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“When I am now reflecting on it”: The interview as the participant’s reflexive moment

Abstract

Reflexivity has become a key feature in ethnographic and sociological studies, especially in relation to interviews. However, the reflexive process is for the most part discussed as pertaining to the researcher rather than the participant (Alvesson, 2003; Bucholtz, 2001; Riach, 2009). As such, it is also discussed as an ‘off-stage’ phenomenon rather than a process that can take place within the interview. In this paper, I focus on reflexivity within the interview itself, in an instance where the participant’s reflexivity is the focus. Using an interview during which the participant states a political stance, examines it and shifts it, I examine the discursive features that are part of this reflexive encounter. The interview is from a study on political discourses of academics in Sri Lankan universities. The aim of the paper is to look at the interview as a discursive space for reflexive relationships for both the participant and the researcher.

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Keywords: reflexivity, discourse, interview, participant, ethnographic_method

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