Jero Time: The Great Andamanese Tribe and its Perception of Time

By Dr. Vaishna Narang

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SUMMARY

The location of the observer in time and space is extremely important. The point in space and time of observation and also the method of observation decides what you observe. In the present context, the observer is not an individual. It is a group, a socio-cultural group, with its own ethnic identity, a speech community that perceives reality in a certain way. An individual located at a point in space and time perceives reality (time in this case) in a certain way because he or she is located in a certain socio-cultural and linguistic context at a given point of time. Current study deals with Stephen Hawking's four-dimensional model of Space-Time and is focused on Jero, The Great Andamanese Tribe and their perception of time as reflected in their language. The conclusions drawn on the basis of linguistic data lead us to the world view of this ancient tribe, a very different way of perceiving reality, which does not require positing 'self' as the reference point and as the deictic centre. The tribe called Jero has only 50 members surviving who have completely acclimatized to the mainstream culture and language. With the new language/s they speak, they have also acquired this new perception, the so called 'modern' worldview, which compels you to first posit 'self' as the deictic centre and then only comprehend reality in relation to that deictic centre. With their language they have also lost that ancient perception of reality which was holistic, and perhaps more objective.

Introduction: Jero - one of the ten, or ten tribes together?

Andamanese is a group of tribes belonging to the 'Negrito' population. 'Negrito'-the term 'Negro + diminutive' is generally used to refer to presumably early humans, presumably out of Africa around 60,000 years ago. Areas where some of these tribes are still surviving are the Andaman Islands, the Malakka peninsula (Thailand and Malaysia), the Philippines and Australia. Actually very little is known about these tribes. Perhaps the only other known Negrito representatives are the 'Semangs' of Malaysia and the 'Aeta' of Philippines (Pandit 1976: 84). The Andamanese tribes and the languages are usually divided into the so called ' The Great Andamanese group' and 'The Little Andaman group'.
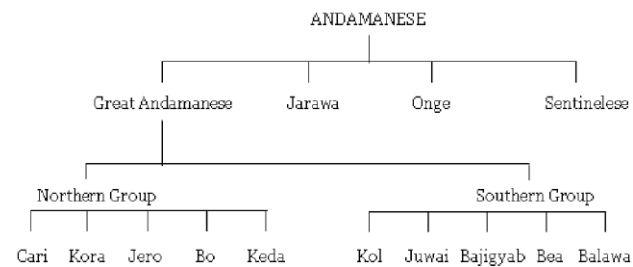
Figure 1.

The tribes of the Little Andaman are the Onges, the Jarawas from the interior of the South Andaman (the outer group, as they are referred to sometimes) and the Sentinalese of the North Sentinel Island, and also the Shom Pen, not to be confused with the Great Andamanese tribes. The latter are a group of ten tribes: Aka-Cari, Aka-Kora, Aka-Bo, Aka-Jero and Aka-Kede form the Yerewa group from the northern parts of Andamans, and Aka- Juwai, Aka-Kol, Aka-Bojigyab, Aka Balawa and Aka Bea belong to the Bojingungji group from the South Andamans.

Most of these names of the tribes/ languages are words from the common day-to day life of the people. For instance, Jero means 'canoe', Bea means 'fresh water', Bojig-yab means 'speech-language', Juwai is 'pattern on arrows', while Kol means 'salty'- all these words signify roughly the same sense in all the ten dialects/ languages grouped together as The Great Andamanese . Aka- is prefixed to indicate that it is the 'tribe/ language'. 1901 Census figures indicate a total of 625 Great Andamanese, with the largest number, 218, from the Jero tribe. In 1921 these figures came down to 208 out of a total of 786, and in 1931, 460 Great Andamanes had only 90 Jeros. In 1949 the Forest Department tried to bring them together and settle them at the Bluff Island, but because of their nomadic nature and lack of any kind of inter-tribal cooperation and understanding, these tribes did not stay together for long.

In 1969, the Andaman & Nicobar Administration offered to help them if they stayed in Strait Island. By this time they were too few remaining, only 23 in all, who identified with each other as the Great Andamanese with many of their inter-tribal differences of culture and language completely lost. So they thought it wise to accept the offer and stay together. The Great Andamanese group settled in Strait Island in 1969 consisted of:

Jero		*Kora*		*Bo*		*Cari*		*Balawa*	
M	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*
7	4	1	-	4	2	1	3	1	-

Very soon they all spoke one language, Jero with some words from the languages of the other tribes completely assimilated into it. Since then their numbers have increased from 26 (1961 census), 23 reported in 1971, 39 in 1981, 47 in 1991, and 43 reported in 2001. As of today their number is 50, with nearly 20 persons under 12, and only four persons in the 50+ age group.

The numbers have increased mainly as a result of mixed marriages, since these people are free to mix with the people of the mainland, and have adapted to their way of life.

They speak Port Blair Hindi, a rather pidginized form of Hindi, dress like the "mainlanders", eat their kind of food, some of them have contractual jobs with the A & N administration, and it is not surprising at all that the younger generation does not know more than a few words of Jero or any other of their own languages. Some of them do not know any Jero at all as they communicate amongst themselves in Port Blair Hindi. The younger people like to spend maximum time in Port Blair at Adi Basera, which is the base camp for the tribals provided by the A & N administration.

In 1989, when I first started working on their language, and on subsequent visits to the Strait Island in 1995-96 for this project, I realized that there was a complete change in their lifestyle; their culture and traditions completely lost, and the only source of data was the oldest surviving couple, Nao I ('I' implies Nao 'senior', since, as per their conventions, one of the younger children, usually a grand child gets grand father/ mother's name. Hence, in this community, there is Nao-II/ junior as well) and Bowa, aged approximately 75 and 65 years in 1995 at the time of data elicitation. They, especially Nao I gave us the maximum data, while his wife, Bowa and another woman in the community, Lecho, who was younger and was able to comprehend both the languages, interpreted the data we obtained. The other informants included Ilfe (68) and his wife Boro (55), Kota (65) and his wife Ile (52). Ilfe and Kota had both retired from Police, while Jirake (around 50) still worked for the police, and also did some private electrical repairs. Jirake's wife Surmai (age anywhere between 35- 40) could provide a few words in Jero but otherwise mostly spoke Hindi. Nao I died in 2003, and Jirake who then became the king, also died three years later, in 2006. Manoharan (1989) and Chakraborty (1990) give interesting life sketches of some of these people and older generation.

As indicated earlier in this paper, when the Great Andamanese tribes moved to Strait Island, they were left with 23 surviving members, 11 out of those were of Jero tribe, 6 from Bo, 4 from Cari and one each from Kora and Balawa tribes. In 1990, the only one surviving member of Kora tribe was still there, and all the rest inhabiting Strait Island claimed to be Jero speakers from Jero tribe. There was no mention of mixed marriages between tribes, which did not matter any longer. There were also additions to the Jero families mostly through marriages with the non-tribal people from the mainland, Port Blair.
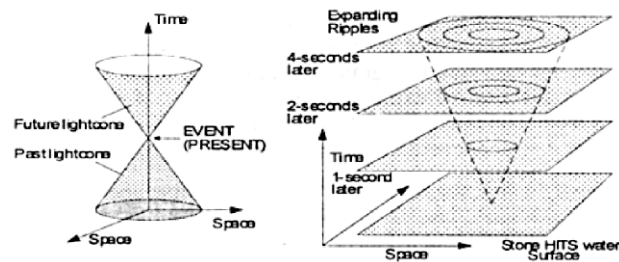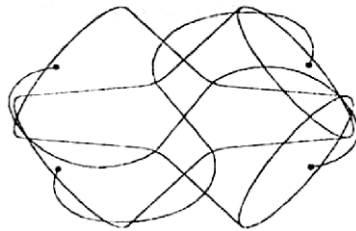
Figure 2: Hawking 1988:27.

Figure 3.

Sources of background information

For historical accounts, we rely on the travel diaries and notes of people who came in contact with these tribes as early as 1669. For a comprehensive report and distribution of the tribes in the Andaman Islands, one can rely on the 1901 Census report which was written by Sir Richard C. Temple in 1903. For anthropological insights, Radcliffe-Brown (1948) is the most reliable source. As far as the linguistic descriptions are concerned, Manoharan's (1989) descriptive grammar of Andamanese is probably the first study with extensive data in IPA, collected by the author using the field techniques of structural linguistics, while Chakraborty (1990) gives an anthropological description and the present day profile of the surviving members/ families of the tribe. These two studies are important because when these two authors collected data for their respective studies, their main source was Loka I, who knew his language well, and also knew the local language of communication with the mainland people i.e. Port Blair Hindi. He was very active, very versatile, well-informed and was an excellent source of data on language and culture of all the ten tribes called the Great Andamanese. Loka I died in 1986 at the age of 100 (a very rough estimate).

In addition to these and several other studies (Basu 1952, Mathur 1968, Lal 1976 and others), there are reports of the Census 1901 to 2001 that contain population details and some more descriptive accounts of the tribes, but there is no systematic analysis and description of the language or the speech sounds of Jero. As of today the language is far too creolized and the sounds, the phonetics and phonology of the language shows a close resemblance with the languages in contact, the Port Blair Hindi, as well as the pidginized forms of Bangla and Tamil.

An important point about the younger generation and its cultural adaptation which has a bearing on the present study is that they all learn numbers and counting (especially counting money) at a very early age, they also learn to name the days of the week, and months (English names as pronounced in Port Blair Hindi), and have no problem handling those or any other categories requiring deixis as the basis. None of them ever bothered to learn those things in Jero. They do not care if they can not name six or seven fine distinctions between different stages of the sunrise, e.g. recognizing early morning of 3 a.m. as different and distinct from say the early morning at 4 a.m., which is just before dawn. Their ancestors did make those distinctions and there are words in Jero for sunrise, a little before sunrise, dawn, a little before dawn, dark before dawn, etc. which many of the present generation Jeros do not know and do not care to remember.

Examples from different languages show that the linguistic expressions for time and time relations, tensed structures or otherwise vary from one language to another, because of the way we perceive time relations in one culture or another. At times we find that one language uses two different tenses for certain time relations for which another language does not require more than one expression. We also find that grammatical time at times has nothing to do with the function of expressing time relations. An all time intrigue, Time needs careful interpretation and investigation.

What Is Time?

In order to talk about the nature of the universe and its properties like space and time, one is likely to talk in terms of observable phenomena like things and events, states and processes. In "Shorter Oxford English Dictionary of Historical Principles" for instance, the meaning of the word TIME is given as "limited stretch of space of continued existence as the interval between successive events, or the period through which an action, condition or state continues' .... Further, it says 'Indefinite continuous duration regarded as that in which the sequence of events takes place' (Onions 1959: 2193). Time is universally conceptualized as a flow and that is why one often finds it being metaphoricized as flow of water, or compared with a flowing river. This flow of time is considered finite only in one sense that it begins and ends with this universe. St. Augustine said that time is a property of the universe that God created. And God created universe with time, not in time.

Time is not separate from and independent of space, but is combined with it to form an object called Space-Time. This is the reason why one often tends to define one in terms of the other, viz. time in terms of events, events in terms of time and space, and sometimes space in terms of time. A meter, for instance, is the distance traveled by light in 0.00000000335640952 seconds, and this new unit of length is called a light second/light year. The hands cover a certain distance on the dial to indicate a certain period of time, while the 'hourglass' system of indicating time was yet another way of measuring time in terms of space traveled by the grains of sand and in terms of the event of a certain amount of sand crossing over from the top cone to the lower cone.

Stephen Hawking (1988) describes ST (space-time) by imagining four co¬ordiantes of an event as specifying its position in a four dimensional space called Space-Time.

Figure 4.

Hawking uses diagrams in which time increases upwards, one of the two spatial dimensions indicated perspective, while the fourth one has to be ignored or imagined.

The diagram indicating 'future light cone' separated from the 'past light cone' by the point marked Event (present) interestingly resembles the familiar hourglass structures. It may be easier to compare the space-time dimensions of the object - ST with the hourglass, labelling its upper sand come as 'future-ST cone' and the lower sand cone as the 'past ST-cone'. The point in the centre at which grains of sand are gradually passing from the future ST - cone to the past-ST cone may be called the moment 'now', the present time. To understand the human perception of the ST and the events located in ST it may be worth while comparing the ST-hour glass with the description of Lord Shiva's damaru in Hindu mythology. It is believed that the two cone shaped parts of Lord Shiva's damaru represent 'future time' and past time' and the middle part represents the 'present moment'. The movements of the damaru indicate how human mind moves into the realm of past experiences and then, the next moment he is in the realm of future. His present is nothing but a continuous switch between his past and what he makes out to be his future. Of course, it needs a certain level of consciousness s to keep the two distinct.

The ST point 'here and now' is for an individual to experience and identify, and varies from person to person depending on his location in space and time. The dimensions assigned to the ST point 'here and now' varies a great deal depending on the speaker's perception of reality and his own location in 'Cultural' space and time.

Breaking up this moment 'now into smaller units of time one reaches that little fraction at which a unit in future is being converted into the past time, like those grains of sand moving from 'future cone' into the 'past cone' continuously. It is this constantly fleeting moment, the moment with zero dimensions that is described and labeled as 'now'. The point labeled 'present' or 'now' should be called 'here and now' in this space-time concept.

Two models of Time: Linear and Cyclic - 'Straight line' or 'kaala chakra'

While the western philosophers conceptualize time as linear, something that flows onwards, represented by a straight line or an arrow, the Indian philosophers conceptualize time as cyclic, represented by a 'cakra'. In physics and in mathematics one learns that there are no straight lines joining any two points. Our understanding of the shape and the movement of

earth tells us that point is a reality, straight line is not. If a line joining two points is curved, then an extension of such a line should give us a circle and a linear representation can only be a representation of a small section or a part of the whole. kaala cakra represents this very conceptualization of time, the holistic view of time.

Linear time and cyclic time are two conceptual models reflecting two different perceptions of time. What we may call 'linguistic time' or grammatical time is a linguistic representation of different perceptions of time.

Breaking up this flow of time egocentricity, using 'now', the time of speaking as the dividing point, we arrive at two major divisions of time - time before now, and time after now, the past time, and the future time respectively. The present time, theoretically, has no dimensions and is a point where a minimal unit of time is continuously being converted into past time, but in every context of situation it may be conceptualized very differently - a point at one extreme and as stretched into infinity on the other extreme. For example 'now' man is a social being, 'then, he was just a biological being, like any other animal., where then refers to a stage in the process of evolution when perhaps Neanderthals were the most sophisticated animals. Contrasting 'now' with' then' in every context of situation one defines the limits of 'now' just as 'here' in contrast with 'there' in space could mean a point in space, or may refer to the whole planet-earth.

In any case, for any stretch of time to be referred to as 'now' or 'the present time; it is obligatory to have the present moment, with no dimensions included in it, part of the stretch of time preceding it, and part of it yet to materialize as 'now'. It is that zero moment into which flows the future time and out of which flows the past time. It is that moment which is ever changing its position, moving forward continuously, 'difficult to perceive and impossible to hold'; unless you view the point now as 'present time' which has duration, its limits extending from infinity to infinity, eternity to eternity.

In absolute terms, what is 'now'? In Physics there is no concept of 'now'. Time becomes divisible into 'now' and 'then/not now', i.e. the present time and any other, the past or the future time only when the observer, the speaker enters the picture. The observer locates himself at a point in time, usually the moment of speaking and then only, using this moment of speaking as the reference point 'now' divides what was before as the past time and what is to follow as the future time. The speaker's location in time and space

becomes the deictic centre and any linguistic / grammatical category which is based on deixis is a deictic category. Apart from tenses, personal pronouns are also deictic with 'I' as the reference point, and 'you', 'he/ she/ it' changing reference, the moment 'I', the speaker, the deictic centre changes. Here- there, now- then, before- after, etc all are deictic in nature.

Perception of Time and its Linguistic / Grammatical Representation

Predicating about some real life situations one needs to give its ST orientation, i.e. to locate the event in space and time. The situation may be located in ST egocentrically, in terms of 'here-there' and 'now -then' locating the event in relation to the speaker's location in space and time. Using different forms of verb to indicate the temporal orientation of the event, deictically, is nothing but 'grammaticalization of time' by means of 'tenses'. Using 'now' as the deictic centre, one may locate an event before now, 'in the past time' or after now in the 'future time', and mark the same grammatically as the past or the future tense. Tenses thus express 'situation external time' as opposed to 'situation internal time which is aspect. The 'Internal temporal contour' (Hockett 1958) of a situation (viz. progressive, or perfective) is represented by what is referred to as aspect which therefore, unlike tense is not a deictic category. Tense and aspect together usually take care of the linguistic expression for situation time.

At the level of communicative function, however things get more complicated as the speaker's attitudes and the speaker's response to the situation time which may be grammaticalized differently in different languages as 'mood' (modality) becomes more important. Apart from what is grammaticalized as mood the speaker's individual response to situation time may vary so much from one sociocultural context to another, that the speaker may choose a set of options (in tense- aspect- mood together) which is just appropriate for that specific context of situation. So, the linguistic/ structural manifestation of the time relations in a language depends on how one community perceives these time relations, which vary a great deal from language to language; from one speech community to another, and from one socio-cultural context to another.

The perceived reality, Time in this case, varies from one cultural group to another, and hence, the linguistic expression for the same also varies from one language to another. To quote Gill (1989) from The Abelardian Semiotics -'Words are imposed upon things by human convention and they do not carry the same significance from one language to another, hence they are 'arbitrary', but as they signify 'intellection' of a given thing, they operate within the sphere of logic. Words constitute intellections or what were called 'analyses' in the 18th century by Condillac and his followers, they represent logical propositions on the object under study.

They do not correspond to the physical, empirical reality of the thing (object) but to its intellective reality. Hence, they move from one intellection to another (Gill 1989:36). Our perception of the reality and the linguistic expression for it are so closely interrelated that one can not perhaps talk about one isolating it from the other.

Tenseless languages: What is meant by tenselessness in languages? It certainly does not mean a sense of 'time-lessness': Hopi language speakers perceive reality as a multidimensional whole that includes properties of events pertaining to the spatial and temporal orientation of the events, and they find it perfectly normal and natural to represent the same as such. As a result Hopi represent 'facts' or 'general truths' by structures that are 'tenseless' (Whorf 1956) and only need to make a distinction between events that have already been experienced or those that are still in the realm of future. So, while it is perfectly natural for the Hopi to include 'tense logic' in 'modal logic', another linguistic group which perceives reality with a linear, sequential order may assign a temporal orientation to such all time truths by choosing certain tensed structures for the same.

John M. Fritz presented a paper on "Hopi Time" in an International seminar on Time 'kala' in IGNCA, in 1990 in which he examines the nature of time and causation in Hopi culture. He shows how Hopi myths of origin link space to time, how Hopi sense of spatial geometry evident in Hopi art and even in the layout of their villages 'which may at first seem static, embodies the dynamism of creation and origin. First, it contains the directional grid according to which the events of the world are organized. Second, it manifests, the sequence of actions through which something has been created- it is completed, or at least frozen in time, the sequence in which it was created (Fritz 1990: 8). It may not be out of place to quote Thompson and Joseph on Hopi world view "The Hopi way of looking at the universe shows that the concept of change in linear, cause and effect terms, which is common among us, is absent in the thinking of these people, who see life in terms of inter-related, multi-manifested wholes in the process of metamorphosis, each according to its own mode, rhythm and tempo" (Thompson and Joseph 1944: 44).

Concept of Time in Jero culture and Tenses in Jero language

Since the linguistic representations of the temporal and spatial orientation of the events/ situations largely depend on the collective perception of the speech community, their world view, it is important to understand how the community perceives these relations. How does man, human mind, singularly and collectively as a group relate to nature is a question that has interested intellectuals and scholars from different disciplines. Temporal (and spatial as well) orientation of man as an individual, and temporal orientation of the world outside an individual therefore interests physicists and mathematicians as much as it interests philosophers, theologians, anthropologists and social scientists.

As a linguist my investigation into how a language expresses time (spatio-temporal relations rather) is only to find out/ to hypothesize about the collective perception of reality by a community which is reflected in the language of that community. Examining the time relations as reflected in the language of the Great Andamanese tribe, we find that their world view is completely different from those of the other speech communities they are surrounded by. Since most of them are bilingual, some of them multilingual, they are able to answer our queries regarding numbers and tenses using one of the modern languages that they all know, mostly Hindi. When you remind them that the example is from Hindi and not Jero, and repeat your question or example asking them how would they say that in Jero, they would either say 'we don't know', or 'we don't have it in Jero.'

It is not surprising at all that at every stage of data collection (since it was mostly done through PB Hindi, which they all speak) we had to keep reminding the informants that this is Hindi and not Jero. Their responses were matching the structures, and numbers, and the names of the days of the week…etc with Hindi. If one insisted on a Jero expression for a word, such as now, today, tomorrow, before this, after this, worked and will work etc, their simple answers were like- 'we don't have it in Jero'. Bowa, Nao-I's wife, addressed as 'Chachi' by all the youngsters in the community replied 'we don't need to say things like that' in Jero. When asked about the names of the days, she said 'why do you want to learn it from us. We learnt it from you (meaning Hindi speakers)'. The younger generation does not know more than a few words of the language since they are brought up in the environment of Port Blair Hindi.

Manoharan's study was a great help. We had enough examples in hand to ask the Jero people questions about their language, in their language. We finally selected only those words and phrases from Manoharan's data which were recognized by at least some members of the tribe. Since Manoharan's data was collected around 1980, or may be earlier, and field work for the present study was done mostly in the year 1995, 96, and 1999, and 2000, the speed with which the language was moving towards extinction was obvious and alarming. Proper documentation of the data, therefore, was the top priority. Our data consists of audio and video recordings, as well as words, phrases and sentences transcribed using IPA. Some of the speech and voice samples are also being digitized so that it could be preserved for future reference and analysis (for examples refer to lists of Words, Phrases and Sentences on website Jero, The Great Andamanese).

Salient features of the language vis-à-vis time relations are reproduced here for the general comprehension of the worldview of the tribe.

There are 17 classifiers which are suffixed to the 17 classes of verbs.

'verb+ classifier' takes suffixes –e, -om / -o, which are usually interpreted as markers of situation time, viz. tense, aspect etc. 'verb+ classifier + -e' signifies a number of things such as: 'copula', 'simple statements (indicative mood, factual statements) / simple present', 'simple instruction/ imperative mood', and some more.

'verb+ classifier + -om' signifies progressive / continuing situation, which continues into the future time and –m is dropped when there is no indication of or reference to the future time.

'verb + classifier + -o' function therefore overlaps with that of –om since both indicate something which is being witnessed by the speaker, or something about which the speaker is sure, i.e. – contingent mood unlike using –e with the stem.

When examined closely, the examples given at the end of this paper and in the report of the project indicate that there are no grammaticalized time references (tenses) in this language. Perfectivity is marked lexically, and + /- progression is marked grammatically, whereas –e suffixed to the stem makes it a general, unmarked category.

I would like to propose the hypothesis that (i) there are no tenses/ tensed structures in this language, and that (ii) mood/ modality takes precedence over tense, and aspect as well.

Dexo- prefixed to a sentence indicates perfectivity. Such a sentence would have −o suffixed to the stem, 'verb + classifier' which is as explained in 4 & 5 above, thus lexicalizing rather than grammaticalizing perfective in the verb phrase.

When asked to translate a sentence beginning with dexo- in the beginning, one of the informants said this meant- 'enough', or 'already', or 'finished'.

There have been various descriptions interpreting the suffixation of −e, −o, and −om as grammaticalising time as tenses in Jero. One realizes the problem only when each one of the constructions using any one of the suffixes can be translated by using a number of differently tensed structures. The only way one can perhaps explain these suffixes is by first of all accepting the fact that there are no tenses in this language, and the reason is their perception of time which is very different.

Tense as a grammatical category requires deixis, and speaker's location in time, the time of speaking, 'now' serves as the reference point, the deictic centre.

Jero uses 'verb + classifier + -e' as the unmarked category used for simple statements as in indicative mood, contingent mood, imperative which also implies some uncertainty, which could be read as 'modality' and 'mood' rather than tense or aspect.

'verb + classifier + -om' is the only category where a certain amount of certainty on the part of the speaker is required. The speaker having witnessed a situation can thus claim a certain amount of certainty. As a grammatical category this could also be read as 'mood', +contingent.

The hypothesis that one could draw from these observations is 'recognition of self as the centre of universe' the observer and his location in time and space as 'here, and now' is a later development and this is what is reflected in most of the modern human languages in the form of tenses (and other deictic categories). Jero, like Hopi language and the tribe, views time from a much higher level of abstraction, and does not require 'now' or 'self' as the deictic centre.

As a corollary to no 14, the earlier man had a vision to perceive reality even without looking upon himself as the deictic centre. For him it was the holistic view of space and time with speaker/ self as much a part of it as any other person, or a being or a thing could be.

Their worldview has also been discussed by cultural anthropologists although much of information on that aspect is already lost since the tribe has adapted to new ways of life. But tenses, pronominal references and other aspects of language structure retain these and similar clues to the past.

Another point which strengthens and supports my hypothesis is the fact that the use of numbers, concepts like greater than/ smaller than, and mathematics in general, words for yesterday and tomorrow, before and after etc completely missing in Jero language. They do recognize the lunar cycles as one way of reading into the temporal orientation of the universe, but probably do not need to break it into weekly cycles of 7 days, hence no names for the days of the week in Jero. The day consisting of 24 hours is, understood much better since they could recognize different times of the day (and night) very well. This explains why there are seven or eight different terms for different stages of morning, before and after the sunrise.

Conclusion

As explained in points 1 to 10 above the language has linguistic/grammatical markers for progression of an action/ event, and completion of an action/ event, and also as a general statement of truth regarding the event/action. For example -e marked to the verb stem makes it a general statement of truth- as in 'clouds' are dark, 'sky' is 'blue', 'oil floats on water', 'color of blood is red', etc; 'dexo' -as a prefix is translated as 'already', 'finished', 'completed', 'enough' (as in have/ had eaten, have/ had worked,) depending on the context and use of perfective. Suffix '-o' or '-om' clearly marks 'progressive action' i.e. 'is going', 'is eating', which is aspect (situation internal time) rather than 'tense' (which is situation external time).

When examined closely one finds that there are no grammaticalized time references called 'tenses' in this language. There are no markers indicating that the event is located in the past time or the future time or the present time which may be taken as the past tense, the future tense or the present tense respectively. The fact that the three tenses and (further subdivisions in the three if needed) require speaker's location in time (and space) as the first point of reference so that one could then identify the past and the future as before and after with reference to that point as the deictic center. Jero language does not have grammaticalized tense references or any other grammatical categories which require positing self / the time of speaking as the deictic centre.

If you can describe a situation without locating yourself in it then definitely you would need a higher level of abstraction and a higher level of objectivity to be able to view the reality as a whole, and represent the same irrespective of your own location in time (and space). Isn't that an indication of 'emancipation' from linear time in which you locate yourself only to be lost in a maze from where you can not perceive reality as a whole? In another context Russell said 'certain emancipation from the slavery of time is essential to philosophic thought' (Russell 1914).

To conclude, one may interpret time relations in Jero language as reflecting a very objective, and holistic perception of time by the Jero people, who do not find it necessary to first recognize self as the deictic centre and then relate everything else to that. The question before us now is 'Are we looking at yet another -the so called 'tenseless language'? If so, then what are the parameters pertaining to the space-time of the situation which are more important for the Great Andamanese? In other words what is their perception of time, or space-time in their culture? If there are no words for 'before', 'after', 'yesterday', 'today', and 'now' in this language, is it because of their holistic and/or cyclic and not really linear perception of time? Is this an indication of 'certain emancipation from the slavery of time' which according to Russell 'is essential to philosophic thought' I wonder if the ancient tribes like the Jero and the Hopi through their languages exhibit that level of emancipation from our kind of slavery of time.

This paper is a modest attempt to show that the ancient Paleolithic Negrito tribes had a worldview which was more objective, holistic, than the so called 'modern' worldview, and modern perception of time as reflected in language traces of which can still be seen in their language, Jero in this case. It's a pity that most of the languages spoken by the Negrito populations scattered in parts of Southeast Asia are either extinct or on the verge of extinction due to contact with the 'modern; and the 'civilized'. The Jero, one of the Negrito tribes in Andaman Islands discussed in this paper is an example of how ancient civilizations lost their culture and language, and in the process their worldview, their perception of reality.

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