

## **The Influence of Language Identity on Students' Learning Foreign Language Process**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Everyone has an identity and language is a sign of that. The associations in a person's environment, with whom they hang out, and where they learn can all have an impact on their identities. This research aims to explain the extent to which language is still used as a symbol of human identity. The language used every day can be a source of pride. Evidence of this pride can be seen from the development of its use which is dynamic. Language has a very important function to express cultural treasures. However, language over time has also developed. Challenges in learning a foreign language can also be influenced by the use of a person's everyday language. Students have their challenges in learning a foreign language, therefore it can be seen whether the everyday language they use has an influence when they learn a foreign language.

**Keywords:** *language, identity, culture, language learning, foreign language*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Many people have migrated to other nations in quest of better jobs and educational opportunities as a result of the globalization period. People migrate for a variety of reasons, including to flee a conflict or to pursue safer and more stable living conditions in another country. The language used by a person changes as they migrate from one location to another. Language is more than just a collection of words; it is an entity that can link a person to his or her family, culture, music, beliefs, and wisdom. History, traditions, customs, and folklore are passed down through generations through language. No culture can survive if it does not have a language. Our language is a reflection of who we are. Language, place of residence, kinship pattern, marriage pattern, religion, the pattern of residence, and others are

examples of forms of identity. A diagram illustrating how the presence of language as a sound identity and tradition can reveal a person's identity. (IM Suastra, 2009). Language acquisition is usually distinguished from language learning. Language learning is related to the processes of the process that occurs when a child learns a language second after he acquired his first language. So, acquisition language is related to the first language, while learning language with respect to a second language (Chaer, 2003:167).

Second language acquisition (PB2) refers to teaching and learn foreign languages and other second languages. Among the many factors that we can encounter in daily life, which are considered very important and fundamental, namely: first, learning a language is people in dynamic interactions; second, learn language is people inside response.

Language acquisition usually refers to first language acquisition which examines children's acquisition of their mother tongue and second language acquisition which examines additional language acquisition by children or adults. Children learn language slowly and abstractly, and they do so without explicit instruction or environmental influences with basic guiding principles. Newborns have begun to criticize the sounds around them. Following Brookes (in Abdullah Yusoff and Che Rabiah Mohamed, 1995:456). So, in language acquisition other than the child has been equipped with nature at birth, it is also influenced by heredity and environmental factors, both family and place of residence.

Every language is essentially a sign of the speaker's identity. People's social identities are identified based on how they use different languages. People may be able to greet in a variety of ways, inquire in a variety of ways, and talk in a variety of intonations, and this variation reflects their identity. Speakers use specific linguistics to define their standing with other people. (Jacewicz, Fox, & Wei, 2010).

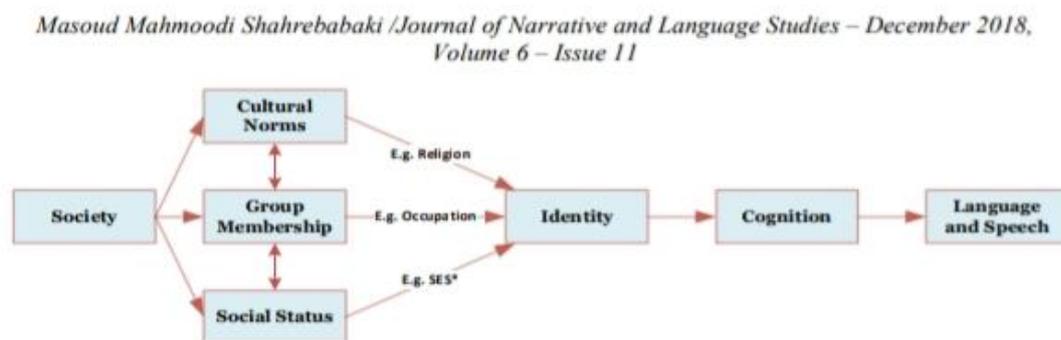


Figure 1. Relationship between language and identity from a sociolinguistic perspective

\*Socioeconomic Status

Social constructivism, sociolinguistic theories, and sociocultural theories of language development are the three main ideologies that have influenced language and identity research. Sociolinguistics and sociocultural theories look into the influence of social variables and societal structure on language development and use. Humans, on the other hand, according to social constructivist ideas, learn by doing. The use of religious language inside a religious organization is a great example of situational identification. One of the biggest concerns for sociolinguists and sociologists as a result of the advent of globalization and its effect on human lifestyle has been the significant role that identity has played in people's lives.

Human contacts in intercultural communication scenarios, when people from various social, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds meet, have spawned the vexing question of whose norms and values should people adhere to in an international setting. Language, culture, gender, race, and ethnicity are all important topics in the global village or diaspora, prompting scholars to pay more attention to identity issues in language and education studies. This research wants to know about the effect of identity language on the foreign language learning process.

## **METHOD**

This is qualitative research applies pre-experimental using a one-shot case study. This experimental model involves several students who are given questionnaire and then the results are observed. There are groups of people with certain criteria who are given treatment to measure the influence of language identity on learning foreign language. This aims to determine the use of everyday language for Indonesians who have studied English. It was conducted using Whatsapp chatting to give a questionnaire. The results of observations show that Indonesian students who have studied foreign languages feel the influence of the language they use on a daily basis on the foreign language they are learning. From the everyday language they use, they can improve their foreign language skills, learn new phrases, improve their speaking skills, and create activities that involve language. Therefore, researchers are interested in studying the influence of language identity on learning foreign languages. The population of this study was 47 students from various universities. In this study, the researcher used a questionnaire technique in using the data.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

As social beings, humans will always relate and cooperate with other humans. Everyone needs the presence of others to fulfill their various needs. In the relationship between individuals and other individuals, a means to communicate is needed, namely language. According to Djoko Kenjono (Santoso 2017), language is

a system of arbitrary sound symbols used by members of social groups to work together, communicate, and identify themselves. Language is not just a sound, morphological, and syntactic system designed to express a thought, but also carries cultural identity and social status. Language reflects social conditions and human relations (Santoso 2017).

The definition of language above implies that language is not only used as a means of communication and cooperation but also functions as a tool to identify oneself as a social group. Through language can be known the identity of individuals or social groups. Therefore, the existence of language in a community is very important. then it is used as an element of culture (Santoso 2017). As an element of a culture, language has a close relationship with the identity of a culture.

Identity refers to the special characteristics of individuals or members of a particular social group or category. Identity comes from the Latin word "idem" which means the same. Thus, identity implies similarity or unity with others in a certain area or matter (Santoso 2017). Apart from containing the meaning of similarity, identity also contains the meaning of the difference. Identity can also mean a character that distinguishes an individual or group from other individuals or groups. Thus, identity contains two meanings, namely the relationship between similarities and the relationship of differences. The relationship of equality in identity arises when an individual has something in common with other individuals in a group. The relationship of differences in identity arises when an individual or group has a certain character that distinguishes the individual or group from other individuals or groups.

The identity possessed by an individual can be in the form of personal identity (personal identity) and social identity (social identity). Personal identity is the result of self-identification, by oneself, with the judgments of others. Personal identity is a certain character possessed by an individual that distinguishes it from others. Personal identity can be in the form of physical characteristics such as face and height, or psychological characteristics such as character, behavior, and speech style. Social identity is the result of self-identification by others and is an identification that is approved or given by a social actor (social actor) to an individual (Santoso, 2017). More clearly, social identity is knowledge and recognition of the individual as a member of a group and the recognition of the group to the individual as a member (Giles and Johnson, 1987).

In an identity, language has its role in determining identity and developing one's communication skills, language is used as a means to identify oneself. With language, the identity of individuals and groups can be known. Language can be used to identify or show a person's identity because when someone speaks it can be known the type of ketamine, age (children, adults, or elderly people), and who

the individual is. This is because of each individual has certain characteristics or a certain style when speaking.

The style of speaking that is owned by an individual and becomes his trademark is called *ideoiek* (Malmkjear, 1991: 344 in (Santoso 2017)). When someone speaks, we will know whether he is a woman or a man, because a woman's voice is different from a man's voice. In addition, it will also be possible to know the age of the speaker, whether a child, an adult or an elderly person. An example is when we are in the room and then we hear dad talking to his friend outside the room. When one of them speaks, we will know who is talking father or friend, even though we do not see it. From the style of language, we can know the identity of the speaker, because we can distinguish the language style of the father and the style of his friend's language

In social life, a person can not live alone without the presence of other people or without associating with other people. This proves that in essence humans are social creatures. Humans are instinctively driven to get along with other humans, both to express their existence, express their interests, express their opinions, or influence others for their interests, group interests, and common interests. In this regard, language plays a very important role.

Considering that language is a social phenomenon, of course, non-linguistic factors or external language factors greatly influence the use of the language. These non-linguistic factors include social factors, education level, economic level, gender, age, and so on. Other non-linguistic factors are situational factors, namely who is speaking, in what language the conversation is held, to whom, when, where, and what problem the conversation is. The existence of these two factors in the use of language causes language variations (Abdurrahman, 2011).

Abdul Chaer and Leonie Agustina (1995:81) in (Abdurrahman, 2011) indicated that in language variation or language variety there are two views. First, the variety or variety of language is seen as a result of the social diversity of language speakers and the diversity of language functions. Second, the variety or variety of language already exists to fulfill its function as a means of interaction in diverse community activities.

Mackey (1970) in Chaer et al (1995:112) also stated that in general bilingualism is defined as the use of two languages by speakers in their interactions with other people. Individuals and communities who use these languages are called bilinguals. Another factor that can shape a bilingual society is due to the presence of industrialization process, educational development and economic development which resulted in urbanization. From this mobilization

process, language and cultural contact will occur. Urban communities tend to learn the local language to use it so that interactions between them and the local community can take place.

The choice of words in a language can also be used to identify a person's identity. During the New Order government, for example, while listening to a snippet of a state official's speech in a news broadcast on the radio, we could hear a state official say the word "diamanken". Upon hearing the word "diamanken", the identity of the official, namely President Soeharto, will be immediately known. This is because the official often utters the word in his speech and then it becomes a character that distinguishes him from others because other people will say "secured", not "securd"

To see the formation of a characteristic of a particular language and its influence on studying foreign languages, the author uses sociolinguistic theory. Sociolinguistics studies language by taking into account the relationship between language and society, especially the people who speak that language. So it is clear that sociolinguistics considers the relationship between two things, namely linguistics for the language aspect and sociology for the social aspect.

Haugen suggests, in his paper 'Some Issues in Sociolinguistics' in a book entitled *Issues In Sociolinguistics*, that the term sociolinguistics was first introduced by Haver C. Currie, a professor at the University of Houston, Texas in 1952. This term was later published in America by William Bright and presented at a VIII International Linguistics congress in Cambridge 1962, then developed again in a more formal International Conference in Los Angeles, California 1962, and has become popular today (Alwasilah, 1990:2-3 in (Abdurrahman 2011)).

The term sociolinguistics emphasizes the study of language about society, as several experts put it, Hymes (Alwasilah, 1990: 2 (Abdurrahman 2011)). argues that, "the term sociolinguistics to the correlations between language and societies particular linguistics and social phenomena," means a sociolinguistic term for connecting between language and society and language and phenomena in society. Even Chaklader Alwasilah 1990:2 in (Abdurrahman 2011) himself indicated that "sociolinguistics concentrates its study upon the societally patterned variation in language usage" meaning 'sociolinguistics emphasizes the study of variations in people's patterns in language use'.

The same thing was also expressed by Hudson 1980:4 in (Abdurrahman 2011) that "sociolinguistics as the study of language about society, implying (intentionally) that sociolinguistics is part of the study of language" means

"sociolinguistics as the study of language about society implies that sociolinguistics is part of linguistics'. Another similar definition is Pride's opinion, namely sociolinguistics to study every aspect of the use of language that relates to its social and cultural functions' meaning 'sociolinguistics is to examine every aspect of language use related to social and cultural functions' (Alwasilah, 1990:2). Suwito (1996:6) suggests that sociolinguistics studies language in the socio-cultural context and the situation of the wearer.

Thus it can be concluded that language is not only from the point of view of its appearance but also from the point of view of its listeners because the use of language is essentially a process of verbal interaction between speakers and listeners. In the process of interaction, both the speaker and the listener always consider who he is talking to, where, when, on the what problem, and in what situation, and so on, as explained by Fishman 1975: 2 in (Abdurrahman 2011). The same thing was also stated by Pateda (1987: 3) that the questions in sociolinguistics include: who speaks to speak (or write), what language (or what language variety), to whom, when, to what end'.

These things show that sociolinguistics views language as a social system and communication system and is part of a particular society and culture. Thus, language is not only seen as an individual phenomenon, but also a social phenomenon. In society, a person is no longer seen as a separate individual from others. He is a member of his social group. This causes language and language usage not to be observed individually but is always associated with activities in society (Suwito, 1996:2 in (Abdurrahman 2011)).

From the description above, it can be concluded that sociolinguistics is an interdisciplinary study that examines linguistic problems concerning social, situational, and cultural aspects. Therefore, when someone talks to other people besides the language problem itself, other people must also pay attention to it. By paying attention to sociolinguistics, the problem of inappropriate use of language in its social context can be minimized. By understanding the principles of sociolinguistics, every speaker will realize how important it is to choose the correct language variation according to the social context, in addition to the structural truth of the grammar.

Sociolinguistics and linguistics have the same research methods, both of which are always based on empirically collected results and are rigorously applied to data. Conclusions are drawn inductively from the results of rigorous data analysis as well. Although both have similarities, they also have significant differences. Sociolinguistics always pays attention to the context of language use (literature) in

the form of meaning, language change, and language acquisition. Meanwhile, linguistics in its analysis only focuses on the structure of language as a code.

In sociolinguistic studies there is a factor of Bilingualism (bilingualism), a community or area that has or uses two languages, then the community or area is called a bilingual or bilingual area or community. People who can use two languages are called bilinguals or bilingual people (Nababan 1993:27 in (Abdurrahman 2011)). The same thing is also expressed by Sinung Hartadi (2001:48) in an open speech community, of course, there will also be language contracts with all linguistic phenomena as a result. The linguistic events that may occur as a result of language contact are, among others, called bilingualism.

When a person uses two languages in association with other people, he is bilingual in the sense that he is carrying out bilingualism which is called bilingualism. So bilingualism is the habit of using two languages in interaction with other people. If we think about the ability or ability of a person to be bilingual, that is, to use two languages, we are called bilingual (from English 'bilinguality'). So people who are 'bilingual' include the notion of the habit of using two languages, or the ability to use two languages. Nababan 1993:27 in (Abdurrahman 2011) distinguishes "bilingualism" (for habit) and "bilingualism" (for ability) by using the terms "bilingualism" and "bilinguality." Furthermore, bilinguality is a person's ability to use two or more languages.

Weinreich 1968:1 in (Abdurrahman 2011) also explains, "the practice of alternately using two languages will be called bilingualism, and the person involved, bilingual" means 'the event of the use of two or more languages interchangeably by a speaker is called bilingualism, and people who speak two languages are called bilingual. The logical relationship between bilingualism and bilingualism is that not all who have bilingualism practice bilingualism in their daily lives, because this depends on the linguistic situation of their environment. It is possible for a person who knows two languages to use one language as long as he is in one place or situation (short or long time) and use the second language if he is in another place or situation (short or long time). Bilingualism like this is carried out sequentially which can be a long time apart.

But we can also understand that one cannot do bilingualism without being bilingual. In other words, doing bilingualism has implications for bilingualism: a person must have bilingualism before he can do bilingualism (Nababan, 1993:28). However, the notion of bilingualism is always developing which has a tendency to expand because the term bilingualism is relative or relative (Suwito, 1996:48). At first, bilingualism was always defined as native control of two languages (having

two languages, such as mastering their mother tongue) (Bloomfield, 1968: 56), bilingualism, i.e., if the ability in both languages is approximately the same, it is called balanced bilinguality or Halliday (1990) 1964) bilingualism or in our terms ambilinguality (Nababan, 1993:33).

Another opinion about bilingualism is explained by Haugen in Suwito (1996: 49), that bilingualism is knowing two languages (knowledge of two languages). This means that in the case of bilingualism, a bilingual does not have to actively master two languages, but it is enough that he passively knows a language by a speaker can contribute to creating linguistic conditions that deviate from the rules that are less mastered. This can happen to bilinguals.

When people are about to speak, first an idea or impression is formed in the person's head. When the time has come, the message is conveyed in the form of speech which is then heard by the person being spoken to or the person who happens to be present in the language event. In this speech process, the speaker always takes into account socio-cultural and socio-situational factors in addition to grammatical linguistic factors

### **Instrument**

What is used in this study is to answer questions sent via a chat application called Whatsapp. The number of questions provided by the researcher was three sheets. These questions are given to determine the extent to which language identity in the form of everyday language can affect the ability to learn foreign languages.

In this study, researchers distributed questionnaires. The steps used by researchers in conducting this research are as follows:

- a. Using Whatsapp to communicate with respondents
- b. Asking three questions about their languages
- c. After finishing reading the questions, the research subjects filled out the questionnaire

### **Discussion**

Human nature is born with its characteristics, every characteristic that exists in humans comes from various factors. Various kinds of human characteristics are intended to form a kind of identity in human society, one of which is the language they use. By having a language, humans and their communities will be distinguished through their habits. Culture has become an important sign for the wider community because it influences the way they use language. In addition, it

cannot be denied that language is part of a cultural identity that will make a difference between one society and another. Each culture has different characteristics in language that make it different from others through the habit of using language.

Indonesia has a variety of regional languages which are the mother tongue of the ethnic group concerned and are used in interacting within the intra-ethnic environment, while in inter-ethnic interactions the language used is the language of unity, namely Bahasa Indonesia.

Communication relations are not difficult for the Indonesian people. Indonesian as a unified language is expected to unite all levels of Indonesian society and make it easier for all Indonesian people to interact. Bahasa Indonesia also functions as the national language has a wider area of use when compared to the area of use of the regional languages. As a result of this situation, almost every region uses the regional language.

This fact shows that Bahasa Indonesia and regional languages coexist, although side by side, the use of Indonesian is more dominant and has a greater influence when compared to the use of regional languages. Situations like this can be a factor in the formation of bilingualism in Indonesian society.

Learning is a process of one's efforts to acquire knowledge, and changes in behavior (attitudes) and skills. One of the compulsory subjects in school is learning Indonesian. Learning Indonesian is very important because language is a universal communication tool. With language, we can convey ideas, ideas, feelings, and messages to others. And Indonesian is the unifying language of the nation. So Indonesian is also used as the language of instruction in learning. However, along with the times, particular localities in language began to merge into a more universal linguistic identity, in this case, the likes or dislikes of using foreign languages and their learning began to spread and mushroom in local communities.

On the other hand, if one of the speakers of the community tries to use a language other than their own, then the language they use will change its form as in the second language. So, the features of the mother tongue used by the speaker such as the manner, style, and structure of the first language indirectly follow the second language. According to Ringbom (in Cohen, 2012: 138), a significant difference in the understanding and production of Foreign Languages looks at participation made based on context and potential skills. Ringbom also adds that redundant transference, which some cross-linguistic parallels have shown in the inclusion and presentation of a foreign language or potential knowledge base in the mother tongue.

According to the sociolinguistic view, language can be studied internally and externally. External study means that the study is carried out on things or factors that are outside the language, which are related to the use of the language by its speakers. (Chaer and Agustina, 2010:1)

As a social identity, language can be used to show a person's social class. Someone from a lower social class has a different language style than someone from a higher social class. The language style of an educated person is also different from the language style of an uneducated person. This explains that in a community there is a language variation between individuals with lower social status and those with higher social status.

Based on the above, from a sociolinguistic point of view, external linguistic factors such as socio-cultural and use or use by speakers, automatically form a person's linguistic identity which in turn becomes the mother tongue as the main language to communicate with their communities in everyday life. At this point a person's process of learning a foreign language that is not his first language can be greatly influenced by his mother tongue.

Data on the overall variable indicators of the influence of linguistic identity on learning a foreign language is acquired from research on the usage of everyday speaking by numerous persons who have studied English in educational institutions, according to the findings of the study. The ability to learn a foreign language is also influenced by how a person learns his mother tongue, which is mostly a regional language. The use of this regional language influences someone when learning a foreign language.

Based on this statement, when interpreted by the findings of research that gave some questions to the respondents, it obtained good results in learning a foreign language when they are in an environment that uses that language a lot. Some of them get bad results because their mother tongue influences them when learning a foreign language and they feel bad about it.

The indicator that makes respondent able to learn a foreign language is because their environment support that, they use that language as their everyday language, and because learning that foreign language is their lifestyle.

The results of the research said that there was an influence of identity language on the learning foreign language process. This statement was obtained from the research results as follows:

This research was followed by 47 respondents. Respondents in this research came from various professions. All respondents are people with the criteria that they have studied a foreign language. Most respondents came from students. 16 of these respondents use a local language as their everyday speaking. Most of their

local language is their mother tongue. It can be concluded that some respondents are familiar with their local language.

There are many reasons they chose to use local language. Most use local languages because it is the first language they know. Some of them also state that they feel enjoyable when they use their local language. 14 of these respondents using Bahasa Indonesia as their everyday speaking because they argue that Bahasa Indonesia is a formal language and most Indonesian use Bahasa Indonesia when speaking. Bahasa Indonesia is the most understandable using in conversation with the different citizens from various regions.

The rest of is 17 respondents used mixing language because it makes them look attractive in speaking. Mixing language is also used in many conversations and it is a unique style of speaking. Respondents who find it difficult to improve their foreign language skills admit that their local language often has a bad influence on learning foreign languages, such as often using grammar incorrectly because they are used to using the language structure of the regional language they use as their daily language. There is a language that is often mixed up when practicing a foreign language.

Respondents who feel no problem with their mother tongue when learning a foreign language in the class admit that the two languages have absolutely no similar words because the two languages are not related or they are not cognate languages.

Respondents who claimed that their everyday language really helped them in learning a foreign language. Mostly because their everyday language is a foreign language or not their mother tongue or local language.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that there is an influence of language identity on students' learning foreign language process. This is due to the background of the environment in which they live, their first language, where they study, and the demands of the profession that require them to use a foreign language.

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