



Language Matters: Representation of Identity through English

Key Words

Linguistic Minority International Students, Social adjustment, changing identities, language learning

Abstract

Recent writing in applied linguistics has shown strong ties between identity and language learning. As a result identity has become a key concept in language learning research. However, with the emergence of globalisation the demographic profiles of once mono-lingual nation states are rapidly changing as they become multicultural and multilingual. This pluralisation is not only the product of formal immigration or refugee and other settlement movements. Student mobility also makes a contribution. This paper will report on the role of international students in an Australian university, with a specific focus on the processes of transition and adaptation in culture, language and identity. The study reports on a diverse group of students in transition from a Henan University course to commencement of Victoria university study. The data are connected to theory in language learning, identity change and social adjustment to produce a map of the complex interactions involved as student mobility investigate the relationship between identity and language learning, between the individual language learner and the larger social world, this paper will therefore consider the efforts of linguistic minority international students in an Australian university with reference to their investment in learning English and their changing identities in a different social and cultural space. As a result the paper will take a socio-culturally framed view of dominant language learning in multilingual/multicultural context addressing the covert and overt representation of the identity of linguistic minority international students. Since academic performance is correlated with adjustment, it is very difficult to compartmentalise the social and academic adjustment processes during transition. This paper Minichiello, V., Aroni, R., Timewell, E. and Alecander, L. (1995) *In-depth Interviewing*, 2nd ed, Melbourne: Langman. will focus on how the adjustment process of Henan University students at the social level influences their sojourn at the academic contexts and how these students adjust in Australian tertiary settings after gaining better competency in English; how and whether that impacts on how these students understand who they are and how they gain access to various social resources.

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