

University of M'sila

Faculty of letters and languages

Master1 level: Language and culture. Teacher: Mrs. Harizi

S2 lecture 1: Language, Culture and Identity: Is there any struggle between teaching a foreign language and preserving one's identity?

Introduction:

1_What is identity?

2_how do we present our identities?

3_ Relationship between language and identity

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5_ Cultural identity and language preference.

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7_ What teachers and students face while teaching/learning a foreign language

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Introduction:

Every single person has his own unique identity, and culture is a part of our identity. It builds our characters and manners. Culture contains language, food, customs, literature, and social activities. They decide what a person is today and will be in the future. People acquire the knowledge of language, social norms and values from their social groups and make their unique identity. Our culture and language build us to be complete human beings. In other words it is our identity. Hence, languages play an important role in providing a speaker with individuality and group membership. When you speak, you give other people important clues about what sort of person you are, where you come from or which social class you belong to.

How do we present our identities to the world?

Your identity changes as you change and as people who perceive your change.

- The way we dress (clothes, hair, accessories..etc).
- The way we behave (we as Muslims we have to show to the world a good picture about our religion and our beliefs).
- The way we speak (we must be proud of our native language and do not neglect it).

Relationship between language and identity:

Language is the medium of community, which means the first method of identity. Language serves not merely as a tool for conveying thoughts and ideas but also as a potent vessel for expressing one's cultural heritage, social affiliations, and personal identity. From birth, we are exposed to the language and the life style of our society. From community members individuals acquire the nuances, accents, and idioms that distinguish them. These linguistic elements become ingrained in their identity, shaping not only how they communicate but also how they perceive themselves and are perceived by others.

The Role of Cultural Identity in Language Learning

Cultural identity is the sense of belonging and identification with a particular cultural group. This includes the shared customs, traditions, beliefs, values, language, and social practices that define and distinguish one group from another. It shapes how individuals express and

perceive themselves and their place in the world, influencing their behaviors, attitudes, and interactions with others. It provides individuals with a framework through which they interpret the world around them and navigate their relationships within society. Cultural identity can be expressed through various means such as language, clothing, food, rituals, art, music, and religious practices, among others.

How important is cultural identity in the process of language learning for students? This is a question that has been debated by educators for many years. Some experts believe that it is essential for students to connect with their cultural identity in order to learn a new language effectively. Others argue that culture should not be a factor in language learning, and that the focus should be on grammar and vocabulary.

Cultural identity and language preference:

For many people, their cultural identity is closely linked to their native language. This can make it difficult when they move to a new country or area where the dominant language is different from their own. While some people are able to quickly learn the new language and adopt the local culture, others may struggle to let go of their previous identity.

It's important to remember that everyone experiences these changes in different ways and there is no right or wrong way to respond. If you're struggling to adjust to a new cultural identity, it's OK to reach out for help.

Aspects of cultural identity: Cultural identity is multifaceted and encompasses a range of aspects that shape individuals' sense of belonging and self-identification within a cultural context.

Nationality: It pertains to the legal and political affiliation with a specific country; It signifies membership & citizenship. Nationality encompasses a shared sense of patriotism, cultural heritage, and collective identity among citizens of the same nation, fostering a sense of unity and solidarity.

Ethnicity: it refers to shared cultural characteristics, including ancestry, language, customs, and traditions, among members of a particular ethnic group. Ethnic identity is often based on common historical experiences, geographical origins, and cultural practices passed down through generations. Ethnicity can intersect with other aspects of identity, such as nationality and race, influencing individuals' experiences of discrimination, privilege, and social belonging.

Religion: it involves beliefs, rituals, practices, and moral principles that guide individuals' spiritual life & influence their values, behaviors, and social interactions. Religious identity often intersects with other aspects of identity, such as ethnicity and nationality, reflecting the diverse cultural expressions & traditions. However, religion can also be a source of conflict and division, particularly in multicultural societies where religious differences intersect with other forms of diversity.

Foreign language learning and challenges faced by both learners and teachers in the classroom

When talking about learning a foreign language and the difficulties that one would face in preserving his local culture and identity, everyone thinks of learners only as the most important link in this process, but the reality is that both teachers and learners have the same degree of difficulty.

what learners may face?

Getting to know the culture of a particular people in order to learn their language may be very effective in learning that language, as it is one of the most important factors that facilitate the learning process, but on the other hand, you may be fascinated by the culture of that language to the point of feeling ashamed of your local culture. There are certain languages that bear historical backgrounds, such as colonial movements, for example, that may lead either to hating the language in itself or to hating those who learn it. Just as these movements had an impact on the spread and ease of learning the colonial language, they also created a state of aversion to that language and contempt for those who learn it.

What teachers may face?

When teaching a foreign language, the teacher should ensure equal opportunities for students to talk about their different identities and cultures, but herein lies the difficulty, as sometimes the cultures and beliefs held by one student conflict with those held by another student, which may lead to the derailment of the lesson. The limiter brings with it many problems. Also, sometimes teaching a foreign language to students of different identities requires being impartial, the teacher has to treat everyone as equal and here lies the challenge, this is difficult to achieve, especially since the teacher in himself must share his culture as an example for his students, but how to achieve this without influencing and coercing them.

Conclusion

Cultural identity is an important part of language learning. It can be used to promote understanding and respect for other cultures or it can inhibit language learning. However, it is possible to learn a new language while still maintaining your cultural identity. By finding ways to connect the new language to your own culture, you can create a sense of ownership over the language and prevent it from feeling like something that is alien or unfamiliar.