

## The Effects of Second Language Learning on Shaping Cultural Identity

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### Abstract

With learning another language people will learn the culture of the target language intentionally or unintentionally, and they may feel belonging to another culture as well, and also they can feel changes on their cultural identity in different aspects, some differences are obvious in bilingual person's behavior and some of them are not visible but it still affects the bilinguals. The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between second language learning and culture. Participants included 5 teachers (male and female, within the age range of 35-50) from five schools in Zabol. The sampling method was randomly and the research method was interview, the questions within it were open-ended and it conclude 8 questions that should have been answered by the experiences of bilingual teachers. The interview first explained the questions to the participants and ask them to answer the question based on their experiences with honesty, there wasn't any time limitation for their answers therefore they could answer all of them freely. The answering process for each interview took about 25 to 30 minutes. The result show that bilingualism effects cultural identity but the way it effects the people's culture and the range of it, is different from person to person. Based on the interview all of the participants experienced changing on their cultural identity but the effect on each person was different from another. some people may feel more attracted to the target culture and some may want stick to their own culture but in both ways bilingualism has significant effects on cultural identity.

**Keywords:** "Second language Learning", "Culture"

### 1. Introduction

learning is a social process in which culturally and historically situated individuals interact in culturally-valued activities, using cultural equipment. They as a result expand the varieties of behaviors required for participation, and in so doing, change the activities and the equipment. This foregrounding of dynamic social activity and the tool mediators of that activity are unique functions of sociocultural theory [12].

Considers language learning as an identity construction process – that is, on every occasion language learner talk, they exchange data and at the same time arrange and reorganize a sense of who they are and the way they're socially associated with the world around them. as a result, they construct and negotiate their identity [16].

terms which include identity and self are very common in literature of language learning, and associated volumes and documents which are written each year. This isn't unexpected, considering that the primary vehicle of self-expression is language. it is regularly said that a new language means getting to know a fresh personality [8]. If we take the position that linguistic groups aren't homogeneous and consensual, but regularly heterogeneous and conflicted, we need to recognize how power is implicated in relationships among people, communities and countries. that is directly relevant to our knowledge of the relationship between language and identity. If we take the position that linguistic groups aren't homogeneous and consensual, but regularly heterogeneous and conflicted, we need to recognize how power is implicated in relationships among people, communities and countries. that is directly relevant to our knowledge of the relationship between language and identity [5].

The experience of 2nd language learning appears to emphasize the role of cultural disposition and attitudes in the process of successful Language acquisition. The degree of acculturation determines the language learners' competence, and without acculturation language competence might be incomplete [18]. one of the extra obvious examples of restrained language competence because of lack of acculturation is immigrant interlanguage and its functions of fossilization. The desire to belong to the new language community has been determined to represent an impartial and essential aspect in 2nd language acquisition. This social element in language learning has been identified as "integrative" motivation and has been determined responsible for language learning achievement in a variety of language teaching situations [3].

The structuralism-positivist technique assumes a linear cause-effect relationship among language mastering, its influencing factors and outcomes. it is crucial to have quantifiable "operational definitions" of every variable, and keep out impact from sources aside from the chosen independent variable(s). It can't be proved that certain "identity changes" are completely attributable to language learning, the discussion of language learning and identity adjustments is illegitimate. however, a constructivist view might understand the relationships as multiple and complex, occasionally reciprocal. it is only natural that identity change is associated with not only language learning but also some of other elements; it isn't a marvel that identity change and foreign language learning affect each other. The absence or impossibility of displaying a special cause-effect relationship does not rule out the need to explore this type of complicated phenomenon. on the contrary, it makes the exploration more interesting [4].

along with learning a 2nd language, a 2nd identity is internalized; that is, the learner's worldview, self-identity, and ways of wondering, feeling, acting, and speaking can be disorganized via a new culture contact [1].

### **1.1. learning a second language**

Language acquisition may be very similar to the process youngsters use in obtaining first and 2nd languages. It requires significant interaction in the target language-natural communication--in which speakers are not worried with the shape of their utterances however with the messages they're conveying and understanding. error correction and explicit teaching of guidelines are not relevant to language acquisition. one might assume that individual second language performers would vary with appreciate to the extent to which they utilize the monitor in 2nd language manufacturing. At one extreme end of the continuum, a few performers may utilize conscious information of the target language whenever feasible. extreme monitor users may, in reality, be so worried with enhancing their output to make it conform to their conscious policies that fluency might be

significantly hampered. At the other end of the continuum, we may also discover people who nearly never monitor their output [6].

### **1.1.1. social psychology of second language learning**

when considered from a social-psychological angle, the process of learning a 2nd language takes on a unique importance. From this view point, one anticipates that if the learner is correctly oriented, he may discover that by learning another social organization's language he has made the essential step in becoming an accultural part of a 2nd linguistic-cultural community. Advancing in the direction of biculturality in this sense may be considered as a broadening experience in a few case, or it may engender "anomie" a feeling of not comforting in a single social organization or the opposite [10] .

### **1.1.2. Learning a second language and changes in the brain**

learning a new language or a new skill has been proven to result in neurocognitive and neuroanatomical adjustments in the brain throughout the whole lifespan. however, little is known about the results of second language (L2) learning context on neuroplasticity and the people differences that may mediate the connection between L2 experience and brain structure. The current study examines people differences in behavior that correlate with adjustments in brain structure because of L2 education in two different learning contexts: a traditional picture-word association task as opposed to a 3D virtual environment. examination of these brain-behavior relationships throughout L2 learning contexts can cause better understanding of the neural mechanisms that sub serve effective L2 learning [11].

### **1.1.3. Second language acquisition**

second language acquisition (SLA) is the scholarly subject of inquiry that investigates the human capability to learn languages apart from the first, during late childhood, adolescence or maturity, and once the first language or languages have been obtained. It researches a huge type of complex impacts and phenomena that contribute to the puzzling variety of possible outcomes while learning an extra language in a variety of contexts [13].

the acquisition of a second language, be it through regular conversation or by instruction, follows specific principles, which stem from diverse properties of human language processing, from the learners' particular motivation and, ultimately, from the way in which samples of, or information about, the language to be learned are made available to the learner. The objective of 2nd language acquisition studies is to find those principles [7].

## **1.2. Culture**

Cultural identity may be conceptualized as one factor of subjective culture, which represents cultural factors including social norms, roles, beliefs, and values which are shared by a distinguishable organization of people and passed on from one generation to others. therefore, participants of each of the two national organizations share more of an identity with individuals of their own organization than with individuals of the respective other national organization [9].

In an increasingly multicultural environment, cultural influence is no longer easy. Now it is important to explore the understanding of culture. In other words, it is important to examine the extent to which understanding and confidence in identity beliefs can result from integration into a cultural group [19].

### **1.2.1. culture and language**

Social and cultural knowledge relies heavily on language as a communication tool and symbol system. These two areas help build social life, especially verbal activity and practice. In other words, those who engage in language activities/uses use knowledge of language and human culture to create and define what is happening. Instead, these linguistic activities/activities are the means by which the linguistic and cultural aspects of knowledge are created and maintained [14].

“Language is our guide to social reality. Language has the power to shape all of our thinking about social issues and trends. The "real world" is shaped, often unconsciously, by the linguistic norms of the group. No two languages are the same to be considered as indicators of social status. The worlds in which different societies live are not the same world with different labels, but different worlds...” [17].

## 2. Statement of the problem

The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between bilingualism and culture.

Second-language learning is essential for communication and social interaction, and is also associated with cultural immersion, intellectual growth, and enhanced job prospect.

Although a lot of studies have been conducted to examine the second language learning its effect on social life, brain and... but the question that how does second language effect cultural aspects on individuals is still unanswered.

This study aims to find the relationship between learning a second language and cultural identity, and the reason they are related together, and how they effects individuals.

## 3. Research question

1. Is there any relationship between second language learning and shaping cultural identity?
2. What is the relationship between language and Culture?
3. How culture can effect language and vice versa?

## 4. Research hypothesis

second language learning doesn't have a significant influence on shaping cultural identity.

## 5. Methodology

The methodology for the research study is qualitative. 5 open-ended interviews with the same questions were provided for participants. In order to find the relationship between bilingualism and culture.

### 5.1. Participants

This study, selected 5 English teachers (male and female, within the age range of 35-50). Participants have been recruited from 5 different high schools in Zabol and were chosen based on the random sampling.

### 5.2. Instruments

This research was conducted on a set of 5 English teacher. The researcher used the technique of the interview for collecting data. The researcher conducted interviews with five teachers who were working in different high schools. The researcher made field notes and voice recordings.

## 6. Procedure

### 6.1. Data collection

Four language instructors with ages thirty-five to fifty were interviewed. Their teaching experiences ranged from thirteen to thirty years. The interviews were recorded and analyzed.

questions including their opinions and perspectives on the relationship between bilingualism and culture. the researcher listened attentively and gave the participants the full opportunity to express their opinions freely without interruption or disturbance.

### 6.2. Data analysis

- 1: Does learning a second language has any effects on cultural identity?

Teacher A: In my idea learning any kind of language can effect on humans ' cultural identity

Teacher B: Yes, off course it does.

Teacher C: Yes, while you're learning another language you will see some factors that may effect on personal identity.

Result: All of the teachers agreed that learning another language will effect on our cultural identity.

2: How does it effects cultural identity?

Teacher A: Each language opens a window of the way its speakers live and their culture and it can effect on our view points. Learning a new language helps us to look at life in different ways, comper, and choose the best part of each culture.

Teacher B: We know that locality and social class have some direct effects on one's identity, so by learning a second language we expand our cultural identity and import some good or bad behaviors from the second language world.

Teacher C: Cultural identities influenced by several different features such as religion, skin color, education, profession, skill, and political attitude.

Result: bilingualism have effects on the learners' culture and it will expand their cultural identity but the effects of it may be good or bad.

3: What are the cultural factors affecting second language learning?

Teacher A: There are many different factors for example: racism, stereotyping, discrimination, communication with native speakers, lack of identification with the culture, ...

Teacher B: Social group, social class, locality, religion.

Teacher C: Language influenced by culture in various ways. learners must comprehend the cultural contract in order to use a language effectively

Result: The influence of culture is vast and it can effect different factors.

4: What is the role of culture in language learning?

Teacher A: It can influence word choice, tone, nonverbal cues, and the learning process itself.

Teacher B: Through cultural context, it affects learner's motivation and understanding of the world.

Teacher C: There is strong ties between culture and language, when you comprehend the culture of the new language, you will understand that language better.

Result: Culture have different roles in language it can be a motivator and it can help people learn the target language better.

5: As a bilingual person do you see any changes on your cultural identity?

Teacher A: I can say learning a new language makes my vision wider and it improves my cultural identity positively.

Teacher B: I cannot name a change, but I see that it generally affected my understanding of the world.

Teacher C: A bilingual person will use two languages one is the mother tongue and another one is the second language a bilingual person usually feels belonging to another culture moreover their local culture this duality helps them see the world from a different view.

Result: Learning the culture of the target language will help people see the world differently with a better understanding and makes their vision wider.

6: Have you ever been worried about drifting away from your own culture?

Teacher A: Not at all. Because as an Iranian we have a very strong and rich cultural background.



Teacher B: Yes, but I so much respect my own culture that hardly let another culture enter my own culture.

Teacher C: It depends on the person if you like your own culture you won't drift away by another culture. Sometimes you see positive points in one culture and you want to get this point. I think it's not too bad.

Result: Drifting from one culture on another culture depends on the person and the points they see in each culture, they may get some point of another culture and use them in their life or they choose to stick to their own culture.

7: Does learning a second language makes you feel belonging to another culture?

Teacher A: I think it can help us to think as a cosmopolitanism.

Teacher B: Off course not.

Teacher C: Yes, using another language and knowing their culture makes me feel belonging to it.

Result: Some people may feel belonging to another culture by learning their and getting familiar with their culture and some of them won't.

8: Does learning English affect your Iranian culture?

Teacher A: As I said learning any kind of language can effect on the way we look at life and I believe it is a valuable potential by itself. But at the end I'm still an Iranian with my special culture.

Teacher B: As far as I see no.

Teacher C: Yes, it does.

Result: Some Iranians doesn't feel any changes on their Persian culture and some of them do.

## 7. Discussion

Perspectives on the validity of foreign language learning and cultural identity research rely heavily on epistemological foundations. From a structural point of view this research is not necessary, but from a structural point of view it is worth following up and paying more attention to. Since identity is not only given but symbolically constructed, the construction of identity involves the use of language. Learning and using a language other than your native affects everyone. At the individual level, identity development can be part of the unspoken 'work knowledge' and 'non-work outcomes', which can be translated into the project's 'discursive thinking'[4]. this study shows the effects of the language on the culture. the effects can be from their mother tongue or from the second language, both have their effects on people's lives. The current study also shows the efficiency of language on culture.

Most students believed that learning English influenced their sense of identity. Students will be introduced to cultural norms. These participants also opposed the imposition of Western values on Islamic countries. Dynamics and English as a global language play an important role in the redefinition and reconstruction of identity. The results confirm the place of communication activities, their power to reconstruct identity in (L2) learning, the inseparable link between language and social identity and, more importantly, how language learners' identity negotiation influences second language learning in different social contexts [15]. The current study also shows the effect of the goal language on the culture of people from different countries. However, the culture in two countries can be so much different but learning their language will move learners closer to the culture of the other country.

Language and culture classes aim to improve people's understanding of the language, as well as those who speak it. Trained to be prospective teachers of English, for students of ELT, studying English culture is not an arbitrary but a necessary activity. According to the findings of this study, cultural classes are strongly beneficial in terms of language skills, increasing cultural awareness, changing attitudes towards indigenous and target societies as well as their contribution to learning [2]. The study shows the necessity of learning the culture of the goal language according to the effects of both of them have on another. The current study also acknowledges the

effects which each of them have on another and the importance of learning the culture alongside of the language.

## 8. Conclusion

Learning another language will lead the learner to a new culture as well. They consciously or unconsciously will get familiar with the new culture by learning their language it can help them to see the world from a different point of view, they may see the world differently from what they used to see, but the effects that a new culture have on them can be different from person to person. They might see themselves more attracted to the new culture and let the culture make its way on their lives but some people won't let that happened because the bonds that they have with their own culture may be stronger. People may feel belonging to another culture by learning the language.

The result of the interview shows that, there is a strong relationship with culture and language and they both are bond together. Learning a new language will affect the culture as well, and with learning the new culture the learners will learn the language more effectively and it can also be a motivation to learn the target language. Drifting away from local culture to the new culture depends on how strong the learners' connection is with their own culture, they may see some positive points in the new language and try to use them in their own life, or they can keep their distance from the new culture but in any case there will be changes on their cultural identity, it can be visible or invisible.

The main aim of research was investigating the effect of bilingualism on cultural identity from the results that have been collected from the interview, it was discovered that bilingualism has a significant effect on cultural identity.

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