

# La Etnometodología, una alternativa relegada de la educación

*Ethnomethodology, an alternative education relegated*

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“Por otra parte, cuantas más cosas ha llegado a conocer la mente, mejor comprende también sus propias fuerzas y el orden de la Naturaleza; y cuanto mejor entiende sus fuerzas, tanto mejor puede dirigirse a sí misma y darse reglas; y cuanto mejor entiende el orden de la Naturaleza, más fácilmente puede librarse de esfuerzos inútiles. En esto consiste, como hemos dicho, todo el método” (Spinoza, 1988, p. 90).

## Resumen

La Etnometodología es una propuesta sociológica alternativa con una consistente argumentación para estudiar los contextos sociales. Es una joven e interesante opción dentro de la metodología cualitativa que gracias a su solidez va ganando adeptos en la comunidad educativa. Y puede ser la opción para proporcionar una nueva visión y una diferente interpretación de los acontecimientos sucedidos en la escuela.

**Palabras clave:** etnometodología, método, educación.

## Abstract

Ethnomethodology is a sociological alternative proposal with a consistent argumentation for study the social contexts. It is a young and interesting option within qualitative methodology with its strength is gaining popularity in the educational community. And it may be the option to provide a new vision and a different interpretation of the events that occurred at school.

**Key words:** ethnomethodology, method, education.

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## Introduction

The need to write on this subject has to do with how some other methodological approaches such as ethnography, case studies, grounded theory, phenomenology, biographical study, etc., have gained ground in educational studies and the little interest shown by ethnomethodology. The living daily educational action is thirsty for novel interpretations suited to provide a better understanding of the educational phenomenon.

Ethnomethodology born in the sixties, in an environment characterized by a laborious search paths for the study of the social, and even has won its place in the chair and in the spaces in which the qualitative methodology is, There are not many studies with this tool to confirm their acceptance among researchers.

Ethnomethodology belongs to what some have called microsociology and is located within the interpretive paradigm. Giddens, a critical neo-Marxist sociologist, says it is studying the "etnométodos". These are the popular methods or inexperienced employees to make sense of what they say and make the other (Giddens, 2000, p. 111). Therefore "... it refers to a method that people have. It is a knowledge of everyday affairs that can be revealed in the form of practical reasoning "(Pérez, 2006, X). This approach provides a choice of holistic understanding of social processes (Merlino, 2009, p. 58). So, without method or own theory it is confined only to describe the etnométodos.

The main foundational ideas ethnomethodology come from research on social interaction, language, ethnography, social psychology and cognitive science. The results of its application studies have brought to light really novel (Firth, 2010, p. 598), making their inquiries into the social world from the everyday, from the context where the events of daily living occur. From initial investigations it has demonstrated against the "professional sociology," because in his description of the etnométodos states have no theory or method.

Ethnomethodologists have substantiated the argument that gives consistency to the analysis with respect to what the members in a context act, talk, hear and perceive. However, due to the lack of a settled body already dense theoretical discourse, search this new perspective has remained marginalized in terms of methodological preferences of social researchers.

Those who conduct research with these assume that the interactions between members of the group to study are made in an orderly manner and in a particular context, which depends on good group functioning and natural alternative methodologies. The focus is to understand how to carry out the organization of these interactions (Flick, 2007, p. 36).

#### **A. Exordium** (capture attention)

Ethnomethodology has gone through a number of adjectives which give an idea of the content that works. It has been considered as an important component of the theoretical paradigm of social definition, and as a variable in the creative sociology. There are even those who have been identified as a sociology of everyday life and considered a variant of social constructivism (Ritzer, 1993, p. 263). But the initiators ethnomethodologists have said that far from following its own theoretical line or a specific method, are limited to the description of etnométodos.

Its immediate interest is in studying the way people interact. To achieve this, the researchers show special interest in linguistic communication (Firth, 2010, p. 598).

Initially, ethnomethodologists made their studies in non-formal institutions such as home, subsequently focused their research efforts to the study of everyday practices in institutional settings such as the courts, hospitals, police stations, etc., in order to understand the how the staff carried out their daily work and how to perform daily tasks at the same time, they are building the institution. In the same way you could know how the teachers and the administrative choose day school, institution after the French Revolution has become one of the pillars of Western societies.

**B. Kish** (who)

Harold Garfinkel etnometodología coined the term in the fifties. His interest in this different way of interpreting and understanding the functioning of the community awoke to see how the collective decisions and verdicts of the jurors, especially from everyday common sense and legal knowledge is not built. When Garfinkel was given the task of bringing his observations to the scenes of everyday life he found that these common sense practices are saddled with the task of consummating and legitimize the social order. Thus, those everyday common sense practices can account for how both healthy relationships between students and the reprehensible acts affecting as school bullying are built.

**C. Quid** (what)

Ethnomethodology studies how the members of a context structure, conduct and understand everyday interaction. It pays special attention to what seems obvious in these trivial daily activities that people perform together. According to Garfinkel, from ethnomethodology it is looking to learn how common tasks performed by members of a society are true methods to analyze his actions, practical circumstances, knowledge of common sense and practical reasoning (Garfinkel, 2006, p. 2 ). They start from the understanding that any of the acts of the members of a context, however insignificant it may seem, may be a clear reason for study. Thus, ethnomethodological research aims to demonstrate "the ability to explain the actions as a continuous practical achievement of members" (Garfinkel, 2006, p. 12).

The study of social action can be addressed "... from materials that keep the data in its original purity, kept the freshness of information generally provides the story of the individual" (Urban, 2007, p. 89). It would be attractive to know what happens in the classroom from the usual action of students and teachers. Illustrative also would know how indiscipline of some group is built, and if this is objectionable or not, etcetera.

The action, seen as an ongoing behavior (Ortiz, 1999, p. 162), is one of the explanatory nuclei formation and reproduction of social life. So action shapes the remarkable work known as social life. And it is in everyday life that flourishes action willing to lead a fruitful

exercise of reflexivity, with rationality and intentionality, which allows some control of the activities performed and on the social and physical contexts.

#### **D. Quando** (when)

The practical sociological reasoning aims to clarify the properties of speech and behavior in their contextual level, as these characteristics make, in addition to organized observable and tidy. "I use the term to refer to ethnomethodology investigating the rational properties of indexical expressions and other practical actions as contingent ongoing accomplishments and ingeniously organized practices of everyday life" (Garfinkel, 2006, pp. 19-20). These studies also allow him to settle the problem that he saw in the theory of action: the predominance of motivation as an essential mechanism. In this, of course, did not agree with Talcott Parsons, who believed that the main constituent component was the way "... that, consciously or not, social actors use their knowledge to recognize, produce and reproduce social actions and social structures . This emphasis on knowledge of the actors, however, revived the interest in discovering the ways in which social actors discuss their circumstances and can share an inter understanding of them "(Heritage, 2000, p. 292).

Among the contributions of Alfred Schutz Garfinkel he used to strengthen their theoretical position, include those that relate to what the actor knows the own constructions of common sense, allowing capture the motivations and intentions of others. Thus, both the properties and the content of these constructions are final, for Schutz, on the foundation of the foundations of social theory, for its immediate reference in everyday life gets the guarantee that reality is replaced by a non-existent fictional world created by the researcher. Also for this author, in everyday life, "the suspension of the doubt" is presented, as it assumes the objectivity of facts and objects. And since the objects are built from subjectivity, a constant reconstruction by a "synthesis identification" constant renewal is needed. Social objects are constructed daily by individuals from a remarkable familiarity and undeniable foreknowledge (Heritage, 2000, pp. 297 and 298). Inside the school countless examples of interaction of students and teachers are given, which gives an unmistakable opportunity to study.

Another prominent authors who greatly influenced the ethnomethodological proposal was Edmund Husserl, founder of phenomenology, explaining that structure the perception of reality. He saw subjectivity as a component that gives the world its status objectivity. According to him, no knowledge comes from experience with the senses but is the product of consciousness and had to prove only that cast doubt on the reality; that is, we must question whether what we see is outside appearance.

#### **E.- Ubi (dónde)**

The studies were performed in the same context where social events, where normal live is consumed. This lets see everyday actions as methods that demonstrate the uniform, consistent, planned, the continuous, as directed, the equivalent, substitutable, the everyday, the plug, the repeatable, so isolable from the same common stock; that is, their rational properties (Garfinkel, 2006, p. 19). School tissue and the current social and economic importance of education constitute a true crossroads for ethnomethodologists visit classrooms and give his version of what happens there. This will surely understand the magnitude of what is the school itself and what happens inside, which would inevitably bring a reconceptualization.

#### **F. Cur (why)**

Garfinkel seeks to analyze the social organization from the structures of experience of the protagonists, far from objectively deducted categories or terms, since only from these structures can be recognized activities and events as rational phenomena (Firth, 2010, p. 600) . And achieved, among other things, show that the social partners are not in goals spaces outside human agency, they are also their own social activities which allow to build the stage, the meaning and social order, especially in the educational institution is a particular and complex way.

Ethnomethodology is a strong element of criticism of the proposals Talcott Parsons. This sociologist, father of structural functionalism argued that social order is maintained primarily by internalization, as necessary measures of social norms, which allow a stable and orderly society.

**G. Quem ad modum** (on how)

Ethnomethodology is based on field work than other disciplinary studies have used, among them discussions, participant observation, direct observation, document analysis, audio and video, and so on. All prepared from an anticipatory expectation. Some are distinctive use as "experiments of violation of rules".<sup>1</sup> It also makes an exhaustive review of conversations recorded in audio and video tapes that have been used to study face dialogues and interactions between social actors in various scenarios socially organized. The use of these devices allow classroom study found, among other things, how the professors flaunt common sense procedures to restructure their teaching strategies, which is what happens when students are not learning the way teacher predicted.

Analysis of the talks is the preferred ethnomethodologists instrument for studies because dialogue is the mechanism through speech, more commonly usually used in everyday interactions (Giddens, 2000, p. 111). This type of analysis would open the place to meet the daily educational activity which takes hold the teacher to reach the learning expected in students, or to understand how this area of uncertainty is built known as recreation time from the study the dialogues of the students themselves.

In general, the Ethnomethodology works on two perspectives: the first is addressing issues in emergency conditions some maintenance of social order, and that is clearly influenced by studies. Talcott Parsons,<sup>2</sup> and the second focuses its studies toward rationality and practical knowledge.

Since we came into the world we suffer a socialization process, and we do it through the various lessons which we are going appropriating. Such knowledge will indicate how we move in the world and allow us to develop the skills that allow us to understand and perform

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<sup>1</sup> It is that the student is placed in a social context in order to analyze their behavior and intentionally breaks the rules that govern it and then work on the reaction of the members.

<sup>2</sup> "Items are rooted in the writings of Talcott Parsons, Alfred Schutz, Aron Gurwitsch and Edmund Husserl. Over twenty years, the writings of these authors have provided guidelines for the study inexhaustible world of everyday activities. Parsons's work, in particular, remains an impressive milestone by deep penetration and unerring accuracy of its practical sociological reasoning on the constitutive task of social problems and their solutions" (Garfinkel, 2006, p. 3).

the roles that society assigns us (Perez, 2010, p. 1). It is through the socialization that individuals are aiming the various meanings. They do this by developing and using characterizations, ie, new construction and pre-built that build from their particular way of understanding reality and used to give names to things and define their meaning in everyday activity (Ritzer, 1993, pp. 268-269). It would be interesting to conduct gender studies at school, to learn the gender resources through which the pupils and students build their femininity and masculinity respectively while staying in educational institutions; This would allow us to understand common practices that define gender-surely interesting cases as the study did Agnes Garfinkel be found.

The process used as the main tool typing language, this being an important component of the social world. Through him we forge the values and patterns of behavior that we collect from family, friends, the environment in which we live. Through language, we assign to objects a number of features that are preserved in the collective imagination (Ritzer, 1993, 265 p.) And, of course, give content to the everyday act; in the case of what goes into school, give meaning to his studies.

#### **H. Quibus adminiculis** (by what mechanism)

The social reality can be perceived and interpreted from the same action performed by individuals. And you can do it from an approach to the language used by the subjects in their interactions, because speech is a means for the activity. The hermeneutic effort to interpret and explain requires involvement in the framework of meaning which the subjects to construct their social world (Giddens, 1993, p. 159).

Linguistic signs take its meaning from what social actors perceive their environment, in their daily lives. Users of the word endow their meaning within the given social practices in the games built in the community where language use is determined sense. The essence of the things we perceive from the language, which demonstrates his control over it man (Heidegger, 1994, p. 120).

For his part, Habermas strongly emphasizes the pragmatic dimension of language, because this is where the dialogic and communicative society (Diaz, 2007, p. 48) is built. Such is the



power of language that determines what is true and what is not, "... if we ever manage to reconcile with the idea that the reality is, for the most part, indifferent to the descriptions we make of it, and that I, instead of being adequate or inadequately expressed by a lexicon, is created by the use of a lexicon, we finally have understood what was really in the romantic idea that the truth is something you do, rather than something it is "(Rorty, 1989, p. 27).

## **Conclusion**

Ethnomethodology, thanks to the number and depth of devices performing the studies can be the tool that allows managers, researchers, teachers and parents, know in depth what happens at school, and a dip new way to interpret the educational act to open new paths of interpretation. It can address many diverse matters, from which sense and reason have the games played in moments of leisure experiences to teachers and students in the classroom building to achieve learning; also it allows you to navigate in the sense of students to understand the reasons why they play a different role in the study group, sports team, club artistic activities, and so on. They could examine how to build effective homework meet, build relationships with teachers and peers strategies, plus a host of issues related to their required training.

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