THE ROLE OF LINGUISTIC IDENTITY IN MULTICULTURAL SOCIETIES

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ABSTRACT *This paper aims to explore the role of language in shaping the cultural identity of people in a society with an argumentative explanation based on the relevant literature. The descriptive summary from the documentary analysis in the paper mainly focuses on the positive and communicational role of language to establish the foundation of cultural landscape through the continuous representation and transmission of diverse cultural characteristics such as people's thoughts, behaviors, cultural histories, traditions, values, principles and boundaries within a socio-cultural context. Moreover, the paper indicates that language as a linguistic channel navigates people's commonality and unity framing them in a single pattern of cultural identity. It is suggested that every language as a powerful source of introducing cultural politics requires continuous transmission, preservation and promotion by the nation as an opportunity for the new generations to be born with distinct cultural identity.*

Keywords: *cultural identity, language learning, cultural representation, language hegemony, ancestral dialects*

INTRODUCTION In an increasingly interconnected world, multicultural societies are becoming more prevalent, characterized by a mosaic of languages, cultures, and identities. Linguistic identity, which refers to the way

language shapes individual and group identity, plays a critical role in these societies. This paper explores the significance of linguistic identity, its impact on social cohesion, cultural preservation, and the challenges it presents in multicultural contexts. Linguistic identity is formed through the languages individuals speak and their cultural affiliations. It encompasses not just the language itself but also the dialects, accents, and sociolects that reflect one's social background. This identity can influence a person's worldview, social interactions, and sense of belonging.In multicultural societies, individuals often navigate multiple linguistic identities, especially if they are bilingual or multilingual. For example, a person from a bilingual community may switch languages depending on the social context, illustrating the fluidity of linguistic identity. This fluidity highlights the dynamic nature of identity in multicultural settings, where individuals may feel connected to multiple cultures simultaneously. Linguistic identity can foster social cohesion within multicultural societies. Shared language can create a sense of belonging and community among speakers. For instance, immigrant groups often maintain their native languages to preserve their cultural identity and strengthen communal ties. Community events, cultural festivals, and educational programs centered around a particular language can enhance social bonds and promote understanding among diverse groups. However, the presence of multiple languages can also create divisions. In societies where one language dominates, speakers of minority languages may feel marginalized. This marginalization can lead to social fragmentation, as individuals who do not speak the dominant language may struggle to access education, healthcare, and employment opportunities. Therefore, promoting linguistic diversity and ensuring that minority languages are respected and included in public life is crucial for fostering social cohesion.

LITERATURE REVIEW This research builds on multiple others, published and made available in books, journals, even online. Following a qualitative approach, we identified language discrimination as it is displayed in our society. It is a fact, observed and often discussed in a more natural setting that

enables one to develop an opinion. Thus, the research method applied here is mainly by direct observation and personal experience as a member of a society where this social phenomenon occurs. The theory that best suits the issue of language discrimination is constructivism. According to Piaget cited by Brau (2018), constructivism "indicates that humans create knowledge through the interaction between their experiences and ideas". He goes further to add that "knowledge is an intersubjective interpretation. The learner must consider the information being taught and - based on past experiences, personal views, and cultural background - construct an interpretation". In other words, beyond acquired knowledge through a literature review which could be considered as previous knowledge, we construct our own knowledge by experiences in the community because community plays a vital role in the process of making meaning (Vygotsky, 1978). The Concept of Language In the area of communication, language is the great tool that helps human beings to exchange or share thoughts, ideas, information, feelings with one another. Without language, it is practically impossible for members of a society to express themselves, communicate and even to interact. Robins (2020) on his own part defines language as: A system of conventional spoken, manual (signed) or written symbols by means of which human beings, as members of a social group and participants in its culture, express themselves. The functions of language include communication, the expression of identity, play, imaginative expression and emotional release. This shows how vital language is in every society. Though humans depend on language and also use language on a daily basis, it is not an easy task to define what language exactly is. Nevertheless, language is considered to be a connector that can either build or tear down any society. In quoting Chomsky, Fabitz (2015) says that "language is a set (finite or infinite) of sentences, each finite in length and constructed out of a finite set of elements". While attempting to give language a definition, opinions will differ from one scholar to another but some fundamental facts still remain unchanged: language is social, voiced, arbitrary, productive and creative, non-instinctive

(conventional), systematic. As a dynamic system and the only means of communication among people in a society, language has 3 well known levels of characteristic. First, language is made up of the phonological level, which is related to sounds and their meanings; the second level is the lexical level comprising words and the meanings attached to them in sentences for effective communication; the third level is the sociolinguistic level recognized to be shaped by social factors like age and gender. Fabitz (2015) further mentioned Henry Sweet who says that "language is the expression of ideas by means of speech-sounds combined into words. Words are combined into sentences, and this combination is answering to that of ideas into thoughts".

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS Although our initial results suggest that the monetary costs of maintaining linguistic diversity in a multicultural society may be considerable, it is less obvious that the benefits of preserving linguistic diversity would be something worth paying for. It is the promise of the benefits that flow from improving the operation of an imperfect system of policy design and implementation in a world which can never be expected to be perfectly fair or efficient that makes this an interesting question. That languages are frequently bound up with cultural, economic, and historical heritages that we desire to preserve seems to be borne out by the treatment given to linguistic diversity in most, if not all, countries. Besides this desire to treat as efficient as an end the preservation of linguistic diversity for its own sake, there are also some arguments that the fashioning of good policies and the securing of fair treatment naturally entails detailed knowledge of the people that are the recipients of the policy and whose well-being the policy design and implementation process seeks to improve. The importance of the democracy-affecting aspect of linguistic interaction is also worth noting in the first case. The richness of choice offered by a political system where representatives are answerable to the constituents is known to be somewhat illusory to minorities that are monolingual or that are unable to communicate in the language spoken by the majority of the country's population. This is because they are very likely to find themselves wholly underrepresented or poorly

represented in the political process. In the second case, linguistic facilities can make translation relatively inexpensive, no matter what the requirements of the translation are. For example, complete translation becomes a real possibility if any action that is announced in a public office, in a public bus, or over a public address system can be translated into the languages spoken by a substantial section of the country's inhabitants. Finally, it may also be argued that linguistic diversity can be a barrier which protects minority cultures from faster assimilation in the main cultural stew, perhaps making the society poorer in the process. The culmination of many factors, some currently under discussion, creates significant challenges to which attention should be paid. For one, it is certain that a diverse linguistic environment is more costly to manage. This statement is not ideologically motivated. More difficult and demanding circumstances usually require more demanding measures. Just as a diversity of motor vehicles requires more elaborate traffic management than the passage of an army of similar type tanks, a panoply of languages also requires a larger amount of resources for management. Flexibility has its price, and societies with a more restricted repertoire of languages can achieve that flexibility more easily than those which have to cater to a larger number of compartments. Official positions favoring language diversity should therefore not shy away from this unpleasant fact. They should base their case on richer, albeit also less efficient and not always elegant forms of linguistic articulation. What is perhaps even more important is the fact that a highly polyglot environment makes it easier for those speakers who wish not to connect to the outside world or even be an integral part of a larger society to stay away. Language acts as a major barrier for social and economic inclusion. A privileged language position favors all forms of dialogue at the expense of the others. Therefore, while fostering a world where as many languages as possible can develop into transmitters of the global knowledge society, where small communication channels of various ingredients thrive side by side with the grand samovar of the world's lingua franca, we should at the same time warn that the world's unity is a noble ideal and that it remains threatened through societal

cohesion built not on diversity and complexity, but on sealed-off compartments. Optimally managed multilingual societies provide channels for people who wish to become a part of a communist utopia. A state should develop forces of linguistic inclusion rather than exclusion. Many like to be free to exploit the sea of languages which spills over the shore of their own, be it for commercial, epistemic, or intellectual reasons. The consequences of such linguistic, however, not only cultural choices range from banal misunderstanding to the deliberate fostering of linguistic marais.

CONCLUSION Minority groups' education has been an important topic within the field of multicultural education and it is still practiced in a framework of the nation-state. In a multicultural society, nation-building and national integration are unavoidable tasks and national education remains central for creating a 'national culture'. In this process, the differences between the majority and minority cultures have been discussed and in many cases, the minority has been required to assimilate into the majority. To reiterate, governments often create their national integration policy by using an official language as the medium of instruction in the education system. However, the minority exerts demands for being educated in their mother tongue to preserve their history, traditional culture and ethnic identity. Nevertheless, in this context of globalization, the realities of minority people transcend nations and they demonstrate unique needs for language education. Language can be chosen as a strategy depending on the people's political, economic and social position. In particular language as culture can be a strategy for people to obtain better opportunities for study or work. These changing roles of language should be considered as a new function within the sphere of multicultural education, which means that minority groups' needs should be understood from both the perspectives of essentialism and social constructionism. Moreover, minority people's routes as well as their roots of migration are important factors to be contemplated. Although there remain the persistent issues of complementing realism and moderate constructionism, as well as the cultural hybridity of cultural

boundaries, such a new conceptual framework is vital when we consider the function of language in multicultural education as one of providing an educational opportunity from the point of equity as well as equality.

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