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The Link between One's Identity and Culture and the Role of Language as a Medium for Contact and Communication

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ABSTRACT

To express ideas and communicate effectively, language is a strong and essential instrument. Diverse civilizations speak diverse and distinctive languages, or at the very least, a different dialect. Our identity is clearly influenced by our language. The main aim of taking this topic is to cover the issue that one faces due to language and cultural non-resemblance and it ultimately impacts one's identity. This issue would be explained through my own experience.

Other examples of elements that influence our identity include gender, ethnicity, and culture. But language "is essential in forming our identity. This review study intends to provide a better grasp of the relationships between language, identity, and cultural diversity in order to help learners gain a greater comprehension of these ideas for upcoming work or projects, language may also serve as a marker of authority and cultural affiliation. From the perspective of studies done addressing the Same, the current study examines the relationship between language and identity. Social existence is mostly linguistic. In addition, there is a huge variety of languages spoken by people. Therefore, this study article will discuss how to get beyond the difficulties caused by the language barrier, particularly for individuals who are not native speakers but have moved to a certain location because of personal issues and are consequently caught in the language's web. The most widespread and arguably the most intricate and fascinating of all human abilities is language. Since it is a tool for interactions between individuals, it fosters the cultivation of people's skills, sparks creativity, invention, and originality, allows people to share and transmit their knowledge and experiences, and, overall, contributes to the creation of societies. Language-related worries are nothing new. The study's findings show a strong connection between one's identity and language, culture, and background.

Keywords: *culture, identity, language, native, relation, obstacles.*

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper will deal with various basic concepts of culture, identity, and language. We will be

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talking about the relationship between language, culture, and identity. This research paper is divided into various segments covering different aspects and variations that could be established between variables of cultural identity and language. Interrelations, links, and connections through the variables which we have taken in this paper have also been explained thoroughly. This research paper will also analyze and talk about the existing research done in this field. My own experience with this subject matter has also been shared in the same.

(A) Scope

The interaction between language and culture is constantly changing and receptive, and both have different effects on how each other operates. Identity and self-perception may vary and develop when people contact with others from various cultures and pick up new languages. whilst distinctive tongues and cultural groups interact and diverge, language and culture can also spark disputes and feelings of animosity.

(B) Literature Review

An integral part of a person's personality is language and culture. Language and culture are intricately linked in many different ways. The use of language influences cultural makeup, and one's identity shapes communication. In order to fully understand how one's identity is influenced by their language and culture, it becomes essential to look at these connections. The current body of knowledge will be examined in this literature study. The papers and books listed below will provide us with a fundamental grasp of this subject.

1. John Edwards' 2009 book "Language and Identity" The present piece investigates the connection underlying the relation of language and identity, making the case that language is a key component of identity formation. Edwards discusses the manner in which language is utilized to establish and communicate social, cultural, and personal identities by drawing on a variety of theoretical viewpoints. He also talks about the difficulties in preserving linguistic variety as well as the function of linguistics in power relations².
2. Shahrzad Mahootian's (2006) book "Language, Culture, and Identity: An Ethnographic Study of Iranian-Americans" In this article, Shahrzad Mahootian talks about as to how Iranian Americans' experiences with language, culture, and identity are examined via an anthropological lens. Mahootian examines the relationship between language and culture in Iranian-American identity as well as how social and political forces influence

² Edwards, J. (2009). Culture and language. In *Language and Identity* (pp. 56-78). Cambridge University Press.

these facets of identity. In addition, she talks about the difficulties that Iranian Americans encounter in preserving their language and cultural traditions in the country.³

3. Masaki Kobayashi's 2011 article, "The Cultural Identity of Second Language Learners: A Study of Japanese Students in Canada, "Studying English as an additional tongue in Canada for Japanese students involves looking at their cultural backgrounds. In order to investigate the manner in which students' encounters with language and culture impact their sense of identity, Kobayashi used a combination of methodologies. He discovers that the student's language use and cultural identification are inextricably intertwined and that their contacts with people from both their own and the dominant culture have an impact on how they perceive themselves.⁴
4. Leo van Lier's 2004 book "Language, Identity, and the Immigrant Experience" Van Lier investigates the manner in which the course of action of acquiring a fresh tongue impacts immigrants' sense of identification in this piece of writing. He contends that language is essential to the immigrant experience and that learning a language entails not just developing linguistic proficiency but also resolving issues of cultural and social identity. Van Lier also talks about how linguistic ideologies and policies shape immigrant experiences.⁵
5. Farzaneh Farahzad's 2014 study, "Language and Cultural Identity: Perceptions of Iranian-Australian Youth, "⁶The viewpoints of young Iranian Australians concerning the connection between language and cultural identity are investigated in the current research. Through the aid of a qualitative approach to investigation, Farahzad investigates what happens when those who participated see their Iranian identity in connection to their usage of the Persian and English languages. She discovers that the participants' comprehension of language is directly related to their perception of their cultural identities and that they make use of language to articulate and negotiate their identities in a heterogeneous society.

The relationship between language and culture and one's identity is very clearly shown by the examination of numerous books and articles presented above.

³ Mahootian, S. (2006). Culture and language. In *Language, Culture, and Identity* (pp. 15-36). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

⁴ Kobayashi, M. (2011). The cultural identity of second language learners. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 35(4), 466-473. doi: 10.1016/j.ijintrel.2011.03.004

⁵ van Lier, L. (2004). *Language, Identity, and the Immigrant Experience*. Multilingual Matters.

⁶ Farahzad, F. (2014). *Language and Cultural Identity: Perceptions of Iranian-Australian Youth*. Lambert Academic Publishing.

(C) Hypothesis

Language and culture are closely related, and both are important in determining one's identity as language reflects cultural practices and ideals, demonstrating the tight relationship between language and culture. By fostering a feeling of community as well as shaping one's own ideas and behaviors, cultural and linguistic factors both have a big impact on how one defines themselves. Although the connections between language, culture, and identity are nuanced, it is undeniable that language and culture are essential elements of both our personal and societal identities.

(D) Research Methodology

The nature of the current investigation is qualitative. It is entirely based on the issues that I have encountered with reference to the subject. Additionally, a number of study papers and publications have been examined to get the result.

(E) Data Collection

The above data which is presented is solely based on my experience and matters posted on online websites.

(F) Limitations

The limitation that I experienced in conducting this research paper:

Target audience: The information in this research paper is purely based on what I have seen and experienced on campus. Only the students on my campus have been taken into consideration.

(G) What is Identity?

Starting with what one understands by identity. So, in the broadest sense, identity may be defined as the feeling of identity that a person has based on their distinctive traits, associations, and particular social standing. Identity also includes persistence since, in spite of numerous variations in settings, one continues to feel that they are the same person over time.⁷ The people who grow up closest to the individual during their early development have the biggest influence on them, and this is when the foundations of their identity are laid. Nevertheless, as people transition from childhood to adolescence, they start to question who they are and their place in the world. Youngsters then set out to investigate their ideas of themselves by attempting multiple behaviors and positions.

⁷ Yilmaz, (2019). Identity: Definition, Types, & Examples - The Berkeley Well-Being Institute. Berkely well-being institution,

(H) What is Culture?

The term "culture" refers to the characteristics and routines of human behavior. Spirituality, values, social conventions, artistic endeavors, practices, and routines are all referred to together as a culture.⁸ The intriguing aspect is the fact that culture virtually defies the simple definition of as a noun. As people tend to defy description because it may be something that is fundamental to our being. But even so, some of the most brilliant minds in history have nevertheless tried to describe it.

II. WHAT IS LANGUAGE?

Despite the fact that a great deal of the population uses language on a regular schedule, it can still be difficult to define clearly. In essence, the notion of "language" refers to every elaborate interpersonal interaction mechanism made up of phrases and verbs that, if paired together, may produce an endless number of different outputs. It is still a mystery the manner in which mankind initially learned the language, and language researchers are still trying to solve it. The majority of people learn at least one language throughout their formative years. A person is unlikely to be competent to learn a language adequately as an adult because of how the human brain develops, hence it is important for people to be exposed to the language while they are young.⁹

(A) How is language interlinked with culture?

A person's personality might be really reflected in their language. Our cultural and individual roots frequently influence how we communicate and express ourselves.

As it conveys our morals, convictions, and circumstances, the way we speak may disclose how we really are as well as characterize us. Language may therefore be thought of as a window into who we are. We may better appreciate the diverse makeup of mankind as well as the way we employ language to build and express our uniqueness by knowing the connection between language and identity. Additionally, it may be utilized to reduce cultural divides and unite individuals. Language constitutes the linguistic medium via which people may communicate by uttering words that are recognizable. This serves as a means of information transfer. In other words, it is the linguistic manifestation of a person's culture. The ability to tell someone's cultural background apart starts with their language skills. Language is mostly used for connection building as well as with the aim of obtaining facts.

⁸ White, L. (2016, April 3). culture. Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/culture>

⁹ Robins, D. (2023, April 7). language. Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/language>

III. FUNCTIONS IN PROMOTING CULTURAL VARIETY

The language used as Interaction between individuals with various cultural origins is referred to as cross-cultural interaction. Due to cultural differences, there is a substantial probability that interactions will be distorted. Language limitations make it difficult to comprehend concepts like etiquette, speaking gestures, and conversational structure. Usually, impediments to comprehension are caused by disparities in language. This is a consequence of the many ways in which values are seen. Language is the primary influence on how people perceive their environment since it shapes our cognitive processes. People's native cultures play a significant role in how they converse. The degree of cultural prejudice in people rises with language, which raises their narcissism in society.

The language emphasizes the feature of speeding variances in culture even more since it blatantly displays the disparities in communication. This approach, in turn, typically impedes cultural exchange efforts, which has a detrimental effect on interpersonal contact involving people with various cultural identities.

IV. LANGUAGE AS A MARKER OF AUTHORITY AND CULTURAL AFFILIATION

In the field of cultural studies, language consistently serves as a significant identification identifier. The subject of identification had been greatly influenced by linguistic developments amid the context of ethnic background. As the idea of ethnicity began to gain popularity during the period known as the decolonization era, the South Asian area in particular has been riddled with such organizations. As a result of the persecution of the minority ethnic group's language by the majority ethnic group, people began identifying more and more with their ethnic heritage, which sparked numerous conflicts throughout the various subcontinental nations.

(A) Language and Identity

Francis Fukuyama's concept, which at first holds that a person's inner sense of worth as an individual yearns for acknowledgment from the outside world, in which language, ethnicity, and identity are all connected. Since human beings inherently yearn for acknowledgment, self-esteem develops from other people's admiration. As a result, identity politics, in which people push for public validation of their value, swiftly take hold in the modern world. Thus, a sizable portion of the political conflicts in the modern world are included in identity politics. In fact, Hegel contended that the quest for acknowledgment served as the primary force behind human history and was essential to comprehend the creation of the modern world.

(B) My experience and observation relating to problems faced by me in regard to culture, identity, and language

So, relating my experience Coming to College as a student from north India was quite unfamiliar to me as my college was in the south. I had the impression that I had been dropped into a sea of other languages and cultures, each with its own distinct identity. Therefore, I had several challenges with languages in various groups when I first arrived here. It was difficult to communicate with a certain set of people due to language issues.

I discovered that groups of individuals with similar cultural backgrounds and languages tend to coalesce, and when outsiders join those groups, they immediately feel out of place and lose interest. This also caused misconceptions and misinterpretations in social and intellectual contexts. Additionally, it resulted in feelings of exclusion from one's peers and solitude.

When I traveled to the city, I sought an auto there, and as a result, 3 to 4 local automobiles appeared. I inquired about fare rates when I went there. They started talking among themselves in their own language, and eventually, they told me at a much higher rate.

Heterogeneous perceptions could potentially lead to disagreements or misunderstandings across different cultures.

Language is a good indicator of cultural differences. Being able to truly comprehend individuals who (presumably) came from very different backgrounds in terms of values and ideas requires mastering the intricacies of a language. Lack of knowledge of regional customs and traditions is one cultural issue that I faced that resulted in miscommunications and social gaffe mistakes. A new way of life, involving different foods, social customs, and daily routines, was also very difficult for me to adapt to.

I concluded or inferred from my observations that individuals around me experienced linguistic and cultural difficulties, which had an impact on their sense of identity. For instance, the linguistic limitations that prevented me and those around me from effectively speaking with others made us feel isolated and cut off from our immediate surroundings. They also struggled to comprehend societal mores and traditions.

V. CRITICAL ANALYSIS

In the discipline of societal linguistics, there has been much discussion and controversy regarding this complication and the dynamic link between one's identity, language, and culture. Language and culture are interwoven, and both are very important in determining one's identity. We may use the Hindu culture as an example, where handshakes and hugs are common greeting

gestures when individuals first meet. As a result, these gestures have come to represent who we are. and if someone doesn't do this greeting today, it will eventually be perceived as something improper. The importance of culture in language acquisition and instruction cannot be overstated. Understanding and communicating with a new and diverse set of people begins with language. However, culture is ingrained in the language, which means that language is expanded to express people's cultural opinions and attitudes. Culture is passed down through language, which is one cultural system. The construction, maintenance, and transmission of identities by people and communities are examined in studies of the connections between these two ideas. According to research, persons acquire their native language through cultural transmission rather than only through formal education which ultimately shapes their identity.

VI. CONCLUSION

Our conclusion section is now at hand, thus it has been separated into several sections for your convenience. the problem's scope, findings, and remedy would be included in this.

(A) Findings

1. Language and culture are intertwined and play major roles in defining who a person is.
2. Speaking the language of that particular group enables interaction with its culture and fosters community. This causes socialization to take place, which eventually aids in the identity-shaping process.

(B) Solutions

1. Try to get as much knowledge as you can about the culture of the opposite party. This requires understanding the motives behind various cultural embraces and peculiarities in addition to studying those behaviors and characteristics.¹⁰
2. Refrain from assuming something about a specific culture or language based on common misconceptions. Be eager to acquire knowledge and have a mind that is curious.
3. If you feel like you are experiencing trouble comprehending anything, it is acceptable to ask someone who is more familiar with the culture or language for assistance.
4. If you come across someone unfamiliar with your culture and language, make an effort to make them feel at ease using any appropriate means.

¹⁰ SHONK, . (2023, March 17). How to Resolve Cultural Conflict: Overcoming Cultural Barriers at the Negotiation Table - PON - Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School. Pon. <https://www.pon.harvard.edu/daily/conflict-resolution/a-cross-cultural-negotiation-example-how-to-overcome-cultural-barriers/>

Language and cultural instruction go hand in hand. Culture is seamlessly integrated into the environment of language acquisition and cannot be separated from it. Language is used to think, interact with others, and provide the groundwork for forming one's perspective and attitude on life. Therefore, language and culture cannot exist without the other and since these two together shape one's identity, the relationship between language and culture is undoubtedly symbiotic.
