# Module 5: Communities

## Introduction

What exactly is a “community” and why is this term important to linguistic anthropologists? This module deals explicitly with the ways in which linguistic anthropologists frame and conceptualize groups of people who use language. It uncovers some of the assumptions and unstated social theories that underpin commonly used concepts such as **speech community** or **community of practice**, and will introduce you to some of the most interesting research that furthers our understanding of the relationship between linguistic practices and social groups.

## Objectives

After completing this module, you should be able to:

* Define **speech community** and **community of practice.** Explain how these concepts differ from one another.
* List **Gumperz’ criteria** for identifying a speech community.
* Describe some of the **criticisms** made of the speech community model.
* Name **alternatives** proposed to the concept of speech community.
* Explain the **criteria for defining a community of practice**.
* Understand an example of close conversation analysis.
* Analyze the merits both the speech community and communities of practice models.
* Evaluate the appropriateness of each concept for pursuing specific kinds of research questions

## Time Management

This course is designed to maximize benefits gained from our weekly f2f meeting. In order for our class meeting to enhance and further deepen your understanding of course materials and help you achieve our module objectives, I suggest you manage your time wisely. An efficient example of how you can best utilize your time for this course is as follows:

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| --- | --- |
| **Day** | **Suggested Action** |
| Monday | Read assigned reading and module content |
| Tuesday | Finish assigned reading and module content |
| Wednesday | Original post due in the weekly graded discussion |
| Thursday | F2F Meeting |
| Friday | Response to another’s original post due by midnight tonight |

## Assigned Reading

This week, you will complete the following readings. Please do the reading as you complete the module content. You must have the required reading done prior to our f2f class meeting on Thursday.

Ahearn, Laura. *Living Language*. Ch. 5.

Bucholtz, M. [“Why be Normal? Language and Identity Practices in a Community of Nerd Girls”](http://www.jstor.org/stable/4168925)

Meyerhoff, M. [“Sorry in the Pacific: Defining Communities, Defining Practices”](http://www.jstor.org/stable/4168926)