

Micro-Paper 3: *Ethnography*

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Defining the Term

Ethnography, as a qualitative research approach, intends to help cultural interpretation. The purpose of ethnographic research is to invite researchers to immerse themselves in the field to better understand the social phenomenon of their interest. Ethnographic research requires researchers to observe and describe in detail, capture images and talk extensively with people in that field. This process, therefore, must go beyond reporting details or results of experiences. The intention of studies using ethnography is, on the contrary, to deeply interpret and understand what these social phenomena really mean.

Ethnography creates the possibility of seeing the world from different perspectives, allowing researchers to pose different questions about the same event. Even if one were to observe it again, days after the first observation, one would discover new findings and new understandings.

Connecting it to LSLP

At LSLP, we chose to frame our research projects under an ethnographic approach. Choosing such an approach has enabled our research team to realize the importance of fieldwork. An ethnographic view of data collection, with its emphasis on multiple instruments and realities, has invited us to constantly restructure the questions and our vision of the city.

Both our city and gaming literacies projects, as well as some school literacies studies, have adopted ethnography as our main approach. We believe that ethnography allows us to explain, describe, and provide insight into the field or the practices we are investigating in context.

Expanding Second Language Research

While first appearing in anthropology, ethnographic research has found a space in fields such as literacy and language studies. Ethnographic studies have great potential in the field of second language, as they provide rich accounts of social and language practices in diverse contexts. Through our research, we have learned that ethnography has all the necessary features to better study language research practices. Given the necessity for researchers to be within the fieldwork studied, in addition to the multiplicity of data sources, there is plenty of potential to use elements from ethnography for studies related to second languages.

References

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