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Abstract

Language is formed by culture, while culture is influenced and impacted by language. Language is the medium of culture. Culture and language shape one's identity and personality. This is the importance of culture and language to one's individual identity.

Keywords: *Language, Culture*



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Introduction

Language as one element of culture has a very important role in human life. Language allows a person communicating with others in meeting their needs. Thus, it can be said is the main function of language as a communication tool. Another function is as a tool to express self-expression, a tool to make integration and social adaptation, as well as a tool to hold social control.

Language

Language is a human system of communication that uses arbitrary signals, such as voice sounds, gestures, and/or written symbols. The study of language is called linguistics. Language is, today, an inseparable part of human society. Human civilization has been possible only through language. Language is a means of communication, it is arbitrary, it is a system of systems. We know that Speech is primary while writing is secondary.

Culture

Culture is symbolic communication. Some of its symbols include a group's skills, knowledge, attitudes, values, and motives. The meanings of the symbols are learned and deliberately perpetuated in a society through its institutions. Culture is a powerful human tool for survival, but it is a fragile phenomenon. It is constantly changing and easily lost because it exists only in our minds. Our written languages, governments, buildings, and other man-made things are merely the products of culture.

Relationship between Language and Culture

The relationship between language and culture is deeply rooted. Language is used to maintain and convey culture and cultural ties. Different ideas stem from differing language use within
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one's culture and the whole intertwining of these relationships start at one's birth. Each language contains a peculiar and unique world view, which causes speakers of that language to see and think in a characteristic way, different from the speakers of other languages. This has become known as the principle of language relativity. Language encodes the values and norms in a given society. As a culture changes, so does the language. Relationship between language, culture and thought bothered many linguists and philosophers since ancient time. Language is generally accepted as a system of arbitrary vocal symbols used for human communication. And there is a most widely accepted definition of culture: culture is the total accumulation of beliefs, customs, values, behaviours, institutions and communication patterns that are shared, learned and passed down through the generation in an identifiable group of people. The definitions of language and culture imply that the two are closely connected to each other. On one hand, culture seems so inclusive; it permeates almost every aspect of human life including languages people use. On the other hand, when people need to share a culture, they communicate through language. The purpose of language is to communicate with others, to think and to create the foundation for shaping one's standpoint and outlook to life. Culture on the other hand has multifarious meanings but for the sake of this article, the definition outlined below will serve our purpose. Culture is the total of the inherited and innate ideas, attitudes, beliefs, values and knowledge comprising or forming the shared foundations of social action.

Language and culture are unique human abilities. The ability to create a structured language for communication is what makes humans and our culture distinct from other species. Humans learn their culture through language and foreign cultures are also transmitted through language.

The role culture plays a major role in language. Humans are born without a language but are born with language-acquisition faculties which enable us learn languages. Research shows that humans learn their local language through cultural transmission rather than from formal learning.

This research goes further to state that to understand specific words and literary terms of a language, an individual must be familiar with the culture of that society.

Language influences culture. Language influences culture in diverse ways and provides people from other cultures with a window into understanding cultures other than theirs. Studies show that the vocabulary of any language tends to place emphasis on words

that are considered to be adaptively important to the corresponding culture. Therefore learning the terminologies commonly used by a culture provides a measure of understanding into the way of life of its people.

Teaching using another language in a different culture is hard. Teachers have encountered difficulties when teaching a second language not local to a culture to its people and here are some facts to explain these difficulties. Studies have shown that how students learn and interact with teachers is determined by their culture. Approximately 80% of language teachers agree that cultural boundaries and roots play a huge role in determining how students understand or interpret the new language expressions they are being taught. Therefore, creators of second language policies must be sensitive to the local culture of all people.

The language and culture of different societies greatly vary. In all communities, the spoken language is in a synergetic relationship with the culture of that society and Sapir-Whorf hypothesis states that; the characteristics, peculiarities, and literary words encoded in one language system are distinctive, typical, and unique to that system and they are dissimilar as well as incomparable with those of other systems. These dissimilarities in turn lead to difficulties in understanding the expressions and terminologies inherent to a certain culture by foreigners.

The major languages do not represent the cultures of the world. Studies show that colonialism saw languages having been adapted by diverse cultures for easy administration by the conquerors but they do not provide insight into understanding of these diverse cultures. Most nations using the major languages as their lingua franca have local languages that represent their culture.

The role of culture in cross-cultural communication is huge. Since each culture has its own language set and ways of communicating, cross cultural communications can be quite difficult for individuals. Research shows that culture constantly makes its presence felt during cross-cultural communication and this can lead to stereotyping and misunderstandings during communication. Language and culture are not monolithic and the belief in a monolithic human identity leads to social and political standoffs.

The relationship between language, culture and gender. Studies have shown that the language used by specific genders fluctuate in almost every culture. In approximately 80% of the world's languages, women may communicate at a deficit which is specified as the

‘woman register’ and this places them as inferior to men. This leads to social friction when genders from diverse cultures communicate.

Learning of new languages is achieved through cultural integration. Understanding a foreign culture plays a huge role in becoming competent with its language. Studies show that students of another language will learn to use expressions and terminologies in their right context if they acquire knowledge of the society’s culture. Therefore an integrated learning policy that targets both cultural and lingual learning is important to mastering a second language

Conclusion

Language is a major component and supporter of culture as well as a primary tool for transferring message, which is inextricably bound with culture. Learning a second language also involves learning a second culture to varying degrees. On the other hand, language is influenced and shaped by culture. It reflects culture. Cultural differences are the most serious areas causing misunderstanding, unpleasantness and even conflict in cross-cultural communication. So both foreign language learners and teachers should pay more attention to cultural communication information.

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