

Language: A Significant Social and Cultural Marker of Identity

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Abstract

Language is a communication tool. It is not only an instrument of communication but also establishing a person's or nation's identity or uniqueness from another, accepting the arguments that language is intrinsic to the expression of culture. This paper explores the means of language in enhancing the expression of culture and identity. I can view it as the 'mechanical glue' holds a society together through social bonds. India is a multicultural and linguistically diverse nation with over 1652 languages with multiple identities. Language is the binding marker of culture and identity. Nowadays the usage and domination of one language over the other create a big issue. The Language policy suppressed the growth of few identities and failed to recognize them. The loss of unidentified culture degrades the growth of language among the people. This paper deals the importance of nation's cultural heritage and identity in preserving communal languages to create unity and integration.

Keywords: National identity, community language, cultural heritage, binding and dividing, policy of suppression.

Introduction

Language is a component of culture. It is impossible to understand the deep meaning of culture without knowing the language. Culture gives the perceptions of identification. The language is a product of culture and the culture allows it to shape and view it. Language what we speak shapes our reality, thoughts, and actions. We can define ourselves about others like the structure of its vocabulary, grammar, syntax, etc. We cannot separate language and culture because the language of the country is culture and it conveys the country's culture. So, the cultural identity with language comes by force of association. Dialect and culture are complicatedly related and reliant on each other. It is an articulation and a show of legacy and history likewise the part of the culture. Phonetic contrasts are the characteristic of another culture, and they make descriptiveness among neighboring people groups or various gatherings of a similar country.

Cultural definitions of Language

Culture and language shape one's identity and personality. As Leverage explains, each human being is born the same way and experiences the same stages in life. The difference is the environment in which each individual grows up his communal language. Environment plays a vital role in developing culture. Language connects culture through the changing needs and trends. Culture describes the way we live and think while the language shows the way we speak and express ourselves from time to time and places.

Different Languages are used in the same culture, which shows the impact of culture on the language. We

can see lots of impact on the Language in terms of accent, dialects, and pronunciation. The Language teaching style varies in cultural groups to understand the subject. In China, Mandarin is the official language, that is the most spoken Language in the world, whereas, in India, Hindi is the official Language despite all the other regional Languages of the country which is the fourth spoken language followed by English in the world. Even countries like the US and Canada share a common language but have different cultures of their own.

Dying Languages and Identity of India

India is a multilingual country. India is losing several languages due to political marginalization. This marginalization of languages started in 1926. The idea of organizing India rose up and came to reality after Independence. The languages with printed scripts were taking into count and the remaining lost its recognition. The establishment of schools and colleges in the official languages were taking place. There is no place for the unscripted languages in the education system. Gondi, Bhili, and Santhali became minor languages because of their limited population among several states. Many tribal groups started lagging in education as they felt very difficult to follow the instruction.

We don't have any perfect record regarding the total languages of India. According to the 1961 census there were 1652 spoken languages in India. According to English Professor Ganesh Devy's research survey, there are 780 living languages in India, and in the next 50 years, there will be at least 400 are at dying risk. There are 22 recognized official languages in India. The establishment of

People's Survey of India happened in 2010 to monitor under the scheme of Protection and Preservation of Endangered Languages to preserve dying languages in mid-2013. The Non - Disclosure Agreement's (NDA) push for Hindi, which has met with protests in other regions, reflects that one nation – one language idea.

Retaining Linguistic Identity and Culture

Each language has a unique cultural identity and traditional knowledge. It is our duty to protect the language from dying. Endangered languages also have their own identity and cultural value. We have to create responsible citizens by protecting their languages. Cultural identities have their own heritage to establish their dignity around the world. Each responsible citizen must share and work together to protect and preserve our national heritage which respects the unity in diversity.

Conclusion

Language is an expression of culture and fosters the feelings of social identity and solidarity. The Nation's pride depends on its Identity, Power, Tolerance, and Solidarity in the communication system of the target community. As an attempt to preserve and sustain these elements, language must be an expression of values, religion, cultural identity, and ethnicity.

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