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ABSTRACT

An examination of the ritual of "sharing time" in a first-grade classroom in the United States shows how it reaffirms the ideal model of a "Good Communicator," develops a concept of personhood as "Self-as-Autonomous-Person," and establishes respect for "Authority." Through the development of these three "sacred objects," sharing time functions as a "deeply cultured" event, affecting the way the children develop, interact, and learn to communicate appropriately as first-graders in their classroom. The children enact this ritual each day at school under the direction of their teacher. Although the teacher does not participate in the ritual, she functions as a guide by reaffirming and correcting the appropriate behavior for the students. This ritual reveals how a diverse, multi-ethnic classroom functions as a specific speech community. (Author/SR)

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The ritual of "sharing time" in a first-grade American classroom

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Running head: SHARING TIME

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Abstract

This is an ethnography about how the ritual of "sharing time" in a first-grade classroom in the United States reaffirms the ideal model of a "Good Communicator," develops a concept of personhood as "Self-as-Autonomous-Person," and establishes respect for "Authority." Through the development of these three "sacred objects," sharing time functions as a "deeply cultured" event, affecting the way the children develop, interact, and learn to communicate appropriately as first-graders in their classroom. The children enact this ritual each day at school under the direction of their teacher. Although the teacher does not participate in the ritual, she functions as a guide by reaffirming and correcting the appropriate behavior for the students. This ritual reveals how a diverse, multi-ethnic classroom functions as a specific speech community.

The ritual of "sharing time" in
a first-grade American classroom

"The function of ritual, as I understand it, is to give form to human life, not in the way of a mere surface arrangement, but in depth." (Campbell, 1972)

During any day of the week after lunch recess, if you enter Mrs. Popper's first grade classroom at Middleview Elementary,[1] you will see the students involved in what appears to be a typical exchange of show-and-tell. From backpacks and paper bags, the students reveal special objects carried from home to share and explain to their classmates. The objects range from books to toys to stuffed animals. However, despite the surface commonalty of this event, show-and-tell-time reveals a "deeply cultured" event in this classroom. Show-and-tell time not only has a different name, but it accomplishes three different functions in the classroom. "Sharing time" functions as a classroom ritual which reaffirms a specific type of "talk," a concept of personhood, and a respect for power and authority. Through sharing time, the students sanction the culturally sacred symbols of the "Good Communicator," "Self-as-Autonomous-Person," and "Authority."

By focusing on four components of the S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G approach to understanding communication events (Hymes, 1972), I will show how sharing time becomes a "deeply cultured" event in this classroom. The four components I

will focus on are S(setting), G(genre), A(act-sequence), and E(ends-functions). First, I will describe the setting of the classroom where sharing time occurs. Next, I will show how sharing time fits into the genre of a ritual. The remainder of the paper will address the "work" sharing time accomplishes through the act-sequence and ends components. Sharing time functions in three different ways: it sanctions the symbols of "Good Communicator," "Self-as-Autonomous-Person," and "Authority."

Setting of sharing time

Located in a university town in the western United States, Middleview Elementary school draws primarily from a middle-class, well-educated community. Despite the majority of white, Anglo-Saxon students, Mrs. Popper's first-grade classroom reveals a diverse mix of children. Among the thirty-two first-graders, eleven of them are English-as-Second-Language (ESL) students. The children come from such countries as Nigeria, Ethiopia, Japan, two different regions of China, Argentina, and Mexico. Although English is the primary language used in the classroom, it is not uncommon to hear students of the same ethnicity talking to each other in their native language.

The appearance of the classroom reinforces the importance of sharing time, especially the impact of the large blue rug where sharing time occurs. Because of the large amount of space it claims, the rug becomes a focal point in the physical classroom, reinforcing the importance

of sharing time for the members of the class. The classroom exhibits the most recent creative projects of the children. The walls display pictures, including self-portraits of each student, calendars, the daily-helper chart, the alphabet, color charts, and pictures of pumpkins and autumn leaves, indicative of the fall season. Chalkboards and bulletin boards cover the remainder of wall space. Bookshelves run along the wall beneath a row of windows. Instead of desks, the children sit at small tables grouped into clusters of four and six students. Mrs. Popper's desk stands apart from the student's tables near the front of the room. In one corner stands an old, upright piano and in another a drinking fountain. But the one area that stands out visually from everything else is the large blue rug, free of furniture and objects, which claims one side of the classroom adjacent to Mrs. Popper's desk. The children are free to spread out on the rug, find their "space," and sit quietly, waiting for "sharing time" to begin.

Sharing time as a ritual

Each day after lunch recess, Mrs. Popper leads the students back to class in a single line. They quickly hang up their coats, put away their lunch boxes, and, if they remember, bring their sharing over to the blue rug for "sharing time." After some general "housekeeping" comments about the day, Mrs. Popper begins sharing time by reading off a list of names of the students responsible to share for that day. The students are supposed to remember to lay

their sharing item on the round table at the front of the rug next to Mrs. Popper's chair before sharing time begins, but those who forget quickly run to their cubby holes and find their sharing.

The setting of sharing time indicates that sharing time occurs in a ritualized place--the blue rug. Occurring every day at the same time, sharing time happens in a repeated and regular pattern which is another indicator of a ritual. Sharing time also follows a ritualized pattern of questions and answers which will be discussed later. The depth and significance of this ritual in the classroom becomes more evident through the children's explanations of sharing time.

When I asked the children what they do during sharing time, they responded with a description of <u>how</u> to do sharing time. Here are some of their descriptions:

> Pass it [your sharing object] around the class.[2]
>
> Stand up and tell about something if you don't have anything to show.
>
> Come in from recess and put your sharing on Mrs. Popper's desk.
>
> One person stands up and shows something.

These responses from the children indicate that sharing time is enacted in a prescribed, established, and repeated manner like a ritual. Although Mrs. Popper reminds certain children to get their sharing and who will be responsible for the next day of sharing, the children's responses

indicate that they understand the correct way to do sharing time and have ritualized the process.

But the key factor in a ritual, as defined by Katriel and Philipsen (1990), relates to "the culturally preferred way to reaffirm the status of what the culture defines as a sacred object" (p. 86). In the culture of this classroom, the "sacred objects" which are reaffirmed are the "Good Communicator," "Self-as-Autonomous-Person," and "Authority." By doing sharing time, the children sanction these sacred, ideal symbols.

The ritual of sharing time is an important event for the teacher as well as for the students. A number of different times, Mrs. Popper commented to me that sharing time is important because it gives her a chance to hear and find out about the personal lives of her students. She expressed the importance of the parents' role in sharing time:

> It [sharing time] also allows me to get to know something about their family life. Parents that remember a share item are ones that get involved with their child's education.

Along with honoring the "Good Communicator," "Self-as-Autonomous-Person," and "Authority," sharing time functions in a secondary way because it acts as a link between the school and the home. With parent involvement, sharing time becomes ritualized both at home where the parents help their

child select an object to share and at school where sharing time gets enacted.

The functions of sharing time

In order to explain the different functions of sharing time, it is important to understand the way in which sharing time is organized. Mrs. Popper regulates sharing time in two different ways. First, she attends to the scheduling of sharing time to maintain orderliness. Instead of allowing the students to bring sharing randomly to class, she assigns each student one day each week to share. She explains that:

> Sharing is important because they always have something to share in class. . . . Other teachers do sharing in one day; I like to spread it out over a week.

Mrs. Popper reminds the students:

> "It is important you share something with us each week. . . . Just like homework, sharing is a responsibility. It is your job as first-graders."

She also regulates sharing time by guiding the students through their individual performances during sharing time.

During the time I observed Mrs. Popper's class, I watched and listened to over sixty children share. The organizing method of the "talk" of sharing time, guided by Mrs. Popper, is question-answer. The method of sharing time in the question-answer format illustrates Hymes' (1972) category of act-sequence (A). Act sequence refers to the sequencing of message form and message content in a speech act. In this classroom, sharing time gets enacted through a

series of questions by Mrs. Popper and answers by the child who is sharing. Although some children will begin sharing on their own, most of the children begin their sharing in response to a question asked by Mrs. Popper. Mrs. Popper asks two different types of questions: questions in which she has the information requested of the child, and questions in which only the child has the information requested. Heath (1983) identifies these two categories of questions in the community she labels the "Townspeople," a community of black and white, middle-class Americans. Heath refers to the two types as Q-I (questioner has information) and A-I (answerer has information). Although both of these types were present, most of the questions asked during sharing time fit into the second category of A-I. One reason for the majority of A-I questions relates to the self-disclosure function of sharing time. The children tell things about themselves which no one knows, thus creating the "Self-as-Autonomous-Person" which will be discussed later.

When a child begins his or her sharing time, he or she stands up in front of the class next to Mrs. Popper who remains in her chair at the front of the rug. If the student stands too far back, Mrs. Popper draws the children closer to her chair and the audience of children on the rug. The student holds up his/her object for the class to see and hands it to Mrs. Popper. Throughout the sharing process, Mrs. Popper guides the children with questions, comments,

and encouraging words. This example with Tony reveals the sequence of questions and answers that sharing time follows. Tony brings an action figure to share:

Mrs. Popper: "Who do you have?"

Tony: "Batman."

Mrs. Popper: "Did you see the movie?"

Tony: (indicates yes) "I like when he fights the Joker."

(Children make noise from the carpet.)

Mrs. Popper: "Shhh (to the class). . . . Show us how it works."

(Tony pulls a string on the figure to demonstrate it.)

Mrs. Popper: "Good for you for sharing. I'm proud of you."

Each child receives similar attention and guidance from Mrs. Popper like the example with Tony.

Depending on the "sharing" object and how comfortable the child feels in front of the class, Mrs. Popper will vary the amount of her questions and guidance. Even for a child who remains silent and does not want to talk, the question-answer sequence still guides the sharing. Noel, an ESL student, struggles with English and speaks very little in class. Mrs. Popper guides her through the sharing ritual with a series of questions and comments. Noel's sharing item is a key chain. Mrs. Popper describes the key chain which has a water maze attached to the ring to the class.

She encourages Noel to speak out loud in answer to her questions:

Mrs. Popper: "Water. . . maze . . . Where did you get this?. . . United States?. . . Japan?"

Noel shakes her head up and down to indicate that the key chain came from the United States. Although Noel remains silent throughout the sharing, the format of question-answer remains intact.

As an Anglo-American, Mrs. Popper follows the same pattern of talk that Heath (1983) discovered between mother and child in the community of Townspeople. Heath found that "the baby is treated as a potential conversationalist" (p. 245). Mothers constantly direct questions to the baby even though the baby cannot talk yet. Instead, the "mothers assume the baby is attending to their talk, and any response is interpreted in intentional and representational terms by the mother" (p. 248). Like these mothers, Mrs. Popper continues to ask Noel questions, waiting for some kind of response from Noel that will be interpreted as an answer.

Although the audience must remain silent during sharing time, the sharer not only is permitted to speak, but is encouraged to share by "talking" rather than "showing." I observed the children during the beginning of their school year. Even though the children had only been in the class just over two months, already many of them demonstrated they understood the different roles of sharing time. When a child shares, he/she plays the role of "talker;" and when

the child sits in the audience, he/she assumes the role of "listener."

This next example with Greg demonstrates how Mrs. Popper encourages the children to practice good listening skills. Greg brings a Transformer action figure to share with the class. He stands up front near the class and looks at his classmates while he explains his transformer figure. Mrs. Popper does not interrupt him with questions or additional comments, except to agree with his explanation with an occasional "yes" or "uhuh." With these short verbal responses, Mrs. Popper demonstrates to the children good listening behavior in the Anglo-American speech community. A good listener, whether or not he or she actually comprehends what is being said or not, does not remain silent, but instead periodically indicates through a nod of the head, a "yes," or "uhuh" that he/she is listening to the speaker.

The children are aware of the importance of listening while someone else is sharing. If the children fail to assume their "listener" role, Mrs. Popper reminds the audience to be quiet and respectful of the person who is sharing. When I asked the children what they do in sharing time, some children responded with how they should behave during sharing time. These behaviors relate to their role as "listener." The audience must do the following:

Sit quietly and listen to whoever is sharing.

Not fight.

Don't bug each other on the rug. Don't touch each other.

The children know that Mrs. Popper will take them out of the sharing time if they don't follow these rules. If Mrs. Popper catches the children misbehaving or failing to participate by not listening attentively during sharing time, she will send them back to their table. Although the children still hear and see sharing time from their table, they are no longer a participant in sharing time. They have left the physical setting (the rug); they are not addressed by the sharer; and they have violated respect for the sharer and teacher by not being a good listener. The primary function of sharing time is "talking" not "listening." The attention and focus is on the child who is sharing up front. The audience plays a passive role, so that full attention may be given to the speaker. This reinforces the "Good Communicator." The audience becomes important only when they hinder the task of the "Good Communicator," and then they are quickly silenced so that the primary purpose of sharing time may resume.

Mrs. Popper's responses to Greg's sharing also affirm Greg's ability to share properly. Because Greg demonstrates he knows how to share, he requires less guidance from Mrs. Popper during his sharing time. Greg appropriately assumes the role of "talker" during his sharing and demonstrates competence in his role. Greg also talks about his object

rather than some other topic which indicates he understands the informative nature of sharing time.

An important aspect of sharing time is its informative function. One interesting example comes from a troll doll that a boy brought in to share. The boy shows the doll to the class and announces that it is a troll. However, the troll is dressed in army camouflage and Mrs. Popper draws the students' attention to the outfit. She asks the children if they know when or why people wear camouflage. The children call out various answers, but no one says "war." Mrs. Popper goes on to explain how camouflage works to disguise people and why that is important for soldiers during war time. As this example indicates, sharing time informs the children about events outside the classroom through the use of sharing object brought into class.

Another example of the informative function of sharing time comes from Amy's sharing. The day previous to her sharing day, the children and Mrs. Popper asked Amy different questions about her family. "Where does your dad work?" "How old is your brother?" "What grade is he in?" During her sharing time, Amy brings a piece of paper up to Mrs. Popper with the answers to the questions that the class asked her. Telling the answers to the class, Amy does her "sharing." Amy's example of information sharing differs from the earlier example because the information in this case functions as self-disclosure. By sharing with the class about her family, Amy discloses personal information,

allowing the children to understand and develop a concept of the person "Amy."

Through the question-answer sequence, children share information about their object. Their sharing object becomes the referent of their talk. Part of this referential function includes accuracy of the talk. Stephen, during a sharing time when a substitute teacher was present, shares about a camping trip. Although he does not bring an object with him, this dialogue indicates the importance of accuracy in the talk of sharing time.

Stephen: "I went on a camping trip with my sister, uh. . . and saw some deers and bulls and it rained a lot."

Sub.: (interrupts) "Bulls? Do you mean male deers? They're called bucks."

Stephen: "I climbed this mountain. . . . There were holes in the rocks and it was fun."

Sub.: Do you remember where?

Stephen: Mount Diablo. . . . It rained and our sleeping bags got all wet. . . and it was cold.

The substitute corrects Stephen's use of the word "bull." This focus on the accuracy of words reveals the emphasis on referential talk in sharing time. The children stand up in front of their classmates and assume a role like an "actor" on a stage, but they engage in more than just a performance. Sharing time concentrates on the referential aspect of the children's talk and becomes an exercise in creating

referential talk. Accurate and precise language, thorough description, and complete explanations all becomes important factors in sharing time talk.

Jeff's sharing of a horseshoe is another example of referential talk and the importance of accuracy in the children's sharing time.

Jeff: "See, um . . . How they put the horseshoe on. . . You use special kinds of nails, not like the round nails. He hammers the nails and he bends them and he makes it all smooth. . . . This is like our fingernail" (referring to the horse's hoof).

Mrs. Popper: "Who did you get this from?"

Jeff: "Uncle Gregory. I got two uncles. . . . I went to him for the weekend."

Mrs. Popper: "Is he a blacksmith?"

Jeff: "He could be a blacksmith or the other name. . ." (He can't think of it).

Mrs. Popper: (Struggling to remember) "It will come to me. . . a farrier!"

Jeff: "Yeah!"

During his sharing, Jeff holds up the horseshoe and points to it as he describes the shoeing process. Although Jeff directs some of his comments to Mrs. Popper, he also faces his audience and holds up the horseshoe for them to see easily. Although the word "blacksmith" gives the audience a sense of what Jeff's uncle does, Jeff and Mrs. Popper are unsatisfied with the term and struggle to think of the

correct and accurate name. Their looks of relief and satisfaction indicate the importance of accuracy in talk.

The question-answer sequence, the role of "talker" and "listener," and the focus on information and referential talk allow the "Good Communicator" to be constructed during sharing time. By accomplishing these various aspects, the children learn what it means to be a good communicator in this classroom. This construction of "Good Communicator" extends beyond this classroom into the larger Anglo-American speech community. The function of talk during sharing time relates to what Heath (1983) discovered in the community of "Townspeople." In that community, the children learn from the time there are babies that talk is important. In the Townspeople's community, "there is a consistent emphasis on the baby as an individual, a separate person, with whom the preferred means of communication is talk" (p. 246). The Townspeople teach their children to use language referentially; language is used "to represent something in the environment or situation symbolically" (p. 248). The townspeople's children learn how to be information-givers and receivers through various types of question-answer routines.

In the speech community of this classroom, the first graders learn to share in direct reference to an external object. Their sharing time is constructed based on how they use language to represent the object of their sharing. Like the Townspeople's children, each first grader is viewed as a

separate person who is capable of communicating during sharing time. The preferred method of communication for the first-graders is "talking" about their object, not "showing" it. By following the question-answer routines, acting in the appropriate "talker" and "listener" roles, and fulfilling the informative aspect of sharing time, each child learns how to be the "Good Communicator."

Not only does sharing time honor the "Good Communicator," but it also honors the construction of personhood in the form of "Self-as-Autonomous-Person." During sharing time, the children are singled out to share. They share one at a time and stand apart from their classmates next to Mrs. Popper. Mrs. Popper indicates that she wants the children to build up confidence and practice getting up in front of the class. She believes that:

> Some are real extroverts and don't need any help [with their sharing]. Others can bring something concrete to share and they don't have to say much, just stand up front. But gradually (she rolls her hands to emphasize a building up) they get more confidence and speak out. . . . Some kids could talk on forever. They have no problem with sharing and you have to stop them--cut them off.

Sharing functions as an autonomous act. It allows the children to build their confidence and sense of individuality. Even though the children share together, the delivery of sharing time remains solely an individual event.

Each child learns that it is important to express him/herself, to disclose information to others about the "person" you are.

The focus of an individualistic construction of personhood, as opposed to a collectivistic construction, extends beyond this classroom and into the larger Anglo-American speech community. Carbaugh (1990) identifies the importance and power of "self" in the discourse of Americans on the talk show Donahue. Self functions as:

> a powerful symbol that signifies an independent center, somewhat bounded, that only individual acts can access, and make available to others. The assumption that persons have a 'self' pervades American discourse. . . . [and] the having of 'self' is a taken-for-granted. (p. 125)

The children in this classroom learn at six or seven years of age that a "self" is the most important right they possess. The dialogue on Donahue occurs among adults, but this first grade classroom reveals that the process of constructing "Self-as-Autonomous-Person" begins in the most formative years of development--childhood.

Mrs. Popper affirms this notion of a separate "self." Mrs. Popper uses sharing time to reinforce the idea that each child is a separate person, a unique individual. Thirty-two first graders and one teacher leave little time for one-on-one interaction. Sharing time becomes a time when Mrs. Popper gives each child that undivided, personal

attention she feels is important to their development. Mrs. Popper indicates that:

> With a class this large, it is difficult to give kids individual attention. . . . to reach their needs. Sharing time is one way I can make them feel special and give them special attention.

This special attention reinforces the idea the student is special and important in his/her own unique way. Each child develops a unique sense of self, different from the rest of his/her classmates.

The focus on sharing-as-a-responsibility is another way "Self-as-Autonomous-Person" becomes honored during sharing time.

If a child forgets to bring his or her sharing, Mrs. Popper reminds that child of his/her responsibility to remember sharing. Even when a child forgets his or her sharing, Mrs. Popper encourages him or her to <u>tell</u> the class something instead.

> Boy: "I have nothing to share."
>
> M.P.: "Do you have something to tell us?"
>
> Boy: "No."
>
> M.P.: "It's important you share something with us each week."

Mrs. Popper frequently reminds the children of the responsibility associated with sharing. Children that remember to share are praised for their contribution to sharing time. One particular sharing time demonstrates the

significance of the responsibility issue. One boy, Michael, had forgot to bring sharing for a number of weeks. Finally, Michael remembered to bring his sharing to class.

> Mrs. Popper: "Good boy Michael! Both of you remembered today [another boy who had forgotten last week remembered as well]. This is the first time in weeks, and weeks, and weeks."

Not only did Mrs. Popper praise him, but the other children exclaimed their surprise and happiness that he remembered to bring his sharing. By the children's reaction, they understand the importance of sharing time and how they need to take responsibility as an individual to make sharing time proceed.

Each child in this classroom has a responsibility to share as a separate, individual person. Carbaugh (1990) claims that the broader American culture views the presentation of self as a guaranteed "right" which must be respected by others. The responsibility placed upon the children in this classroom to participate in sharing time also gives them the right to speak out. If the children take responsibility and remember to bring their sharing, then once a week they are guaranteed a right to speak. Along with the responsibility and rights of sharing, the child is respected during sharing time. When this respect is violated by the audience, the "listener," the violator loses his/her right to participate in sharing time. Responsibility, rights, and respect all interrelate in the

sharing time ritual and help to construct a sense of "Self-as-Autonomous-Person."

Sharing time also relates to what Philipsen (1986) describes as a "code of dignity" in Anglo speech communities which values "individuality, the sacredness of the person against the group, equality of opportunity, shared power, fairness, sense of self-worth, and inalienable rights to material well-being without the need to ask for it" (p. 257). Sharing time promotes equality among the children; each one is privileged weekly with a voice through his/her sharing time. Each child is encouraged to be open and express something about him/herself through an object or experience. The sacredness of the self is honored again and again as each child steps out of the audience of classmates to assume the independent role of sharer, portraying a unique and individual sense of self.

From my first day in the classroom, I could feel the excitement of sharing time and enjoyment the children took in performing it. The children hurry into the classroom from their recess time. They look eager and happy as they talk with each other about what each one will share for the day. However, even though the tone is positive and welcoming, the children still feel shy and scared about sharing time. I asked them how they feel during sharing time. Some responses from the children include the following:

I am nervous but when I get up there, then I'm glad and it's fun.

I feel shy.

Everyone is quiet, so I feel shy.

When I didn't know everyone's name, I felt shy.

I feel scared.

Their responses reinforce the idea that "Self-as-Autonomous-Person" is being honored during sharing time. They all indicate that sharing time is enacted by "I" rather that "we." Even though they all participate, the actual performance remains an individual act. Their feelings of nervousness and being scared are not unlike responses from beginning public speakers (or even veteran speakers). Although sharing time maintains an informal, positive atmosphere, it still functions as an individual performance, much like a speech, which causes some anxiety among the children.

The construction of personhood also relates to what the children bring to class to share. They told me they have brought things such as toys, joke books, stuffed animals, and pets. From watching sharing time, I saw a wide range of "things," including: frogs, eggs, glass figurines, pictures, Bible story book, Spiderman book, action-adventure figures, T-shirt, kaleidoscope, computer game, rocks, pieces of glass, and a tooth-fairy pillow. There are no criteria for a sharing item except that it somehow relates to the person who shares about it. Through sharing and describing

their sharing object, the children develop a sense of personhood. The individual focus of sharing time allows each child to see the "uniqueness" of each one through the object the child shares about in class. The various objects allow each child to develop a different sense of personhood apart from each other student. Sharing time is the one time during the day when each child expresses his/her personhood through his/her "sharing."

The "Good Communicator" and "Self-as-Autonomous-Person" are two significant functions of sharing time, but sharing time also honors a third "sacred object" which is the notion of "Authority." This part of the ritual becomes evident through the roles of spectator and exhibitionist that the teacher and children play out during sharing time. Scollon and Wong-Scollon (1990) discuss the issue of the presentation of self as a power relation between speakers. They claim that:

> For American English speakers, the person in the superordinate or dominant position is the spectator and the subordinate person is the exhibitionist. . . . In school English speakers expect children to display their abilities as exhibitionists to the teacher as spectator. There is no doubt at the same time that the teacher is in the dominant or superordinate position. (p. 265)

Sharing time in this English-speaking classroom displays these same notions of spectator and exhibitionist. Though

Mrs. Popper questions the children and comments on their sharing, she remains a spectator during the ritual. She does not bring objects to share herself and the children focus much of their talking directly to Mrs. Popper. The children are like exhibitionists in that they use their abilities as "Good Communicators" to do their sharing time for Mrs. Popper. While the rest of the class watches sharing time like Mrs. Popper, they do not become spectators because they remain in the subordinate position of students. The sharer assumes the role of exhibitionist as soon as he/she stands up to share. Although Mrs. Popper will guide the child during his/her "exhibition," she remains a spectator not only because of her status as the authority figure, but also because she does not participate in the sharing ritual in the same way the children do.

By taking on the exhibitionist role during sharing time, the children develop a respect for their teacher who functions as the authority figure of the classroom. The children know that the teacher has the ability to correct, discipline, and praise them during sharing time. Part of becoming the "Good Communicator" is demonstrating a respect for the teacher. Although self is constructed individually, the children all assume the role of exhibitionist and develop a sense of personhood based on how they differ from their teacher who functions as the spectator.

Hymes' (1972) components of "ends" or "purposes" of the speech act reinforce the significance of the ritual of

sharing time. Hymes explains "ends" or "purposes" of speech acts as having two focuses: outcomes and goals. Outcomes and goals relate to each other, but remain distinct. Outcomes refer to the general purpose to be accomplished and goals refer to the individual purposes, usually different for each participant, in a speech.

The general purpose of sharing time, which applies to all the children, is to learn how to be a responsible, good communicator. The outcome of sharing time is that a "Good Communicator" engages in referential talk which is accurate, descriptive, and truthful.

The goal of sharing time relates to its outcomes, but is best expressed in the sacred object of "Self-As-Autonomous-Person." The goal of each child in sharing time differs because each child is creating a unique and autonomous sense of personhood. Although they all are working at becoming "Good Communicators," they express this individually rather than collectively.

More implicitly, the "end" of sharing time reveals how the children develop respect for the authority figure, their teacher. This respect for authority results from the contrasting roles of spectator and exhibitionist. Through sharing time, the children learn that they possess a specific role which differs from that of their teacher. They develop respect for authority because, in part, the authority figure guides them in becoming a "Good

Communicator" and helps them construct "Self-as-Autonomous-Person."

Conclusion

The ritual of sharing time reveals that a diverse and multi-ethnic group of children comprise a single speech community and culture. Sharing time unlocks one aspect of the culture of this first-grade classroom. Through this ordinary, everyday event of sharing time, these first-graders speak "in deeply cultured terms" (Philipsen, 1986, p. 259). As Campbell (1972) notes, ritual gives form to human life, not on the surface but in depth. Unless one understands how the ritual of "sharing time" functions, a rich and deeply-grounded event in this first-grade classroom is lost in the simple expression of "show-and-tell."

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Footnotes

[1]I want to thank the principal who allowed me to come into the school and the first-grade teacher who graciously volunteered to let me participate and observe in her classroom for my project. The name of the school, teacher, and students are pseudonyms.

[2]Direct quotations will be signalled through double quotation marks ("). Paraphrases will be indented from the text without any quotation marks added.