

LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY

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Abstract: In the first place, Language is an essential aspect of human communication and plays a crucial role in shaping someone's identity. Our use of language reflects and influences our cultural, ethnic, national, and personal identities. It is through language that we express our thoughts, emotions, and experiences, and it's a key element in how we connect with others and form social bonds. Therefore, This research article will explore the multifaceted relationship between language and identity, examining how language acquisition, variations, gender, minority status, and power dynamics contribute to the construction of one's identity.

Keywords: language, identity, relationship, society, gender identity, technology, sociocultural identity, English learners, language learning

Introduction: This research explores the relationship between language and identity; with more than 7,000 spoken languages in the world today, we can transmit our identities and thoughts by using our language, and that is one of the strongest human abilities as far as the language is different as much as the transmitted can be different too since the language is a main and an important method to express our identities in any culture and society. Language is either individual words, connected speech, or even writing. While we use written or spoken language, we do not only express our thoughts, culture, society, intentions but also who we really are and how we want people to see us.

The relationship between language and identity is a strong unbreakable relationship, both of them affect each other in some way, and every person is affected by this relationship. Our language and our surrounding determine who we are, considering the importance of the language which is used among us and between us. While science grows and the researchers increase, they have been curious about that. And studied many places that were unknown, trying to figure out how the differences in the languages can create different identities and really, the differences in our languages can be an obstacle to being able to communicate with each other.

When we learn more about this relationship, it will help us even on a personal level. It will also help our understanding of the surrounding people, even if we are different in languages and identities. The more we know about this relationship, the more we will know how they are connected to each other and which one of them has a stronger effect on society. Our culture, which plays a great role in constructing our

identity, affects our language use; for example, in English speaking countries, the buyer use Thank you in buying things and please in the request more than in other countries. Unlike in Japan, mostly the person who sells is the one who thanks. Even though the situations are similar, and the order of the events is the same, we still find some differences. Our language and our choice of specific words and sentences are shaped by our cultures and our society, as well as the people around us. In some way, our language shapes them too.

Identity refers to the characteristics, beliefs, values, and experiences that define an individual or a group. It presents various aspects such as cultural, ethnic, national, personal, and social identities. Language, as a fundamental mode of communication, is intricately intertwined with these different dimensions of identity. Language serves as a reflection of cultural identity, capturing the shared values, traditions, and beliefs of a particular group. The vocabulary, grammar, and expressions used in a language often reflect the cultural nuances and experiences of its speakers. For instance, the use of specific words, idioms, or metaphors can reveal cultural values and practices. By using language, individuals affirm their membership and connection to a specific cultural group, reinforcing their cultural identity.

In the poem “What’s in a Name?”, written by Jani Rose, the author shares a powerful reflection on the significance of one’s name and its connection to identity. the poem highlights the importance of respecting and honoring the names that people are given, as they are an integral part of their identity and culture.

Our language is intimately connected to ethnic identity. Ethnic groups often have their distinct languages or dialects, which serve as a marker of their cultural heritage and group affiliation. Language can be a source of pride and solidarity within an ethnic community, providing a means to maintain and transmit cultural traditions across generations. It allows individuals to express their unique ethnic identity and foster a sense of belonging.

That being said, we can affirm that Language plays a significant role in shaping national identity. In many cases, a nation is defined by its official language(s), and language can be a powerful symbol of national unity. Speaking a common language fosters a sense of shared history, culture, and values among citizens. Language can also be a tool for national integration, promoting social cohesion and facilitating communication within a diverse population.

Moreover, Language is deeply intertwined with personal identity, because language(s) can influence their sense of self, their relationships with others, and their worldview. Language shapes the way individuals perceive and interpret the world around them, providing a unique lens through which they express their thoughts, emotions, and experiences. One’s choice of language can reflect personal preferences, aspirations, and affiliations, contributing to the formation of their personal identity.

Also, Language acquisition during childhood is a crucial stage in identity formation of a person because it allows children to communicate and engage in social interactions. Through language, children can express their thoughts, feelings, perspective, understanding, and ideas, and can also learn about the world around them. This helps them to develop a sense of self and place in the world.

When it comes to multilingual or bilingual settings, language acquisition becomes even more complex. Individuals who grow up speaking multiple languages navigate different linguistic and cultural contexts, resulting in a multifaceted identity. Bilingualism and multilingualism provide individuals with the ability to express themselves in different ways, adapt to diverse social environments, and engage with a broader range of cultural experiences.

Bilingual and multilingual individuals often develop a hybrid identity that incorporates elements from each language and culture they are exposed to. They may switch between languages depending on the social context or prefer certain languages for specific purposes. This fluidity in language usage allows for a more nuanced expression of identity.

To summarize, through reading, it is possible to understand that language is not only a tool for communication, but also a way of expressing the cultural reality of a people. Language reflects the perspective, understanding, and identity of a nation and its individuals. Furthermore, language and culture are closely linked, influencing each other. Understanding this relationship can help with communication and understanding cultural differences.

Language is the main instrument used for communicating with others, but it is also a fundamental part of our identity and is required for all aspects of environmental interaction. In considering the amount of time that parents spend with their children in forming their communicative style and building their character, family is without doubt the most significant factor in children's language development, which contributes to the shaping of their identities. As children mature into adolescents, their identities shift as they become more aware of how their peers perceive them, impacting their language use in such a way as to represent their social standings. Finally, geographic location produces dialect differentiation, which can lead to language barriers, making communication between people who speak the same language difficult. Based on these three factors, one can conclude that identity is never static and varies throughout time as a person's language evolves in a determined social context.

Conclusion: The relationship between a person's language and identity is fundamental. The importance of language and identity is indescribable. As we discussed, our language plays the most important role in expressing our identities and gives the most significant clues about our cultures. However, there is a variety of factors that affect this relationship, such as gender, age. Considering their roles in our

society as well as our daily life, we can not neglect their importance and how they help us to understand our own identities and others. And how we can shape the different aspects of our identities depending on our languages. And to emphasise the beauty in difference and how it will not become an obstacle to communicating with each other. Actually, years from now and with more and more studies, many secrets about the connection between language and identity will appear. Hoping this research will be one of them. I am sure that someday there will be research that covers all the different aspects of this amazing relationship, and I hope that day is soon.

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