

Chapter 8

Language, Identity, and Racism in Postsecondary Classrooms

Michael Olayinka Gbadegesin

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5081-6188>

Lead City University, Nigeria

Rachel Oluwafisayo Aluko

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5395-1203>

Lead City University, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

Language, identity, and racism are three concepts that define people's attitudes in all facets of relationship. The system of interrelatedness which exists among the three concepts of language, identity, and racism can therefore be said to be reflective. This study investigated elements of language used in foregrounding identity and racism in multiracial classroom settings. The study gathered data through a self-designed Google questionnaire of a mixed structure. Forty Nigerian graduate students studying in different parts of the world were selected for the research. The study shows that use of language to establish identity and racism is covert in postsecondary classrooms of the selected respondents; hence, expression of racism among learners is mostly done unconsciously and basically unintended.

INTRODUCTION

Language, identity, and racism are three concepts that define a person's attitude in different facets of their relationship. This relationship can be that of the intra-space of one's makeup. At other times, it is with other people in the physical environment. Over time, language has served as a medium through which people communicate what they consider to be their identities. It is also used to express racial prejudices which earmark the identity of *the Other*. Just as a mirror reflects images, language reflects who we are and how we see others. It helps us to create distinction for self as well as establishing desired distance for othering (Charles & Bellinger, 2020). Racism is thus established through *othering*. The system of interrelatedness which exists among the three concepts of language, identity, and racism can therefore be said to be reflective (Brenda et al., 2005). It is in this wise that manifestation of identity and racism are said to be discursive. Language is thus deployed as a tool for discriminatory discourse.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-9029-7.ch008

Language, Identity, and Racism in Postsecondary Classrooms

The study is projected as being one of the timely interventions of academic scholarship and research in sensitizing all stakeholders of education and diverse races on the global space of the need for a discrimination free learning environment. The study focuses on knowledge of use of language as a tool for promoting racism. It will serve as an insight into measures of linguistic and racial exclusivism among learners in multi-racial postsecondary classroom settings. It is believed that this will evoke a sense of linguistic empathy, mutual responsibility, and conscious resort to deploy a more inclusive language usage among multiracial learners. The study will also help policy makers tagged with the duty of catering for students from diverse racial backgrounds to formulate policies that will help preserve learners' racial diversity without the resultant effect of marginalization of any of the groups. This is integral to the futurity and achievement of sustainability of each race's uniqueness.

Study Objectives

1. The chapter intends to examine the interconnectivity of language and identity as elements of racism in postsecondary classroom.
2. This will be carried out through purposive investigation of elements of language used in foregrounding identity among learners, racism tendencies, and manifestations in classroom interaction.
3. The effects of racism on classroom interaction and collaboration will also be examined.

Research Questions

Guided by the enumerated study objectives, the chapter attempts to answer the following research questions in the course of data analysis:

1. What are the elements of language used in foregrounding interconnectivity of language and identity as elements of racism in postsecondary classroom?
2. What are the racial tendencies and manifestations in classroom interaction among learners in postsecondary classroom?
3. What are the effects of racism on classroom interaction and collaboration among learners in postsecondary classroom?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Challenges posed by racism in relation to language use and identity formation is open to studies backed up by theories which give room to a sociolinguistic interrogation of human relationship in a biased system. Raciolinguistics and intersectionality are two of such theories which help in promoting the argument raised in this study. The study deploys raciolinguistic model of language theory with partial dependence on Kimberlé Crenshaw's intersectional theory (Crenshaw, 2017; Flores, 2019). The two theories become eminent in this work based on their abilities in theorizing the historical and contemporary co-naturalization of language and race. The theories also give the much-needed avenue to interrogate overlapping or intersecting social identities, particularly minority identities, related to systems and structures of domination and discrimination respectively.

18 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:
www.igi-global.com/chapter/language-identity-and-racism-in-postsecondary-classrooms/336624

Related Content

Creative Discourse as a Means of Exploring and Developing Human Creativity

Tasos Michailidis and Gina Paschalidou (2022). *Research Anthology on Applied Linguistics and Language Practices* (pp. 1406-1426).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/creative-discourse-as-a-means-of-exploring-and-developing-human-creativity/303082

Bilingual and Multilingual Education for Deaf Students, Linguistic Minorities

Abdulaziz Alqahtani (2022). *Deaf Education and Challenges for Bilingual/Multilingual Students* (pp. 75-88).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/bilingual-and-multilingual-education-for-deaf-students-linguistic-minorities/294139

The Impact of Culture on Workplace Conflict in the Caribbean

Susan Scott (2014). *Cross-Cultural Interaction: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications* (pp. 1352-1366).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-impact-of-culture-on-workplace-conflict-in-the-caribbean/97536

Creative Discourse as a Means of Exploring and Developing Human Creativity

Tasos Michailidis and Gina Paschalidou (2019). *Applied Psycholinguistics and Multilingual Cognition in Human Creativity* (pp. 55-82).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/creative-discourse-as-a-means-of-exploring-and-developing-human-creativity/214759

Making Connections Through Knowledge Nodes in Translator Training: On a Computer-Assisted Pedagogical Approach to Literary Translation

Lu Tian and Chunshen Zhu (2020). *International Journal of Translation, Interpretation, and Applied Linguistics* (pp. 15-29).

www.irma-international.org/article/making-connections-through-knowledge-nodes-in-translator-training/257027