

Reshaping Gender Identities and Ideologies through Foreign Language Learning

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Abstract

Many of the early studies in the field of language and gender explored the relation between language and gender in binary oppositions framework and essentialist perspective, which resulted in an over-simplification of gender roles, linguistic phenomena, and its relation with second/foreign language learning (Gordon, 2008). Although all of those approaches had indeed succeeded in identifying the gender inequalities as the result of male's control over various resources, it failed to acknowledge the social, economic, and political contexts which influence the construction of gender identity, especially in foreign learning contexts. The emergence of new perspective, which is largely influenced by *the post structuralist tradition*, contributes to the new and more complex understanding of the relation between gender identity and foreign language learning. It implies that in the process of foreign language learning learners are not merely acquiring the linguistic knowledge (grammar, lexicon, *etc*), but also acquiring the social and cultural aspects of the target language, including gender identities, ideologies and norms. Hence, in this paper I would like to explore the relation between gender identities and ideologies, and foreign language learning. The discussion will revolve around how the learners' L1 gender ideologies influence their motivation or resistance to foreign language learning which eventually affect their success as well as failure. I also expect to explore what particular factors that might contribute to the transformation of gender ideologies and identities in foreign language learning.

Keywords: The post structuralist tradition, Gender Ideologies, Gender Identities, Foreign Language Learning