

THE DISCOURSE OF SILENCE IN MULTILINGUAL AND MULTICULTURAL CLASSROOMS

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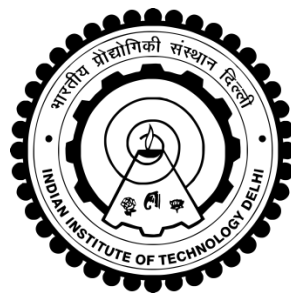
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Submitted

in fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

to the



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Certificate

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**The Discourse of Silence in Multilingual and Multicultural Classrooms**” being submitted by **Sanchita Verma** for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy**, to the **Indian Institute of Technology Delhi** is a record of original bonafide research carried out by her under my guidance and supervision. I am satisfied that the thesis presented by Ms Sanchita Verma is worthy of consideration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

The results of this thesis have not been submitted to any other University or Institute for award of degree or diploma.

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Dated:.....

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Abstract

Silence is a complex phenomenon and interpreting it even in a trivial conversation exposes us to an entirely new dimension of language study. It is therefore surprising that silence, which forms an essential part of spoken communication, has been relatively under-researched in the domain of linguistic studies. Language and silence are in fact so dependent on each other that silence can be thought of as a complement to speech. Speech cannot find an identity without silence, and silence cannot find an identity without speech. Moreover, silence in communication is not silent; it communicates specific messages. Such a multifaceted and ambiguous phenomenon is an exciting challenge to study.

In everyday conversation, silence occurs in a complex and structured form and its interpretation exposes us to an insightful and revealing world of talk-in-interaction. For any conversation to be meaningful, it must have two essential components, verbal and non-verbal. The composite meaning of a conversation is derived from examining both components in context. For a conversation to continue, one not only listens to words and sentences but also derives and constructs meanings. These meanings are derived consciously or unconsciously from a number of non-verbal cues, one of the most important of which is silence. Silence thus contributes significantly towards the semantic interpretation of a conversation.

Models of silence in social space usually relate to the contexts and dimensions of community attitude, social organization and normative functions such as the expression and modulation of group identities. These contexts may be as diverse as the performance of rituals or covert as well as overt endorsement of gender roles. It has also been shown that silence in intercultural communication also often plays a subtle, understated and important role.

Importantly, the discourse of silence can also be studied in multilingual contexts. This thesis concentrates on silence in primary school classrooms in India, which are almost always multilingual. Since this is a new approach to the studying the sociolinguistics of the Indian classroom, this thesis can

be classified as an exploratory work. Here, different forms of silence such as conversational gaps, lulls and pauses are used as variables to study the relation between aspects of multilingualism and their social and communicative functions. Theoretical paradigms of language use and the stipulated medium of instruction in Indian classrooms as laid out in state language policies are also considered and questioned in this thesis.

The examination of the multilingual and multicultural Indian classroom in this thesis shows that a main cause that contributes towards a culture of silence in such a classroom is a lack of linguistic facility. Be it Hindi or English, the medium of instruction in school is sometimes entirely different from the language spoken by the children in their home and neighbourhood. After joining school, children often find themselves in an alien environment where strict regimens and the norm of using a particular language in class inhibit them from participating in class activities and thus they tend to dissociate themselves from the school environment. This analysis of silence in the Indian primary school classroom thus reveals the structuring of social roles from childhood onwards and points towards a larger critique of language policy as well as its implementation within basic educational institutions such as government school classrooms.

This study focusses on talk-in-interaction between participants – the teacher and her students - in the natural and non-obtrusive real-world social setting of a multicultural Indian classroom. The method applied to the analysis of the data is conversation analysis which is an ethnographic method for investigating micro-details of the structure and process of social interaction. In this case, these are the details and dimensions, the forms and functions, and the iterations and implications of conversational silence in the classroom.

Mapping silence, which has thus far gone entirely unnoticed, in the very vibrant, noisy, dynamic, layered and often ambiguous space of the multilingual Indian primary school classroom has therefore proven to be a highly productive exercise in this thesis, yielding many rewarding research insights.

Key Words: silence, communication, multilingualism, talk-in-interaction, conversation analysis.

सार

मौन एक जटिल क्रिया है तथा नगण्य बातचीत में भी इसकी व्याख्या करना हमें भाषा अध्ययन के एक पूर्णतः नए आयाम की ओर ले जाता है। अतः यह विस्मय का विषय है कि मौन, जो कि मौखिक संचार का एक महत्वपूर्ण अंग है, के विषय में, भाषायी अध्ययन के आलोक में, अपेक्षाकृत कम शोध हुए हैं। भाषा एवम् मौन वस्तुतः एक दूसरे पर इतने निर्भर हैं कि मौन को वाणी का पूरक समझा जा सकता है। वाणी का मौन के बिना कोई पहचान नहीं है और मौन का वाणी की बिना कोई पहचान नहीं है। इसके अलावा, संचार में मौन का अर्थ चुप्पी नहीं है बल्कि मौन विशेष संदेशों का संचार करती है।

प्रतिदिन के वार्तालाप में मौन जटिल एवं निर्मित रूप में दिखता है एवं इसकी व्याख्या करना हमें एक व्यावहारिक एवं “भाव पूर्ण वार्तालाप” के रहस्यमय दुनिया की ओर ले जाता है। कोई भी वार्तालाप मौखिक, अमौखिक अथवा दोनों ही तौर पर अर्थपूर्ण हो सकता है। इस सन्दर्भ में परीक्षण करने के उपरांत ही बातचीत की समग्र परिभाषा सामने आती है। वार्तालाप के निरंतरता हेतु हमें केवल शब्दों एवं वाक्यों को सुनना नहीं पड़ता है अपितु अर्थों को निकलना एवं बनाना पड़ता है। यह अर्थ बहुत से संकेतशब्दों के सचेत एवं अचेत विवेचना से निकाले जाते हैं जिनका मौन एक महत्वपूर्ण अंग है।

सामाजिक संरचना में मौन के रूप सामान्यतः सामाजिक मनोभाव का सन्दर्भ एवं पैमाना, सामाजिक ढांचा एवं मानक क्रिया जैसे कि समूह समरसता की अभिव्यक्ति एवं उतार चढ़ाव की ओर इंगित करते हैं। यह सन्दर्भ रस्म निभाने जितने विविध या लैंगिक भूमिका का गुप्त या अपरोक्ष समर्थन भी हो सकते हैं। अंतर - सांस्कृतिक संचार में मौन एक गूढ़, न्यून कथित एवं महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाते हैं।

यह महत्वपूर्ण है कि मौन की भाषा को बहुभाषी प्रसंग में भी अध्ययन किया जा सकता है। यह शोध कार्य भारत के प्राथमिक विद्यालयों के कक्षाओं में मौन का अध्ययन करता है क्योंकि सामान्यतः यह कक्षाएं बहुभाषी होती हैं। चूंकि भारतीय कक्षाओं में सामाजिक भाषा विज्ञान का अध्ययन अभी नया है अतः इस शोध कार्य को समवेशी समझा जा सकता है। इस शोध कार्य में मौन के विभिन्न प्रकारों जैसे कि

संवादी रिक्ति, चुप्पी एवं ठहराव का बहुभाषावाद एवं उसके सामाजिक एवं संवादशील कार्यों के सम्बन्ध का अध्ययन करने के लिए परिवर्ती की तरह उपयोग किया है। इस शोध कार्य में भाषा प्रयोग के सैद्धांतिक रूपावली एवं भारतीय कक्षाओं में राज्य भाषा नीति में निर्दिष्ट पढ़ाई के निर्धारित माध्यमों पर विचार किए गए हैं एवं उनपर प्रश्न उठाये गए हैं।

इस शोध कार्य में बहुभाषी एवं बहुसांस्कृतिक भारतीय कक्षाओं के परीक्षण उपरान्त ऐसा प्रतीत होता है कि ऐसे कक्षाओं में भाषायी सुगमता के न होने से मौन की प्रवृत्ति हावी हो रही है। अंग्रेजी हो या हिंदी, कभी - कभार विद्यालयों में पढ़ाई का माध्यम बच्चों द्वारा अपने घर या मोहल्ले में बोली जाने वाली भाषा से एकदम भिन्न होता है। विद्यालय में आने के बाद, बच्चे प्रायः अपने आप को एक ऐसे अजनबी वातावरण में पाते हैं जहां सख्त नियमों एवं किसी विशेष भाषा को प्रयोग करने की बाध्यता के कारण वे अपने आप को विभिन्न गतिविधियों में भाग लेने से रोक देते हैं जिसके कारण वे विद्यालय के वातावरण से अपने आप को असम्बद्ध पाते हैं। भारतीय प्राथमिक विद्यालयों में फैले इसी मौन के विश्लेषण से बचपन से ही सामाजिक दायित्व की संरचना करने का रहस्योद्घाटन होता है तथा मूलभूत शिक्षण संस्थाओं जैसे कि सरकारी विद्यालय के कक्षाओं में भाषा नीति एवं उसके क्रियान्वयन के समालोचना की ओर इशारा होता है।

यह अध्ययन प्रतिभागियों – शिक्षिका एवं उनके छात्रों - के बीच बहुसांस्कृतिक भारतीय कक्षा में प्राकृतिक एवं अधृष्ट वास्तविक लोक के सामाजिक व्यवस्था में हुए ‘भाव पूर्ण वार्तालाप’ की ओर केन्द्रित है। तथ्यों के विश्लेषण के लिए वार्तालाप विश्लेषण का प्रयोग किया गया है जो कि सामाजिक परस्पर के संरचना और प्रक्रिया के सूक्ष्म विवरण के जांच का एक नृवंश - विज्ञान विधि है। इस मामले में यह संवादी मौन का विवरण एवं आयाम, रूप एवं कार्य और पुनरावृत्ति एवं प्रभाव है।

इस शोध कार्य में मौन के मानचित्रण किया गया है जो कि बहुभाषी भारतीय प्राथमिक विद्यालयों के अति जीवंत, कोलाहलकारी, उर्जस्वी, स्तरित एवं प्रायः अस्पष्ट क्षेत्र के कक्षाओं में युक्त होते हुए अब

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