

## Title: The Correlation between Mother Tongue and Intangible Culture Patrimony -Concerning Some Specificities of Tlemcen Region

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### Abstract

Nowadays, the mother tongue is regarded as an essential factor in the human relationships; as it supports the establishment of the social link. It remains the basis of reasoning of every human being since it starts to be acquired from the time the latter is still in his fetal stage. Indeed, it represents the fundamental tool for the anthropologist to interact with the members of the community of which they represent the subjects of his empirical research. Through the mother tongue, the anthropologist acquires the mechanisms considered to be essential for the preservation of an intangible cultural patrimony, which seems vulnerable to disappearance due to globalization and its impact on the components of a sociocultural environment. The acquisition of a mother tongue is part of a profoundly intimate and social process. From the very beginning, children internalize not only a linguistic system, but also a set of values, traditions and symbolic representations specific to their community.

**Keywords:** Mother tongue, Social link, Patrimony, Culture, Preservation.

### Introduction:

In all human cultures, the language is seen as a crucial element in the establishment of the social link. It is absolutely inconceivable to the human being aside of this means of communication, which remains the prerogative of the human condition. In other words, the language remains the way unchallenged to the man to build the link with loved ones and the social environment in which it is an integral part. Jean Claude Romano said in this regard:

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"The individual is socialized and build its identity by step in a long process that goes from birth to adulthood. Their beliefs and representations of the self are a psychological structure extremely important to select its actions and social relations"<sup>1</sup>.

However, we can do the enumeration of three types of languages. The language learned in school, and who appropriates the status of an official language, the foreign language which is also taught in academic institutions for education and scientific research. And in the end, there is a dialect or native language. It is the language that the child compmakes before they start school; and through which it interacts within the company during his adulthood.

Obviously, the mother tongue is usually acquired in the family environment, and that are considered vital for any further learning in so far as it constitutes the basis of the reasoning. Linguists are interested in the study and, more particularly, *kyra Karmiloff* in his book entitled: **(How children come into the language?)** in which she argues that the baby is beginning to recognize the language of his mother from the moment it is still in its fetal stage. She said that in the womb of his mother, he is able to discern his voice, his syllables, as well as its intonation<sup>2</sup>.

In fact, the native language is acquired in a natural way, through interaction with the immediate environment without instructional intervention and reflection of linguistic awareness.

### **Problematic of the research:**

The nature of the research that we are in the process of initiating, encouraging us to ask the following question:

In what sense, the tongue can bring its contribution in the preservation of intangible cultural heritage in the region of Tlemcen?

### **Assumptions :**

- The tongue can be considered as a primary factor in the transmission of the living heritage, as it can also maintain the cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue between communities.
- The native language is the main vehicle through which the intangible cultural heritage can stay alive.

### **1. Mother tongue and cultural identity :**

It must be said that the date of February 21 wasn't chosen at random to refer to it as the international day of the native language. If he makes a jump into the past and, more particularly, in 1952, it so happens that on this day the students had been killed by police in Dhaka, capital of Bangladesh, as they demonstrated their claim to their mother tongue or a second national language of Pakistan of the time<sup>3</sup>.

There is no doubt that this is evidence of the vitality of the mother tongue in the fulfillment of the cultural identity of any company, as well as the cultural diversity in the world.

Certainly, it is through the mother tongue that we can shape not only our thoughts, but also our imagination and our way of conceiving the world. It is thanks to it that the child learns to adapt to his groups, standards, images, and values of the company. In other words, the tongue is assigned the task of shaping the mould of socialization.

By combining native language and cultural identity, the man appropriates the tools are fundamental for the constitution of its independence, and integration in the society as well as the power to open up new horizons.

### **2. The role of the mother tongue in cultural diversity:**

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<sup>1</sup> - Romano Jean-Claude, *La construction de l'identité*. Sciences humaines, 2004, p1 .

<sup>2</sup> - Karmiloff kyra&Annette Karmiloff, *Comment les enfants entrent dans le langage*, éd. Retz, Paris, 2003, p7-8.

<sup>3</sup> - Kerlinger, M. (2022, février 21). Le 21 février, Journée internationale de la langue maternelle. <https://l-express.ca/le-21-fevrier-journee-internationale-de-la-langue-maternelle>.

Ms. Audrey Azoulay, director-general of UNESCO had stated during a press conference : "bringing its speakers, allowing them to flourish in the horizon common mother tongues are a source of social inclusion, innovation and imagination ; they are also a breath for cultural diversity"<sup>1</sup>.

It is necessary to say that the ability to communicate in the native language promotes the development of the social bond, and also allows to become aware of its culture and of its difference from other cultures existing in the world. Where the tolerance of the differences begin to take shape in the beliefs of individuals. Something that leads to an easing of tensions and conflicts between the nations.

The question of identity is at once simple and complex. On the one hand, it is simple in its nature: it is what anchors the man in his environment while making it unique. On the other hand, complex, since it refers to the various dimensions that make up the universe of a Man. It is believed, among other things, to his family backgrounds and social, to his ethnic origin, beliefs, etc., The identity allows Man to recognize themselves as a distinct while being in continuous interaction with its surroundings<sup>2</sup>.

Through this quote, we would be able to understand that the human being identifies its culture through its interaction with others ; as he also argues for his own culture to the members of the society with which it interacts. However, it is through the mother tongue and that the transmission of the characteristics of their culture. Just because the words used in the communication are representative of certain cultural aspects. Giving emergence to another key dimension affecting freedom, tolerance, respect and intercultural dialogue.

### 3. What cultural heritage owes to the mother tongue:

In the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, adopted in Paris on 7 October 2003, it was agreed that the different fields of heritage mentioned first include oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle for intangible cultural heritage.

Indeed, language is a defining feature of an ethnic community, as it carries values and knowledge and is often used in the practice and transmission of intangible cultural heritage.

There is no doubt that the correlation that occurs between the mother tongue and practices rituals had given birth to a discipline that we had named anthropology linguistics. It must be said that anthropology language had contributed immensely to the preservation of intangible cultural heritage by its way to study the words by associating them to a particular cultural group. She has never disassociate the act of language in the social life of a community, and all it entails as a custom, religious events and practices rituals.

In his book (Structural Anthropology) Claude Levi Strauss is trying to establish a link between the organization of a people, its customs, its own rituals, its society and institutions on which it depends. However, this organization could not take shape without the existence inevitable, an essential factor by which this culture is conveyed ; and that is the language.

Claude Levi Strauss engages in the exploration of language, seeking different paths and convergent, which do lead to the perception that the human mind is a great machine that brings together all the plans of the human life, of family, religious beliefs, works of art, to table manners. "In the whole of the social sciences to which it belongs, indisputably, the language occupies, however, a unique place"<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> - Azoulay, A. (2020, février 21). À l'occasion de la Journée internationale de la langue maternelle. <https://www.unesco.org/fr/days/mother-language>

<sup>2</sup> - Duchastel, Julie. Représentations identitaires chez un homme ayant purgé une longue peine : Aspects stables et mobiles. *Mémoire présenté à la faculté des Études Supérieures et Postdoctorales en vue de l'obtention du grade de maîtrise des sciences en criminologie*, université de Montréal, 2015, p 9 .

<sup>3</sup> - Levi Strauss Claude, *Anthropologie structurale*, Tome 1, 1958, Librairie Plon, Paris, p37.

In the same vein, the linguist Ferdinand De Saussure says in his book (Courses of General Linguistics) : "the study of language therefore involves two parts : an essential is for the language, that is social in its essence and independent of the individual ; the other is secondary, that is to say, the word including phonation "<sup>1</sup>.

Nowadays, we can see that the populations have tended to adopt the official language at the expense of the mother tongue. Something that leads to dramatically their disappearance, as well as a large part of their traditions ; as is the case of the American Indians or the African tribes.

According to UNESCO, a language disappears every two weeks, and if nothing is done, 90 % of languages will disappear during this century. Of course, this is closely linked to the disappearance of peoples, such as wars, birth insufficient, epidemic, immigration. Therefore, and in this perspective, it is imperative to take into account the importance of mother tongues in creating academic institutions designed for their studies.

#### 4. About a few specific features of the mother tongue in the region of Tlemcen :

It is obvious that in all human societies, we find some vocabularies appropriate to the designation of certain cultural facts. However, it is through the naming of these facts that we tend to recognize that culture and preserve it.

Actually the Tlemcen region is full of these terms ; here are a few :

**/Chedda/** : the term belongs to the mother tongue of the company of Tlemcen and that means all of the elements that make up the costume of the Kaftan. the professor Rostane Rachida, a specialist in philology from the university of Tlemcen, had said at a conference that the origin of some terms of the accessories used in the Chedda tlemcenienne found their origin deep in the Algeria numidian, ottoman, andalusian, amazigh and Arabic, as she also added that this outfit bridal, even if it has undergone over time influences the andalusian, Turkish, and others remains authentic and represents the high degree of the creation and the craftsmanship that has always distinguished artisans algerian <sup>2</sup>. The etymology of the term 'Chedda' is the classical Arabic verb (tighten). The costume is considered by UNESCO as the first garment introduced in the cultural heritage of humanity in 2012 <sup>3</sup>.

**/Kaftan/** : it is a garment typically traditional that the bride is supposed to wear on the night of his marriage ; leaving the parental house. This costume is derived from the Turkish language which means costume of the sultans.

It is representative of grace and elegance. Since time immemorial, the artisans have made this dress to be the prerogative of the ritual of the departure of the bride from the house of the parents. This is also the place where begins the ritual clothing of this costume. She wears it with pride to be beautiful in front of the guests.

**/Bernous/** : The bernous is a draped worn as a cape by the men berbers since ancient times. The bernous male original amazigh is common to all of rural areas and traditional Maghreb, made in trainages thickness obtained from various animal fibers.

**/Jellaba/** : this is a traditional dress is usually white or yellow. The husband is supposed to wear it on the day after the wedding ceremony. The artisans of the city of Fez (Morocco) are very worn in the seam of the garment ceremony. People tend to call him 'Djellaba fassia' by reference to the city of Fez, where it derives its origin. For what is the etymology of the term, you could assign it to the (Djilbab) that the arab women in the middle east are expected to wear in order to conceal the shapes of their body<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>- De Saussure Ferdinand, *Cours de linguistique générale*, Payot, Paris, 1995, p37.

<sup>2</sup>- Rostane, R. (2018, décembre 09). La Chedda tlemcenienne, classée patrimoine de l'humanité depuis six ans. *Conférence au centre national du costume traditionnel algérien de Tlemcen*. Tlemcen. < <https://www.aps.dz/regions/81940-celebration-du-6e-anniversaire-du-classement-du-costume-nuptial-tlemcenien-patrimoine-de-l-humanite>

<sup>3</sup>- Les rites et les savoir-faire artisanaux associés à la tradition du costume nuptial de Tlemcen, <https://ich.unesco.org/fr/RL/les-rites-et-les-savoir-faire-artisanaux-associes-la-tradition-du-costume-nuptial-de-tlemcen-00668>.

<sup>4</sup>- Al fayrouz Abadi, M. (2008). *dictionary of the Arabic language El Mouhith*. (A. Chami, & Z. Djaber Ahmed, Trads.), dar el hadith, 2008, Cairo, p 281. p157.

**/Belgha/** : this is a pair of shoes that will work in perfect harmony with the Jellaba. It is the husband who has to wear it. It is made of leather and embroidered by hand. The people of Tlemcen wear it to the Friday prayer in the mosque. It is native to the cities (Fez, and Marrakech). The term (Belgha), the name derives from the classical Arabic language which underlies the connotation of which is the execution of an action in order to achieve a certain place <sup>1</sup>.

It is certain that these words were from a cultural fact closely related to the rites of marriage in Tlemcen. This is obviously an inheritance semantics rooted in the deep culture of the region. Something that undeniably contributes to its preservation, because the marriage ceremony is considered first of all as an act of alliance with a series of transactions. It is also an act of passage involving a potential symbolic of sacred practices. Something that reflects the cultural heritage of so great a value rooted in the distant past, and designed to perpetuate the continuity of the generations of the future.

Referring to the inheritance semantics, based on unquestionably the hypothesis of Sapir-Whorf (The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis). Of course, the ability that tends the language to reflect the culture was first proposed by anthropologist and linguist Edward Sapir and his student Benjamin Whorf. However, this assumption had led to the deduction that the way in which a person cultivates his thoughts and designs the things of existence is determined by its language. What linguists call (**language determinism**) or (**language relativity**). It is this reflection in the work of Edward Sapir called the language " <sup>2</sup>.

If one refers to a different social context is particularly Beni Snous, a village located 40 Kilometres from Tlemcen ; it is admitted that the region is characterized by a merry event that takes place each beginning of the year and is called **/Ayred/**. It is regarded as a ritual iconic of the region celebrated every year on 12 January. It is also a cultural event within the directory of the para-theatrical. It is a disguise that some of the young people of the village are supposed to wear during this ritual humming to different popular songs accompanied by folk dances rimées and organized by a major public.

Some people of the region attribute this celebration of praise made in the good God, so that the earth be fruitful. The term (Ayred), the name derives from the dialect amazigh, which means lion.

This brings us without any doubt the evidence that the survival of a culture depends mainly on the dialect spoken in the community.

In another social context, and not far from the village Beni Snous, is located in a locality with the name (El Kef). It must be said that this region is full of customs and rituals, including the game of 'Souna' (لعبة السونا), which took place during the feast of Aid El Kabir (عيد الكبير). The game that there were a considerable number of children was that they déguisaient in rags made of leaves, trunks of trees and plants to be in perfect harmony with nature. This testifies to the importance and great attachment of the population to the earth and the abundance of the harvest. The game "Souna" has its origins in Amazigh beliefs. The merry event lasts two days, during which time children go from door to door asking for money and semolina, which is used to make the emblematic regional dish, "couscous".

**/ Couscous/** : This traditional dish has a special place in the families of Algerian. It is served in almost all of the Maghreb companies every Friday ; classified as intangible heritage of Maghreb of humanity, the couscous can be presented in various occasions, happy or painful, in the region of Tlemcen as in different wilayas of the Country, like wedding parties, the Mawlid Ennabawi, circumcision, funeral and other occasions, such as the wa'da (الوعدة), the touiza (التويزة) and the feast of the amazigh new year (yennayer النايير).

### Conclusion :

All in all, we can say that the native language plays a decisive role in the emotional fulfillment emotional and spiritual levels of being human and then that it allows you to build social ties with members of the community. By his naming of things through the mother tongue, the man moves towards the construction of its identity, its culture and its

<sup>1</sup>Ibid, p 157.

<sup>2</sup> - Sapir Edward, *Le langage*, éd. Payot, Paris, 1970.

heritage. As it can be considered as an essential factor not only in the contribution of cultural diversity, but also in the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage. George Mounin says in his book (linguistic and translation) : "learning a language means one of two things, to learn the structure and words of the language, but also learn the relationship between structure and words, and the reality non-linguistic, the civilization, the culture of that language"<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> - Mounin George, *Linguistique et traduction*, Bruxelles, 1976, p62.