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Course

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Show How Customs Define a Person's Identity

The definition of an individual's identity takes a broad approach in the contemporary world. Customs are core elements that explain the culture of a social group. Specifically, customs refer to the practices that many people from the same region, time, culture, or country have done for a long time. The cultural diversity in the modern society facilitates the association of a person in more than one group. For instance, an individual might describe him/ herself as an American in one context and a Chinese or Japanese in another case. Consequently, it is imperative to appreciate the historical and cultural factors that support these multifaceted personality descriptions. Accordingly, this paper examines how customs define a person's identity by focusing on the case of Asian Americans.

Language is a significant component of a culture that defines an individual's identity. Although words may be similar, some distinct feature, such as accent, makes them different. Accordingly, this makes it possible to classify a person's ancestry based on this element. For example, people of the Asian origin have a problem in speaking English due to their improper American accent. Therefore, this becomes a significant customary grouping strategy to categorize an individual as an Asian American. For example, in the book *A Different Mirror a History of Multicultural America*, Takaki reveals how people use language and accent to categorize others (2). Specifically, his conversation with the taxi driver shows that Asian-Americans have poor English knowledge. Accordingly, American speakers are surprised when they find an Asian American speaking 'excellent' English. Evidently, the Asian Americans have continuously exhibited a below average language skills leading to a national