking are phenomena that are likely to be culturally relevant. This is not the point of my example. My point is that Barnes' (2001) conception of shared practices takes a variety of shapes and forms, with varying modes of expression and desired purposes.

Discussing social rules, Turner (2001) argues against the notion of shared practices, refutes scholarship that favors the influence of implicit social rules, and calls for a "throwing out the tacit rule book" (p. 120). He argues, "The experience of social life, in the absence of a massive amount of information or of highly structured experiences, is simply too diverse, and too thin, for the individual to derive from it anything so determinate as a set of rules that is the same for everyone" (p. 129). In other words, the diverse nature of social life decreases the likelihood of communicators operating based on implicit rules. To claim that communicators function from tacit knowledge is to imply their homogeneity. In contrast, Turner (2001) writes,

> [T]he problem is to figure out … the kinds of patterns and regularities we regard as social practices are nothing more than that which people learn, in a rather heterogeneous way, are the best ways or the satisfactory ways to negotiate the paths toward the fulfillment of whatever purposes they might have. (p.129-130)

Moments of my family life illustrate Turner's (2001) thesis. Until somewhat recently, my memories of religion have always been interconnected with Catholicism. I was baptized as an infant, attended catechism classes, and went to a Catholic high school. Even to this date, I have not declared myself as Buddhist, or at least a non-Catholic who has an affinity for Eastern perspectives, to my parents. One argument could be that my non-disclosure is influenced by a presumed tacit rule that the Berry family is Catholic. My grandparents from my father's side of the family are Catholic. Without explicit discussion, then, practicing Catholicism is simply something that my family seems to do. No one in my family has explicitly stated that our family is and should be Catholic.

Complicating this argument is Turner's (2001) position against the notion of tacit rules. I, together with my sister, have viewpoints about religion that differ from those our parents. Put simply, we had never expected to remain Catholic once we became adults. Furthermore, I would imagine that my mother, reared Protestant and later converted to Catholicism, does not function from the same "rules" about religion as does my father (a life-long Catholic). Thus, it seems likely that, although we do not explicitly state our divergent ("heterogeneous") viewpoints of "rules," nor do we demonstrate our diverse practices of religion, the Berry family enters the practice of religion with "heterogeneous lessons" that prevent one from arguing with clear conscience that tacit rules drive our religion practices.

Practice approaches, along with Garfinkel's (1967) ethnomethodology, explicitly foreground practices over broad, theoretical claims about human conduct. Practice theorists hold that to understand human conduct better, scholars should explore the social practices that constitute our lives (Schatzki, 2001a).

The Ethnography of Communication

Dell Hymes founded the Ethnography of Speaking (EOS) to fill a gap in research between anthropology and linguistics (Saville-Troike, 1989). Addressing what he sees as a commonly held assumption that speech is more homogeneous than heterogeneous, Hymes (1968) argues: "The speech of a group constitutes a system," "speech and language vary cross-culturally in function," and "the speech activity of a community is the primary object of attention" (p. 132). In other words, speech "does" things in diverse, pervasive ways. EOS—later named the Ethnography of Communication (EOC), in part, to incorporate non-linguistic cultural phenomena—is a "comparative study of the patterning and functions of speech" (Hymes, 1968, p. 133) that allows scholars to explore and descriptively analyze "situations and uses, the patterns and functions, of speaking in its own right" (p.101).

EOC scholars seek first to particularize findings to a localized speech community and only eventually work toward establishing a generalized metatheory of communication by comparing and contrasting particularized ways of speaking (Saville-Troike, 1989). Scholars immerse themselves in a field; "jot" various observations on communicative phenomena, and interview members of a speech community about what the researchers observed (Saville-Troike,

1989).[4] Finally, EOC is an emic-based research (Pike, 1967) process that entails a middle ground between "rigid linearity and deliberate nonlinearity in research design" (Philipsen, 1977, p 45) and serves as a cyclical heuristic approach through which to develop interpersonal communication theory (Carbaugh & Hastings, 1992).

"Shared Knowledge" of a Speech Community

In this essay, I use Hymes (1967) notion of a speech community[5] to consider ways communicators co-construct meaning. Although he has reservations about ascertaining a "single general definition" (p. 19), Hymes "tentatively define[s] the basic notion of *speech community* in terms of shared knowledge of rules for the interpretation of speech, including rules for the interpretation of at least one common code" (p. 19, emphasis in original). In other words, a speech community is a group of communicators with joint knowledge for ways of communicating and the meaning of communication. The emphasis on "shared" guidelines for the conduct of, and meanings of, communicative behavior suggests that communication within speech communities is more a collective, rather than solely an individual, process.

Two relevant examples come to mind. First, the Speech Communication (SPCM) department (both graduate students and faculty) at my university is an example of a speech community. We have "shared knowledge" of the notion of tolerant communication. Using racial slurs, or those directed at sexual minorities would likely be interpreted as intolerant, disrespectful and, thus, inappropriate communication in our community. Thus, individual members of this community are likely to perceive slurs negatively and avoid using them, at least when with fellow members of the community. Secondly, the speechies with whom I have studied constitute a speech community. Based on the observation and interview data I collected, it is evident that many speechies have shared knowledge about what it means to use the word speechie and how a speechie typically communicates. While many individuals stray from the cultural norm, they generally know that being a speechie largely entails communicating with openness, humor, and support.[6]

Hymes (1967) accounts for the possibility of idiosyncratic ways of speaking within a speech community: "There may be more than one language of the home, each linking the family in a different direction (p. 13) [...] Not all of these codes will be intelligible to all members of a community [. . .]" (p. 18). Elsewhere, he argues, "If several dialects or languages are in use, all are considered together as part of the speech activity of the group" (Hymes, 1968, p. 108). The chance for the intolerant communicator in the SPCM community, and the speech team member who uses the term speechie inappropriately, or communicates in ways contrary to speechie ways,

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[4] For additional information on fieldwork and interview processes, see the work of Charles L. Briggs (1986), Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson (1995), Robert Emerson, Rachel Fretz, and Linda Shaw (1995), and John Lofland and Lyn Lofland (1995).

[5] I use Hymes' speech community specifically to highlight the notion of a sharing of rules for conduct and interpretation. See J. Gumperz (1962) and R.J. Hans Dua (1981) for alternative views and challenges to the notion of speech community.

[6] Over the course of three years and three seasons of speech competition, I have spent over 150 hours in the "field" with these students. This often takes place while they practice for competition and more often while they are at the competitions themselves. This research is ongoing and contributes to my dissertation.

would exemplify idiosyncrasy in communication style. These distinct ways of communicating exist within the often more noticeable communal ways.

Despite idiosyncratic behaviors within speech communities, I believe that EOC cogently explicates the ways in which groups of communicators co-construct meaning. This is evident in the work of Philipsen (1992) and Katriel (1986) (among others). I follow by offering a sketch of select works from these authors to better understand EOC and Hymes' influence on the situated analysis of cultural communication.

Philipsen (1992) describes communication in "Teamsterville," a working class neighborhood on the near southwest side of Chicago. More particularly, he explains how the perception of neighborhood shapes "Teamsterville" practices. Philipsen argues, "[A] Teamsterviller's sense of neighborhood is a lens through which he [or she] locates speech, socially, physically, and hierarchically. 'The neighborhood' is the most macroscopic concept that Teamstervillers use to distinguish places in general from places for speaking" (p. 35).

He further suggests that the physical boundaries of the neighborhood are "coextensive with a particular style of speaking, which is characteristic of the community and to which, its residents should conform" (pp. 31-32). Thus, there is an "unusually strong relationship of social to physical place" (p. 33). That is, "speech is seen as an instrument of sociability with one's fellows, as a medium for asserting communal ties and loyalty to a group, and serves—by its use or disuse, or by the particular manner of its use—to signal that one knows one's place in the world" (p. 42). Thus, the ways in which one communicates in Teamsterville speaks to her/his being an "insider" or "outsider."

Katriel (1986) describes the Israeli Sabra "dugri speech," a way of speaking rich in history, tradition, and (like Teamstervillers) cultural identity. Sabra culture sought to renew a "Jewish life in the land of Israel as the historical bedrock of the Jewish people" (p. 17). She adds, "The New Jew… was to prefer clear-cut deeds to mere words, clarity of purpose coupled with simplicity and a nonmanipulative openness of expression, rather than a debilitating sensitivity to the complexity of issues and to external pressures" (p. 18).

Dugri speech then is a communication style personified by an "accent of sincerity" (p. 21) and "attitude of 'antistyle'" (p. 24). Sabra culture views "dugri" as an "antistyle" because of the ways that members' directness contrasts with Zionist preaching of the past that used "dramatic language and high-flown expressions" (p. 25). The "plain talk" nature of dugri speech, Katriel (1986) maintains, "is not the absence of style but rather an alternative stylistic option" (p. 25).

Together, Philipsen (1992) and Katriel (1986) illustrate EOC scholarship that describes situated theories of communication. One mode of examining such localized theories exists in Carbaugh and Hastings' (1992) "BASE" mnemonic (p. 163). They propose "four distinctive but interrelated phases (or moments) of theorizing…each phase…like each stage above [their three phases], provides a context for, and is itself contextualized by the others, though we present them here in their logical, chronological sequence" (p.159). Phase one theorizing ("Basic Orientation") entails researchers questioning their assumptions about the character of communication. Phase two theorizing ("Activity Theory") moves from that general theorizing of communication (phase one) to particular theories of communicative activity. Carbaugh and Hastings (1992) argue, "The intent is to develop a conceptual system that informs one generally how to look (the basic orientation), and identifies possible parameters of variability in what one might see (the activity theories)" (p. 161). They propose a third phase ("Situated Theory") focused on "the theory of the case, the formulation of the general ways in which communication is patterned within a

socioculturally situated community, field, or domain" (p. 161). In other words, this takes the above mentioned general theories of communication and explores how these notions are "done" in particular cultural contexts. Finally, phase four theorizing ("Evaluation and/or Evolution of Theory") entails researchers taking localized communicative theory (developed in phase three) and using it to re-examine the broader theoretical perspectives of phases one and two: "By reflecting upon the lens used to conduct the ethnography (the basic/activity theory), and critically assessing its use (through situated theory), the lens itself is refined, developed, and/or validated, even, though rarely, discarded" (p.162).

Of the four phases, I am especially interested in the possibility that the final, "evaluation" phase of ethnographic research accommodates "enrichment" by practice scholarship. For instance, in past research experiences that explored members of a particular speech community's use of "politeness," I conducted observations and interviews and, consequently, found that the situated theory I proposed about this community questioned the efficacy of Brown and Levinson's (1987) notion of a universal "politeness" (Berry, 2002). Therefore, the "evaluation" phase seems useful to my own EOC scholarship. I will provide more detail as to the usefulness of Carbaugh and Hastings' (1992) model below. With an introductory understanding of both approaches in place, we can now discuss their similarities.

Toward A Connection

Schatzki (2001b), Barnes (2001), and Turner (2001) offer theoretical perspectives about practices. EOC provides theory along with situated accounts of communicative behavior. I believe that practice theory and EOC scholarship intersect in three aspects: their focus on practices; the importance of shared action; and an emphasis on non-evaluative, detailed descriptions of phenomena.

First, both emphasize practices. Schatzki (2001a) proposes that practices are "bundled activities" (p. 3), or "embodied, materially mediated arrays of human activity centrally organized around shared practical understanding" (p. 2). In his discussion of cultural "ways of speaking," Hymes (1974) asserts that a speech community is comprised of "a set of *styles*…a way or mode of doing something…any way or mode…all ways and modes" (p. 434). Both approaches seek to move beyond what Schatzki (2001a) argues is "general and abstract account[s]" (p. 3).

Most beneficial from the focus on practices is the way in which practice and EOC theorists allow researchers to explore diverse types of phenomena and, similarly, diversity within those phenomena. First, just as human beings do a multitude of things in their everyday lives, scholars can examine a multitude of foci. Not constrained to ascertaining how generalized communicative phenomena apply to all communicators, researchers can explore particular contexts and, within those contexts, specific ethnicities, sexual orientations, religions, geographic locations, etc. Second, both practice and EOC scholars imply, in Kenneth Pike's (1967) sense, emic oriented analyses of human conduct. This generally means that these approaches work inductively rather than deductively. Because of this and, more specifically, because neither purports to begin research with global, generalizing theories of human conduct, they both offer scholars a chance to explore and report on diverse peoples and their practices.

Both approaches propose that something particularly significant takes place while individuals are engaged in practices. Schatzki's (2001a) assertion that practices are "organized nexuses of activity" (p. 48) and, even more, his notion of "teleoaffective structure" (p. 50) tells me that individuals "do" things (e.g., they "organize" or structure their experiences) that

typically relate to what is practical for them in any given moment. Likewise, Barnes' (2001) position that social order is an accomplishment of social practices in which "members learn from others" (p. 19) suggests that this learning must be about something. Indeed, there are inevitably lessons that are less important, or more trivial than others. However, Schatzki (2001b) and Barnes (2001) imply that there is "substance" to practices—that more often than not they hold particular significance for the involved members. Easier to explain is EOC's notion of meaningfulness in practices. Following Hymes' (1967) discussion of speech communities, members have "shared knowledge." Thus, the "something" meaningful in EOC practices is communicative meaning. For example, there is particular meaning to the statement "I speak Dugri" (Katriel, 1986) and to the Teamsterville male practice of not handling conflict with physicality (Philipsen, 1992).

These examples of the meaningfulness of practices suggest an important component of the practice approaches and EOC scholarship: meaning is largely a constituent of social interaction rather than a reflection of representational influences. This is to say that individuals engaged in practices construct meaning within the interaction.

A second main connection between these approaches is their position on shared action. Schatzki's (2001b) proposal that practices are "arrangements of people" who "coexist" and "relate and possess identity and meaning" (p. 53), and Barnes' (2001) assertion that social order is a "collective accomplishment" (p. 23) that is enacted via communicators "oriented to *each other*" (p. 24, italics in original) suggest that practices are not individualistic phenomena, devoid of the contact with, and influence of, others. Instead, the actions of individuals engaged in practices *together* construct varying components of a given social order. Philipsen (1992) and Katriel (1986) find that members, rooted in their respective histories, engage in communicative practices that constitute larger, more significant aspects of their lives (e.g., Teamsterville solidarity and Israeli Sabra's cultural ethos).

This agreement in the importance of shared practice carries with it the shared implication that communication is a dynamic process. Communicators' identities are diverse. Consequently, we should expect similar diversity when they engage in communicative practices with others. Turner's (2001) position that individuals come to practices from heterogeneous lessons influenced by their diverse lived experience further illustrates the likelihood that practices are dynamic phenomena, affected by diverse participants. I will discuss the complication that Turner's (2001) thesis presents in terms of Hymes (1967) "shared knowledge" below.

A final connection between the two approaches relates to the ways in which researchers discuss the phenomena they encounter. Practice and EOC scholars emphasize detailed, non-evaluative descriptions. Schatzki's (2001a) assertion that practice theory "departs from both the once dominant conception that ties theory to explanation and prediction" (p. 4) suggests that it is possible to engage practice scholarship simply seeking to describe communicative phenomena I observe. By non-evaluative, I do not mean neutral. Assuredly, I believe that my lived experience influences how I research. Being non-evaluative, however, means approaching a research site with an open mind, which entails not scrutinizing the communication I experience as being "wrong," "immoral," "incompetent," etc.

This emphasis on non-evaluation becomes easier (but surely not easy by any means) to accomplish when I consider an inspiring overlap in terminology that I discovered while preparing to write this essay. Garfinkel (1967) proposes that ethnomethodologists focus on mundane phenomena "in their own right" (p. 1). Hymes (1968) asserts that EOC scholars should study communication "in its own right" (p.101). It is clear that both approaches treat practice and

communicative phenomena alone as efficacious foci of study. This foregrounding of communicative activities entails privileging participants' reports, which, in turn, involves researchers using detailed descriptions of what they observe and hear in fieldwork and interviews. For example, I find that the more detail I provide, the more I seem "true" to the participants of my research and the less evaluative I am about their communication.

An Opening of Doors

In the foregoing discussion, I have attempted to make clear the similarity between practice and EOC perspectives. These similarities center on aspects that I find to be critical to research processes. They deal with questions such as: On what do I as researcher focus? What counts as noteworthy in my investigation and why? What type of claims should I make as researcher? These are summary questions based on the previous discussion, instead of questions that need answering at this stage. While I see illuminating intersections between practice and EOC approaches, I do not want to conflate the two, nor do I wish to imply that they are identical. Rather, I believe Schatzki (2001b), Barnes (2001) and Turner (2001) can enrich EOC and vice versa.

Using Practice Perspectives to Enrich EOC

Recall that Carbaugh and Hastings (1992) propose "four distinctive but interrelated phases (or moments) of theorizing" (p. 159). In the fourth phase of theorizing ("Evaluation and/or Evolution of Theory") the scholars discuss how researchers take the localized communicative theory developed in phase three (e.g., the ways in which Israeli Sabra culture uses dugri speech) and use it to re-examine the broader theoretical perspectives of phases one and two (e.g., the reexamination of *politeness theory*). Carbaugh and Hastings (1992) propose that this phase allows the theoretical approach of the ethnographer to be "refined, developed, and/or validated, even, though rarely, discarded" (p. 162). I use this logic as rationale for suggesting that practice theory can enrich EOC. Specifically, I believe that, in addition to re-examining the theories that guide our ethnographic research, we can also attend specifically to the situated theory just constructed. We can be excited about the localized accounts we describe and, yet, be open to various tools with which we can examine those accounts for ways in which to enrich them. I contend that practice approaches serve as examples of such tools.

Turner's (2001) debunking of tacit rules, on the basis that practices, and the individuals within practices, are "too diverse" (p. 129) to allow for them, reminds EOC researchers to explore the idiosyncratic within their observation and interview practices. This argument affirms and enriches EOC. On the one hand, EOC scholars conduct participant observation and interview research (Saville-Troike, 1989). In doing so, they examine *explicit* instances of talk, or, more broadly, communication. Given this, it would seem that Turner's (2001) position concurs with the EOC approach: EOC scholars describe specific instances without reliance upon tacit, or implicit, rules.

On the other hand, Turner (2001) suggests that individuals with heterogeneous experiences enact practices. This position does not "throw out" Hymes' (1967) contention that speech community members have "shared knowledge." Instead, Turner (2001) inspires me to both identify instances of "shared knowledge" that are made explicit through my fieldwork, but also to subsequently re-explore speech communities for idiosyncratic communication and

meanings within these communities. Granted, Hymes (1967; 1968) acknowledged the possibility of diverse language, styles of communicating, etc. in speech communities. Yet, it seems to me that so often what is foregrounded in EOC scholarship is the collective accomplishment rather than the idiosyncratic voices of a speech community (Philipsen, 1992; Katriel, 1986). An examination of the idiosyncratic would not only allow researchers the opportunity to explore diversity within a community, but also to explore how this diversity might actually inform the collective accomplishment. Perhaps ethnographers can incorporate analyses that focus on divergent styles within a speech community.

Also, I believe that Schatzki's (2001b) "teleoaffectivity" enriches my experience as an EOC scholar; in particular, this notion suggests keeping an open mind in terms of the malleability of communication styles. The author positions his discussion of "teleoaffective structure" (p. 50) within individuals' "ongoing involvement with the world" (p. 49). This points to practices being temporal and, consequently, momentary or fleeting. While sedimented lived experience plays a role, Schatzki (2001b) emphasizes that practices, like communication in general, are fluid and changing.

In relation to EOC research, I think of occasions when I have analyzed (and also spoken of) speechie communication as more static than fluid. For instance, I seem to rely heavily and, at times, comfortably, on the belief that this self-identifying term has been in the past, and still remains today, pervasive for this speech community. Granted, I believe that the data I collect strengthens my claims. Yet, I wonder how the information I collect in future observations and interviews might enhance, or dramatically change, what I believe now about the speechies.

Katriel (1986) discusses how the communication styles of her participants have changed over time. For instance she compares current Israeli Sabra culture's communication styles with those of this group's parent generation. Thus, Katriel (1986) serves as an exemplar for ways in which I can discuss communication in flux. The ways in which I write EOC "write-ups" can assist in accounting for change in communication styles. I can remember to rely on the data I collect and, at the same time, write more provisionally so as to create the image of communication experiences as changing rather than statically enduring.

This leads me to an important question: What if the data I collect illustrates a speech community using communication styles that endure? What happens when, in a research process that requires the emic-researcher to focus on the data in his/her descriptions, the data does not reflect change as a result of, in Schatzki's (2001b) sense, a speech community's "ongoing involvement with the world" (p. 49)? It seems reasonable to suggest that once I notice what I think is a static quality to the communication described by participants, I can question them specifically as to the ways in which they see change in their community's communication. If my fieldwork is complete, and I cannot return to the field, I can still rely on the data I have collected and, in the process of writing provisionally; I can leave room for the possibility of change.

Using EOC to Enrich Practice Perspectives

Just as I argue that practice approaches can enhance EOC, prior to closing, I also offer my suggestions as to how EOC can add to the studies of practices by centering on the efficacy of localized theory and Hymes' (1972) "SPEAKING" mnemonic.

Schatzki's (2001a) telling of how practice theorists respecify "general and abstract account[s]" (p. 3) reflects Garfinkel's (1967) call to study particular, everyday activities—those "unexamined" aspects of a social order. I wonder about Garfinkel's (1967) hesitation regarding

theory. I understand that within the practice of theorizing, it is possible to lose sight of the contingencies of everyday life, or those "unexamined" aspects of social practices. And yet, this approach seems awfully "all or nothing" to me. Is there not an in-between stage between theory and no theory?

Carbaugh and Hastings (1992) provide a valuable framework through which practice theorists might "warm up" to theory. These scholars might find value in the situatedness of ethnographic theory. For instance, Philipsen's (1992) work with Teamsterville communicators does not make a claim for all working class individuals. Nor does Katriel (1986) argue that Israeli communicators in general communicate in highly direct ways. Rather, they utilize data from an extended period of time conducting fieldwork to provide a localized theoretical description of communication. Ethnographic theory can serve as an exemplar for practice researchers who wish to examine situated scenes of social practices.

Additionally, Hymes (1972) offers a "SPEAKING" heuristic as a guide through which EOC researchers can focus their ethnographies. Briefly, he argues that ethnographers can examine the "S"etting or scene, "P"articipants, "E"nds (i.e., "outcomes" and "goals"), "A"ct sequence (i.e., the "message content" and "ordering" of speech), "K"ey (i.e., the tone in which something is communicated), "I"nstrumentalities (i.e., channel), "N"orms (of interaction and interpretation), and "G"enre (e.g., a story, joke, etc.). I present Hymes' (1972) heuristic as a means through which practice scholars can engage their research interests, if they wish to move from their theoretical positions to the more localized contexts in which practices are enacted. Hence, in line with Philipsen's (1977) proposal that ethnographers are able to utilize conceptual frameworks with which to provisionally guide their studies, Hymes' (1972) heuristic offers one viable provisional framework option for practice scholars.

In this essay, I explored my curiosity about whether practices and EOC approaches were more disparate than similar, and whether some sort of "reciprocal enrichment" was possible. I argued that both share an appreciation for the notion of practice, shared action, and description. While they are not identical, I offered initial insight as to how each approach might enrich the other. Using Schatzki (2001a), Barnes (2001), and Turner (2001), and influenced by Carbaugh and Hastings (1992), I demonstrated how EOC scholars could ask important questions about their situated theories of communication so as to expand and not debunk them. For example, we can ask questions pertaining to idiosyncratic communicative behavior and those that inquire about "ongoing" change within a cultural way of communicating. Additionally, I argued that EOC scholars offer practice theorists ways in which they might concretize their theoretical perspectives. Namely, they can situate their theories in localized "scenes" (Carbaugh, 1996) with rich descriptions of data, and still have a better chance at avoiding "general and abstract account[s]" (Schatzki, 2001a, p. 3).

My discoveries are initial ones. They are starting points from which I can begin future, similar analyses between these research approaches to human behavior. I believe that the notion of theory is central to this, and future investigations. Practice and EOC scholars seem to have conclusive, often distinct conceptualizations about the ways in which theory should be used and the ways in which it should be discussed. Considering the title of my essay, I argue that searching for a "mutually beneficial relationship" between these approaches does not entail, e.g., ethnographers using the practice scholars simply as a means of prioritizing ethnography, or vice-versa. In spite of the fast-paced times of technological advancement, I have not intended to build researchers into "bigger, stronger, and quicker machines." Instead, my sense of "mutuality" implies that scholars can engage in an ongoing, open minded pursuit of improving themselves

and their methods with alternative possibilities, while also "giving off" possibilities to other scholars with differing approaches. Diverse communication researchers can use such engagement to enact situated communication research and concomitantly and creatively perform themselves in the process.

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Author's Citation