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A STUDY ON LANGUAGE TOWARDS CHARACTERS SOCIAL IDENTITY IN BERNARD SHAW'S *PYGMALION*

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to find out the description of Eliza Doolittle's and Professor Henry Higgins' character then to find out the influence of language towards characters social identity in Bernard Shaw's play *Pygmalion*. The writers use social identity approach to analyze the problems. From the analysis, we find that Eliza's character changes from unintelligible girl into sophisticated, elegant, and charming lady. Another character, Professor Henry Higgins is described as energetic, scientific type man but he is jerk. Then from the second problem, the influence of language toward character social identity is categorized into two, they are interpersonal behavior which is including gender and intergroup behaviors which are including social status, educational background and profession. By language, it can indicate one's social status, but it can also change people's consideration to that character. Sometimes we are still static with our concept of thinking even there is a character changing because of language use. But the other people have dynamic concept of thinking with the character changing because of language use.

Key words: language, social identity, characters

INTRODUCTION

Language becomes a tool of communication for people around the world. There are many languages all over the world which is used nationally or internationally, such as English, Germany, French, Chinese, Japanese, etc. People use language to communicate to others by spoken or written. Like Mesthrie and friends say that "Language is not just denotational, a term which refers to the process of conveying meaning, referring to ideas, events or entities that exist outside language" (2000:6). It means that language is not only for transferring idea which has meaning but also it has function beyond that. Moreover, he states that language is indexical to one's social class, status, region of origin, gender, age group, etc. Index here means it refers to certain features of speech (including accent), which indicate an individual's social group or background. By language can refer to certain features, namely social class, status, region of origin, gender, age group so it needs further research dealing with those features or only focus on one subject only.

Language which has relation to social class will be reflected in prestige. Prestige describes the level of respect accorded to a language or dialect as compared to that of other languages or dialects in a speech community (wikipedia). So the concept of prestige is closely related to that of prestige or class within a society. Generally, there is positive prestige associated with the language or dialect of the upper classes, and negative prestige with the language or dialect of the lower classes.

Language also can be reflected from gender and age group. There are differences between male and female speakers. Female speakers tend to use more prestigious forms than males with the same social background (1987:121).

From the literature about the relation between language and social identity above, it will be connected to the literary work, that is drama, entitled *Pygmalion* which represents the life of upper class and lower class. The representative of characters are Henry Higgins and Eliza Doolittle. Henry Higgins is a professor of Linguistics is coming from the upper class and another character, Eliza Doolittle is as the representation of the lower class.

In this study, the writers will investigate the influence of language towards characters social identity in Bernard Shaw's play *Pygmalion*. Therefore, the writers formulate the questions into problem formulation as follows:

1. How do the characters of Eliza Doolittle and Henry Higgins describe?
2. How does language influence characters social identity?

Then the objectives are to find out the description of Eliza Doolittle and Henry Higgins characters and to find out the influence of language to characters social identity.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1. Character

A character is the way someone thinks, feels, and behaves : someone's personality (Merriam Webster). Moreover, Kennedy and Gioia state that a character is presumably an imagined person who inhabits a story (2002:77). To borrow the useful terms of the English novelist, E.M. Forster, characters may seem flat or round, depending on whether a writer sketches or sculptures them. A flat character has only one outstanding trait or feature, or at most a few distinguishing marks. Flat characters tend to stay the same throughout a story.

Meanwhile round characters present with more facets – the authors portray the characters more generous detail. It contradicts with flat characters which stay the same throughout a story, round characters often change (2002:78).

One character in a dramatic work may be very formal and aloof, using absolutely correct grammar, a learned vocabulary, and long, complex sentences. Another may be informal, using conversational speech, colloquialisms, and slang. The example of dramatic work in which the characters use formal and informal language is in *Pygmalion*. The two characters, Eliza Doolittle and Henry Higgins perform with different levels of language. The contrasting language of Henry

Higgins, the professor and Eliza Doolittle, the flower seller, indicates the different of social status. It can be seen from this conversation:

Liza: I ain't got no mother. Her that turned me out was my sixth stepmother. But I done without them. And I'm a good girl, I am.

Higgins: Very well, then, what on earth is all this fuss about?

From the conversation above it proves that a character's accent or dialect is significant in showing one's social status. It often becomes the objects of humor in a comedy of manner by identifying their speech.

2. Social Identity

Social identity theory is described as a theory that predicts certain intergroup behaviors on the basis of perceived group status differences, the perceived legitimacy and stability of those status differences, and the perceived ability to move from one group to another (wikipedia). In other word, we can say that one's attitude or behavior, and social environment give influence to social status differences.

Social identity theory states that social behavior will vary along a continuum between interpersonal behavior and intergroup behavior. Completely interpersonal behavior would be behavior determined by the individual characteristics and interpersonal relationships that exists between two or more people. While intergroup behavior would be behavior determined by the social category memberships that apply to two or more people (wikipedia). It can be concluded that social behavior is the unity between interpersonal and intergroup behavior. Each has different characteristics. Interpersonal behavior is the individual characteristics and the relationship between two or more people while intergroup behavior is decided by the social group that is applied for two or more people.

According to Social Identity Theory, people tend to classify themselves and others into various social categories, such as organizational membership, religious affiliation, gender, and age cohort (Tajfel & Turner, 1985). As these examples suggest, people may be classified in various categories, and different individuals may utilize different categorization schemas. Categories are defined by prototypical characteristics abstracted from the members (Turner, 1985). Social classification serves two functions. First, it cognitively segments and orders the social environment, providing the individual with a systematic means of defining others. A person is assigned the prototypical characteristics of the category to which he or she is classified. As suggested by the literature on stereotypes, however, such assignments are not necessarily reliable (Hamilton, 1981). Second, social classification enables the individual to locate or define him or herself in the social environment. According to Social Identity Theory, the self-concept is comprised of a personal identity encompassing idiosyncratic characteristics (e.g., bodily attributes, abilities, psychological traits, interests) and a social identity encompassing salient group classifications. Social

identification, therefore, is the perception of oneness with or belongingness to some human aggregate. For example, a woman may define herself in terms of the group(s) with which she classifies herself (I am a Canadian; I am a woman). She perceives herself as an actual or symbolic member of the group(s), and she perceives the fate of the group(s) as her own.

3. Gender and Language Use

Men and women use language differently has been a long story within ‘folklinguistics’, a term used by some researchers to refer to sets of popular belief about language. Language and gender has been characterised by interdisciplinarity, with valuable contributions from anthropology, various forms of discourse analysis, education, literary theory, media studies, social psychology, sociology, women’s studies and lesbian and gay studies as well as sociolinguistics more narrowly defined (2000:216).

The aspects of language and gender are most closely related to sociolinguistic issues. Jespersen as cited by Mesthrie states,

The men have a great many expressions peculiar to them, which the women understand but never pronounce themselves. On the other hand, the women have words and phrases which the men never use, or they would be laughed to scorn. Thus it happens that in their conversations it often seems as of the women had another language than the men (2000:217).

From the quotation above, we can conclude that there are distinction forms of language between women and men. In conversation, women has words and phrases which never use by men and vice versa.

For further understanding about the distinction forms of language between women and men can be seen from the example of two accounts of gendered pronoun forms in Japanese (2000:219).

	<i>Men’s speech</i>	<i>Women’s speech</i>
First person (I)		
<i>Formal</i>	watakusi	watakusi
<i>Plain</i>	watasi	atakusi
<i>Deprecatory</i>	boku	watasi
		atasi
	ore	∅
Second person (you)		
<i>Formal</i>	anata	anata
<i>Plain</i>	kimi	anata
	anta	anta
<i>Deprecatory</i>	omae	∅
	kisama	

First, the difference in levels of formality can be observed. The level of formality of *watasi* is formal for men but plain for women and that of *anata* is formal for men but plain or formal for women. It means that women are required to use more formal forms. Second, we notice pronouns

of deprecatory level, *ore, omae and kisama*, in men's speech but none in women's speech. There is no deprecatory word in women's speech.

Later on in the analysis, we will find different finding that is related to difference levels of formality for men and women which is represented by Eliza's and Higgins' characters.

4. Previous Studies

There are several studies on language and social identity which will be elaborated as follows: The first article about social identity theory was written by Rupert Brown with the title *Social Identity Theory: past achievements, current problems and future challenges*. In this article, he presents a critical review of Social Identity Theory which is identified into five issues, they are the relationship between group identification and ingroup bias, the self-esteem hypothesis, positive-negative asymmetry in intergroup discrimination, the effects of intergroup similarity and the choice of identity strategies by low-status groups. Then a future research agenda for the theory is sketched out with five lines of enquiry noted as being particularly promising: expanding the concept of social identity; predicting comparison choice in intergroup settings; incorporating affect into the theory; managing social identities in multicultural settings and integrating implicit and explicit processes. The conclusion of this article remarks on the potential applications of social identity principles.

Second article was written by Ying-yi Hong, Jill Coleman, and friends entitled *Predicting Intergroup Bias: The Interactive Effects of Implicit Theory and Social Identity*. This research sought to integrate the implicit theory approach and the social identity approach to understanding biases in intergroup judgment. The authors hypothesized that a belief in fixed human character would be associated with negative bias and prejudice against a maligned group regardless of the perceiver's social identity. By contrast, a belief in malleable human character would allow the perceiver's social identity to guide intergroup perception, such that a common ingroup identity that includes the maligned group would be associated with less negative bias and prejudice against the maligned group than would an exclusive identity.

The third article entitled *Acculturation, Social Identity, and Social Cognition: A New Perspective*, was written by Amado M. Padilla and William Perez. In this article, the authors argue that new approaches are needed in the study of psychological acculturation. They posit that a new model of psychological acculturation should incorporate contemporary work in social and cognitive psychology. They hypothesize that acculturation is more difficult for those persons who must cope with the stigma of being different because of skin color, language, ethnicity, and so forth.

Our study are different to the previous studies which focuses on the influence of language towards characters social identity in Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*. We will describe the characters of Eliza Doolittle and Professor Henry Higgins then after that finding out the influence of language used by the characters towards their social identities.

METHODOLOGY

1. Approach

The term social identity approach refers to research and theory pertaining to two intertwined, but distinct, social psychological theories. These being: social identity theory and self-categorization theory. As formulated by Henri Tajfel and John Turner, social identity theory introduced the concept of a social identity as a way in which to explain intergroup behavior. It is a theory that predicts certain intergroup behaviors on the basis of perceived group status differences, the perceived legitimacy and stability of those status differences, and the perceived ability to move from one group to another (1986:7). Then self-categorization theory is a social psychological theory that describes the circumstances under which a person will perceive collections of people (including themselves) as a group, as well as the consequences of perceiving people in group terms (Turner, 1987).

From the definition above, social identity approach has relation with social identity theory and self-categorization theory. Each has their own definition and aspects but both are interconnected each other.

2. Object of the Study

The object of the study in this article is a play entitled *Pygmalion* which was written by Bernard Shaw. His play was made into a film twice, and the screenplay he wrote for the first version of it won an Oscar. In this play, the writers will analyze the description of characters which are represented by Eliza Doolittle and Professor Henry Higgins; and to find out the influence of language towards the characters social identity.

ANALYSIS

To answer the first problem that is to find out the description of characters in *Pygmalion*. The writers focus on describing Eliza Doolittle's and Professor Henry Higgins' characters.

1. Eliza Doolittle

She is described as a poor girl from streets who sells flowers in order to fulfill her daily needs. She is independent and bold girl who dares to warn the buyer of her flowers. It can be seen from this conversation:

THE FLOWER GIRL. Nah then, Freddy: look wh'y' gowin, deah.

FREDDY. Sorry.

THE FLOWER GIRL. There's menners f'yer! Te-oo banches o voylets trod into the mad...

THE MOTHER. How do you know that my son's name is Freddy, pray?

THE FLOWER GIRL. Ow, eez ye-ooa san, is e? Wal, fewd dan y'de-ooty bawmz a mather should, eed now bettern to spawl a pore gel's flahrzn than ran awy atbaht pyin. Will ye-oopy me f' them? (ACT I)

From the conversation with the buyer of her flowers, she warns the buyer by using her dialect without a phonetic alphabet from outside London. From her dialect, it also shows that she is unintelligible girl.

Her character turns out to be a brilliant and beautiful young woman after she is taught by Professor Higgins. From her thick accent, she moves with confidence and poise. Eliza is transformed from a poor flower girl into a sophisticated young woman and the most important thing is she stops being the object of jokes.

LIZA. [speaking with pedantic correctness of pronunciation and great beauty of tone] How do you do, Mrs. Higgins? [She gasps slightly in making sure of the H in Higgins, but is quite successful]. Mr. Higgins told me I might come.
MRS. HIGGINS. Quite right: I'm very glad indeed to see you (ACT IV).

The conversation above shows that Liza has changed into sophisticated, elegant, and charming lady.

2. Professor Henry Higgins

He is described as energetic and scientific type man but he also has contradictive character which is as loveable jerk, and personable misanthrope. It can be proven from the statement below.

.... He is of the energetic, scientific type, heartily, even violently interested in everything that can be studied as a scientific subject, and careless about himself and other people, including their feelings...His manner varies from genial bullying when he is in a good humor to stormy petulance when anything goes wrong; but he is so entirely frank and void of malice that he remains likeable even in his least reasonable moments (ACT II).

Higgins can be a pigheaded jerk, but he is definitely not a fool. He knows that he is a jerk and he come with a justification for his behavior. After Eliza accuses him of treating her unfairly, he tells her by saying,

Higgins. [Seriously] The great secret, Eliza, is not having bad manners or good manners or any other particular sort of manners, but having the same manner for all human souls: in short, behaving as if you were in Heaven, where there are no third-class carriages, and one soul is as good as another (ACT IV)

Higgins' spirit can get him into trouble. He spends so much time "inventing new Elizas" with his friend, Pickering that sometimes he forgets that she is a human being. He forgets to congratulate her for her bet-winning performance. He gets so angry and nearly hurts her feeling.

HIGGINS. Then get out of my way; for I won't stop for you. You talk about me as if I were a motor bus.

LIZA. So you are a motor bus: all bounce and go, and no consideration for anyone. But I can do without you: don't think I can't.

HIGGINS. I know you can. I told you you could.

LIZA [wounded, getting away from him to the other side of the

ottoman with her face to the hearth] I know you did, you brute.
You wanted to get rid of me (ACT IV).

To answer the last problem that is the influence of language toward the characters social identity, it can be seen from the interpersonal behaviors, including gender and the intergroup behaviors, including social status and educational background.

1. Interpersonal Behaviors

Interpersonal behavior would be behavior determined by the individual characteristics and interpersonal relationships that exist between two or more people (wikipedia). Related to this theory of social identity, we can see from Eliza and Higgins characters that their interpersonal relationship exist between both of them. Formerly, Eliza is a poor and uncivilised girl who becomes a flower seller. Her language is so unintelligible with a cockney accent, which is often used to refer to working-class Londoners in the East End.

THE FLOWER GIRL. Ow, eez ye-ooa san, is e? Wal, fewd dan y'
de-ooty bawmz a mather should, eed now bettern to spawl a pore
gel's flahrzn than ran awy atbaht pyin. Will ye-oo py me f'them?
[Here, with apologies, this desperate attempt to represent her
dialect without a phonetic alphabet must be abandoned as
unintelligible outside London.] (ACT I)

Comparing to Professor Henry Higgins who is brilliant linguists. He is an author of Higgins's Universal Alphabet. He is as the representative of the upper middle class society. His language is perfectly correct in pronunciation, well arranged of grammar and great choice of words.

HIGGINS [with professional exquisiteness of modulation] I walk
over everybody! My dear Mrs. Pearce, my dear Pickering, I never
had the slightest intention of walking over anyone. All I propose
is that we should be kind to this poor girl. We must help her to
prepare and fit herself for her new station in life. If I did not
express myself clearly it was because I did not wish to hurt her
delicacy, or yours. (ACT II)

From his statement, it proves that he speaks in a clear pronunciation with a great choice of words and correct grammar.

But in three months under the training by Professor Higgins, Eliza Doolittle turns into a duchess who learns to speak properly and begins dressing differently.

Eliza, who is exquisitely dressed, produces an impression of such
remarkable distinction and beauty as she enters that they all
rise, quite flustered. Guided by Higgins's signals, she comes to
Mrs. Higgins with studied grace.

LIZA [speaking with pedantic correctness of pronunciation and
great beauty of tone] How do you do, Mrs. Higgins? [She gasps
slightly in making sure of the H in Higgins, but is quite
successful]. Mr. Higgins told me I might come. (ACT III)

From Eliza's statement, we can see that by language under the training, one's character can be changed into the desired ones.

We can conclude that based on the theory of gender and language use, there are distinction forms of language between women and men. In conversation, women have words and phrases which never use by men and vice versa.

2. Intergroup Behaviors

Based on the theory stated before that intergroup behavior would be behavior determined by the social category memberships that apply to two or more people (wikipedia). Connected to language which is used by the characters, Eliza and Higgins, it is influenced by social categories such as social status, profession, and educational background.

Eliza Doolittle was born as a poor girl that belongs to working class society. Basically, people belong to working class society will have their own language with the specific accent.

THE FLOWER GIRL [picking up her scattered flowers and replacing them in the basket] There's manners f' yer! Te-oo bunches o voylets trod into the mad. (ACT I)

From Eliza's utterance, we can show that people belong to working class society, use language with the specific weird accent. Typical jobs for people in working class society are blue-collar jobs which depends on daily or weekly wages. Most of them work for others. They cannot be independent workers. Seeing from the educational system, most of them do not experience the higher education. It is proved on Eliza's job. She is a flower seller who is given a wage after selling flowers. She does not experience any education system, in fact, she is unintelligible girl.

THE FLOWER GIRL [far from reassured] Then what did you take down my words for? How do I know whether you took me down right? You just show me what you've wrote about me. [The note taker opens his book and holds it steadily under her nose, though the pressure of the mob trying to read it over his shoulders would upset a weaker man]. What's that? That ain't proper writing. I can't read that. (ACT I)

It also happens with people from the upper middle class society. They have formal and excellent accent as being duch or duchess. They speak elegantly by using correct pronunciation and great diction. They experience formal education to the highest level of education, therefore most of them belong to white-collar jobs who can get personal incomes monthly or even they hire people to work in his/her company. The character is represented by Professor Henry Higgins who is an author of Higgins's Universal Alphabet. Of course, he speaks fluently with the correct pronunciation and grammar. He earns money for his profession by being linguist and researcher.

HIGGINS. This is rather a bit of luck. I'll show you how I make records. We'll set her talking; and I'll take it down first in Bell's visible Speech; then in broad Romic; and then we'll get her on the phonograph so that you can turn her on as often as you like with the written transcript before you. (ACT II)

From Higgins' utterance, we know that he is a linguist who plans to do the research and Eliza becomes the subject of the research. He also bets with his friend to change Eliza's character into a duchess only in three months.

Language gives big influence in the characters social identity. But one's identity depends on people's point of view though it is influenced by social environment. In case of Eliza Doolittle who turns into duchess with a great looking and lovely manner, for Higgins, she is still a flower girl who come from working class society but for Higgins' friend, Pickering, she is like a lady with a lovely manner.

LIZA. I know. I am not blaming him. It is his way, isn't it? But it made such a difference to me that you didn't do it. You see, really and truly, apart from the things anyone can pick up (the dressing and the proper way of speaking, and so on), the difference between a lady and a flower girl is not how she behaves, but how she's treated. I shall always be a flower girl to Professor Higgins, because he always treats me as a flower girl, and always will; but I know I can be a lady to you, because you always treat me as a lady, and always will. (ACT V)

By language, it can indicate one's social status, but it can also change people's consideration to that character. Sometimes we are still static with our concept of thinking even there is a character changing because of language use. But the other people have dynamic concept of thinking with the character changing because of language use.

CONCLUSION

From the analysis, it can be concluded that from two problems that are elaborated, the writers found on a first problem that there is a character changing of Eliza from being unintelligible into sophisticated, elegant, and charming lady. Meanwhile Professor Henry Higgins is described as energetic, scientific type man but he is jerk. Then from the second problem about the influence of language toward character social identity, can be identified into two categories, interpersonal behavior which is including gender and intergroup behaviors which are including social status, educational background and profession. Therefore language really influence the characters social identity.

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This is to certify that

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