

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE STUDIES

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Abstract

The entire human race elevates itself from other living creatures by well refined language and language in turn pervades in their social life, culture, customs and tradition. Language is a primary means by which we get connected to other people's minds, norms of life and helps to segregate the refined and non-refined races of humanity. This refinement gets its impact on the culture of people and hence language always gets intertwined with cultural studies of any human race.

Key words: Traditional values, Cultural refinement, believes and group identity.

Introduction

Language is defined by Merriam-Webster Dictionary as a "system of words or signs that people use to express thoughts and feelings to each other" (Merriam-Webster). But language is more than that, language is a string connecting culture, spirituality, knowledge and wisdom, from the past to the present and future therefore bringing an overall social, moral and ethical developments to all those who speak it. Every language is "acquired by man as a member of society," along with his society's culture in which he was brought up. Culture of a society is moulded by language and culture gets refined and elegant by the usage of language by the group of people in that society. Cultural Studies is an academic field that deals with the amalgamation of Sociology, Political Economy, Anthropology subjects along with the historical events and social inequalities in any particular society. It deals with the cultural behavior of that particular society along with their social, racial and

class inequality and it form the main reason for the beginning of cultural studies.

Culture Studies and its Development

Cultural Studies is relatively new interdisciplinary field of study, in the post-war years. Raymond Williams, Richard Hoggard and Stuart Hall are the founding figures of Contemporary Cultural Studies in 1968, at the University of Birmingham. The Birmingham CCCS (Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies) approaches to culture and politics evolved from a complex moment within the British post-war history. They were the rise of the Anti-Stalinist New Left, the promotion of adult education in Britain after World War II, the "Americanization" of British popular culture, the growing multiculturalism of British society and the eventual influence of new critical methods like semiotics and structuralism in literature. The center considers over all these factors and also pioneered the analysis of popular culture, subculture, race and mass media. For them, Culture of any society couldn't be understood without having direct access to its language and vice versa. Hence, the usage of words in our speech is related to our spoken language while the way we deliver it is related to the culture and the mannerism of our brought-up by our parents, society and economical background.

Analysis of Language and Cultural studies

A language becomes important only when the people who speaks it are also important through political, economic, social and cultural aspects. Literature, which is expressed through language, can be understood and recognized by bringing it into close relationship with cultural and societal norms of that particular society in that particular period. It is wrong to insist on the singularity of art and diverse it from its social and cultural contexts for it leads to a partial and biased understanding of the processes of any literary creation. Thus, it could be concluded that Cultural Studies revalue and redefines the value of any concepts that are defining the society. For example, Feminism, Marxism, Modernism differ from their norms for each decade and they are redefined and remoulded according to the different cultures of the people. Harry Hoijer's (1964) view that language is a cultural complex with a body of customary forms transmitted from generation to generation and from society to society.

Birmingham Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies (BCCS)

The early version of Cultural Studies was influenced by the British New Left, especially Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams who both had working class background. In 1970s, based on the views of Feminism, Marxism and Structuralism, Cultural Studies began to get theorized. Raymond Williams poststructuralism approach developed Cultural Studies and influenced the projects in Birmingham Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies (BCCS). In its early form the texts of Cultural Studies were on group identity, policies of developed nations and thoughts that had the image of 'high culture'. Since culture is considered as the source of art and literature, cultural criticism has gained ground, and therefore, Raymond Williams' term "cultural materialism", Stephen Greenblatt's "cultural poetics" and Michael Bakhtin's term "cultural prosaic", have become significant in the field of cultural studies and cultural criticism. The works of Stuart Hall and Richard Hoggart with the Birmingham Centre, later expanded through the writings of David Morley, Tony Bennett and others. Cultural Studies is interested in the process by which power relations organize cultural artefacts like food habits, music, cinema, sport events and clothing. It looks at popular culture regarding dance, music, writings on everyday life, which had hitherto been dismissed as inferior and unworthy of academic study. Cultural Studies approach transcendence of a particular discipline in the society and reject the distinction between 'high' and 'low' 'art' or 'elite' and 'popular' culture. It analyzes not only the cultural works but also the means of its production

Development of Cultural Studies

Antonio Gramsci, Italian Marxist intellectual and politician, modified classical Marxism by viewing culture as a key instrument to control political, social and economic issues of the society and the individual. In his view, capitalists or the rich people are strong and massive forces to have control over the everyday culture of working people. Thus, the key concept of Gramsci for cultural studies is that of cultural hegemony. It promoted the ways in analyzing the subaltern groups actively resisting or supporting the political and the economic dominating persons within their society. The approach of Raymond Williams was clearly poststructuralist, and he believes that one cannot understand cultural artefacts only within the aesthetic realm of the text, rather the work of art by the author must be studied with the social and material perspectives also. He suggests that the novel should be analyzed not only by the generic conventions or the historical background of the novel, but also in terms of the publishing industry, its profit, its reviewers, the politics of awards and the hype of publicity that helps to sell the book.

For Cultural Studies, representation is a key concept and the cultural practice of

giving dolls to girls indicates that girls are tender and delicate and need to be given work of caring and concerning children, homely responsibilities, and boys are to be with machine guns and truck toys indicating them for war, business and economical competence. This discourse of femininity and masculinity form the larger context of power relations in culture. Cultural Studies views everyday life as fragmented and multiple layers, where meanings in any art or literature get hybridized. With the globalization of urban spaces, local cultures are linked to global economical markets and needs. In India, after economic liberalization, consumption has been seen as a marker of elite identity. Consumption of branded commodities are signs of their elite identity and lifestyle and consumption begins before the actual act of shopping; it begins with the stylishness or popularity of the signs of that commodity.

Malls are display places of all commodities where goods are displayed for maximum visual display with attractive display in such a fashion that they are fascinating enough, to kindle desire. Spectacle, attention- holding and desire to consume much than necessary are central elements of shopping experience in the mall. Hence mall emerges primarily as a site of gazing amusement center and secondarily as a site of shopping. The mall presents a spectacle of a fantasy world created by the presence of models, posters, attractive offers for men, women and children. Through comfortable and luxurious consumers and vibrant youths malls altogether make people to feel elite by consuming global brands and cosmopolitan fashion by making the possibilities of marking their better identity among their society. The mall invites people for participating in the fantasy of excitement for their shopping experience. The encircling vistas, decorative lights, long-spread display tables and fascinating discounts add to the spectacle, by providing the contentment and happiness for their shopping experiences.

Cultural Studies of the media begins with the assumption that media culture is ideological, and it reproduces existing social values, oppression and inequalities. Media culture clearly reflects the multiple sides of contemporary debates and problems. It helps to reinforce and criticize the hegemony and power of specific economic, cultural and political groups by suggesting ideologies for the society, and imbibes their readers and audiences with their unbiased policies and ideologies in their mind. Media culture is also provocative as it sometimes guides people to rethink what they know or believed in any particular field. In Cultural Studies, media culture is studied through an analysis of popular media culture like short films, TV serials, advertisements for they are the tools of ideological and political power to promote their ideas. Media studies and its role in the

construction of cultural and moral values, circulation of symbolic ideas, and its production of desire for consumption are important to media and popular cultural studies of these days.

Cultural Studies of popular media culture intends to bind a large population with diverse cultures and form a unified cultural identity. Some examples of the media culture include television programs, clothing advertisements, and slang words with catchy phrases, brand names, and symbols of popular soft drinks. Media culture determines the daily activities of people and their society through their advertisement and popularizing the commodities with their brand names. Greatly, they affect the listeners ideas and displaced the future generations according to the path they paved for the younger generation's future. Several media platforms focus on the socio-economic status of the people and make their live relay, regardless of age to attract public. Everybody has their preference on the type of media to entertain them or to enlist details of the happenings to them. Video games, movies, Facebook, and music relaxes people especially after a long tiring day's work and frame people's choice based on their own selection .At the same time the media platforms, particularly the print and the audio-visual offer an appropriate place of learning, paintings, sports and other educative material to the public for increasing their circulation and promoting reading among the public. Contemporary Culture Studies of media culture explores 'media ecologies' the study of media environments, as the modes of their information and codes of media communication play a strong effect on the fabric of civilization and culture of the society.

To conclude, Cultural Studies is an ever-changing field and is not confirmed to any particular discipline. Spending time with all life sources will always make us outfitted with our modern future generations in our life. By giving chance to learn about other societies and their behavior, we are more likely to understand their way of living rather than judging it. If more people are to trained in cultural studies, it would lead to better human understanding of our generations and to be united as one global family. Studying about cultures does not necessarily involve book reading. The best way to learn about other cultures is to travel and connect to those places. Travelling help to understand other cultures better and appreciate them. Speaking, traveling and experiencing with a person from a foreign country is probably the best way to understand Cultural Studies than to read from books.

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