

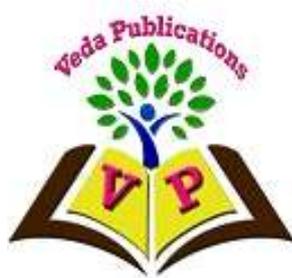


LANGUAGE IS CULTURE AND CULTURE IS LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT



Language and culture are complementary to each other in such a way that one enriches the other and vice versa. Learning or teaching a language which is nothing but sharing cognitive abilities includes the involvement of the native culture of that particular language group because language and culture are not two separate entities. The use of symbols that represent events, identities, feelings and beliefs is also the method of bringing these things into the process of acquiring a language consciously and getting in touch with its culture unconsciously. Because of this reason, the much acclaimed phrase, *language is culture and culture is language* has been in vogue. With the advent of globalization, intercultural relations are growing intensely. There is a continual merging of cultures across the world as people began to think globally. As the world has been termed to be a global village, peoples of the world are looking for new styles of life, new values, behavioral conventions, beliefs and attitudes shared by different ethnic groups. In this process, a sort of embracing the dominant cultural traits and conscious erosion of recessive ones take place. Human histories have been written and passed on to the succeeding generations through a language. On the contrary, animal behavior or culture has no such transmission since they have no written form of language.

Keywords: *Language, Literature, Culture, Inter-Cultural, Globalization, Ethnicity, Acculturation, Diglossia.*



Language and culture are two concepts in human life that are inseparably intertwined. They are complementary to each other in such a way that one enriches the other and vice versa. A particular community of people is identified with the use of a specific language. When people of one language background are confronted with those of another language, they are also interacting with the culture of the latter. At this juncture, Alfred L. Krober, a cultural anthropologist of America said 'culture started when speech was available, and from that beginning, the enrichment of either one led the other to develop further.' One cannot understand the culture of a community without ever having the knowledge of their language. Rita Mae Brown, an American writer, activist, and feminist says 'Language is the road map of a culture. It tells you where its people come from and where they are going.'

It goes without saying that when you learn a new language, it not only tells us about learning its alphabet, the word arrangement and the rules of grammar, but also learning about the specific society's customs and behavior which amount to culture. Therefore, learning or teaching a language which is nothing but sharing cognitive abilities includes the involvement of the native culture of that particular language group because language and culture are not two separate entities.

Paralanguage is specific to a culture, in the sense that it is inevitable to learn the glances, gestures and changes in voice or tone and other communication tools to emphasize or alter what one want to do or say.

The homologous relationship between language and culture are emphasized by many linguists. The sum total of human interactions constitutes culture. Ferruccio Rossi-Landi, an Italian philosopher who worked on semiotics and linguistics said that a speech community is made up of all the messages that were exchanged with one another using a given language, which is understood by the entire society. Rossi-Landi further added that young children learn their language and culture from the society they were born in and hail from. According to Professor Michael Silverstein, who teaches psychology, linguistics and anthropology at the University of Chicago, culture's communicative

pressure represents aspects of reality as well as connects different contexts? It means that the use of symbols that represent events, identities, feelings and beliefs is also the method of bringing these things into the process of acquiring a language consciously and getting in touch with its culture unconsciously. Because of this reason, the much acclaimed phrase, language is culture and culture is language has been in vogue. According to anthropologist-linguist Edward Sapir of the United States, language habits of specific groups of people built the real world.

WORLD IS GOING INTERCULTURAL AND MULTI-CULTURAL

With the advent of globalization, intercultural relations are growing intensely. There is a continual merging of cultures across the world as people began to think globally. As the world has been termed to be a global village, peoples of the world are looking for new styles of life, new values, behavioral conventions, beliefs and attitudes shared by different ethnic groups. In this process, a sort of embracing the dominant cultural traits and conscious erosion of recessive ones take place. For instance, the advent of the British in India has influenced the dress styles of the Indians, not only due to the fascination for the new style, but also for the ambience it offers. Gradually, food, business, education, medical procedures, travel and leisure management have been richly influenced by the dominant cultural traits, but not necessarily the dominance of the western culture is taking place. To put the argument inversely, knowledge of other languages facilitates knowledge of other countries and the specific cultures and as a consequence international communication and cooperation are promoted.

Every language has its own literature with culture-specific dimensions and social standards. A dialect or standardised form of the language used in writing is called the literary language. There exists a strong divergence between literary and non-literary forms in many languages. For instance, Telugu used in Telangana literary writing is almost the same as the spoken and vernacular form and therefore it reflects the life styles of common people who do not relish nuances and innuendoes of language. But in



some languages like English exhibit a clear form of diglossia.

CLASSICAL LANGUAGES

Some languages like Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, Latin Sanskrit and most recently English are used for liturgical writing, which is the language or form of language used in the liturgy of some religions.

There had not been much distinction in the English language between an elevated literary language and a colloquial language before the Norman conquest of England. At this time and into the Renaissance, the practice of aureation (the introduction of terms from classical languages, often through poetry) was an important part of the reclamation of status for the English language, and many historically aureate terms are now part of general common usage. Modern English no longer has quite the same distinction between literary and colloquial registers.

In the case of one of the oldest languages like Arabic, many western scholars distinguish two varieties: the Classical Arabic of the Qur'an and early Islamic (7th to 9th centuries) literature; and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), the standard language that has been in use today in the Arab speaking Islamic countries. Today, literary Arabic or classical Arabic is the official language of all Arab countries and is the only form of Arabic taught in schools at all stages. But the sociolinguistic situation of Arabic in modern times provides a prime example of the linguistic phenomenon of diglossia.

Aramaic, the language of the Biblical times has been diglossic for much of its history, with many different literary standards serving as the "high" liturgical languages, including Syrian language, Jewish Palestinian Aramaic, Jewish Babylonian Aramaic, Samaritan Aramaic language and Mandaic language, while the vernacular Neo-Aramaic languages serve as the vernacular language spoken by the common people.

In the case of Greek, from the early nineteenth century until the mid-20th century, Katharevousa, a form of Greek, was used for literary purposes. In later years, Katharevousa was used only for official and formal purposes, such as politics, letters, official documents, and news-casting while

Dhimotiki, 'demotic' or popular Greek, was the daily language. This created a diglossic situation until in 1976, when Dhimotiki was made the official language of Greece.

Latin also has its own share of diglossic situation. Classical Latin was the literary register used in writing from 75 BC to the 3rd century AD, while Vulgar Latin was the common, spoken variety used across the Roman Empire. The Latin brought by Roman soldiers to Gaul, Iberia, or Dacia was not identical to the Latin of Cicero, and differed from it in vocabulary, syntax, and grammar. In 813, priests were ordered to preach in the vernacular language—either in the *rustica lingua romanica* (Vulgar Latin), or in the Germanic vernaculars for the intelligibility of the language by the common people.

CULTURAL AFFINITY AND TRANSMISSION OF CULTURE

There is an unconscious and involuntary process of acculturation in a language community. Transmission of culture takes place through teaching or learning a language, teaching. Human histories have been written and passed on to the succeeding generations through a language. On the contrary, animal behavior or culture has no such transmission since they have no written form of language.

Media play a vital role in the dissemination of culture of a language group. The advent of television, broadcast media and internet has much to do with the spreading of new culture values across the communities of the globe. As such, the world today is becoming inter-linguistic and inter-cultural. Another significant factor is that there exists an ardent adherence to own culture in the case of people of who have settled in an alien country. For instance, Indians who have settled abroad observe Hindu festivals and rituals in a more devoted way than the native Indians do. Some of the Indian politics-enthusiasts living abroad have been found to be lending valuable thoughts and opinions on the trending politics in India. Blacks living in America cling to their native African dance and music in spite of their residence in the US for several generations since the 17th century. Their jazz music and Rumba and Samba dance styles are box office hits in the white America and they make huge money in cities that do not sleep. Therefore, culture is deep rooted



in the minds and hearts of a language community.

Culture is transmitted from a linguistic group to another through the formula of dominance of the ruler and submission of the ruled. Macaulay, a British historian and Whig politician, essayist, on contemporary and historical sociopolitical subjects, and reviewer strived hard for the introduction of English and intersperse western concepts to education in India, and published his argument on the subject in the "Macaulay Minute" in 1835. He strove hard the replacement of Persian by English as the official language, the use of English as the medium of instruction in all schools, and the training of English-speaking Indians as teachers. On the flip side, this led to Macaulayism in India, and the categorical wiping out of cultural values of India from the ancient Indian education system. After 70 years of freedom, today there have been stringent efforts planned by the Indian academia for the reintroduction of Indian cultural values.

Macaulay divided the world into civilised nations and barbarism, with Britain representing the high point of civilisation. In his Minute on Indian Education of February 1835, he asserted, "It is, I believe, no exaggeration to say that all the historical information which has been collected from all the books written in the Sanskrit language is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgement used at preparatory schools in England. He wanted to produce on war footing interpreters between the British rulers and the millions whom they govern, – a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect. To that extent we have the prevalence of a rich sprinkle of the Western words.

In this way, cultural assimilation from the western world is on the move in the third world countries as the English language enjoys the prestigious position in education, careers, society and public life in almost all the countries that look towards the West, which phenomenon was advocated by the English man as 'White Man's Burden'.
