

Building National Identity Through National Language:

Selected Case Studies

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Introduction

It is often stated that problems of identity constitute the most serious distinctive psychological disorder of our time and it has become clear that problems of identity continue to become even more severe, and must be contained if not resolved if the destruction of states is to be avoided.

National identity cannot be observed directly but is a highly volatile and potentially explosive force which has been at the basis of humankind's most noble achievements and most infamous examples of destructive behavior. It is an essential ingredient in the creation and continued existence of a state but cannot easily be measured (Bostock & Smith, 2011). Without formal conceptualization, poets, playwrights, composers and other artists have expressed thoughts, feelings and moods accepted by others as valid statements of identity. Many of these expressions, such as those of Adam Mickiewicz (1798-1855) who gave international stature to Polish literature and whose imagery contributed to the emergence of a heightened sense of Polish identity, or Jose Rizal (1861-1896), the Philippine nationalist, author, poet and physician, whose execution by the Spanish conferred upon him martyrdom and incited a full-scale rebellion are of enormous importance to the national identity of these countries. Clearly, culture and identity are very closely related (Boran, 2001). In the social sciences, it is only in the last 150 years that the concept of identity has gained currency, and then only intermittently. When he introduced the concept of "class consciousness", Marx revealed himself to be an identity theorist, but it was psychoanalysis that gave the concept a fundamental place in its scheme. "Identification

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is known to psychoanalysis as the earliest expression of an emotional tie with another person," wrote Freud (1920-1922,1955:105) thus placing identity at the core of the socialization process by which he saw societies being created.

Identity and Mental State

The performance of the individual, community or state in the task of surviving involves an interaction between many activities and the prevailing mental state. This requires the maintaining of a *sense of coherence* (Antonovsky, 1980) which is vital to the task of survival, that is, coherent social functioning, though the difficulty of obtaining and maintaining the sense of coherence can be made much harder when a state is lacking in initial integration.

The psychoanalyst Erikson saw a strong sense of identity as a necessary condition for both a successfully functioning individual and for a society and he discussed at length the dysfunctional states of confusion, crisis and panic of identity. A strong sense of identity is a generator of energy and a weak or confused sense of identity as a source of decline. As a crisis of identity develops, powerful negative identity factors are produced (Erikson, 1968, 62).

Three functions of identity at the national level have been proposed. Firstly, national identity provides a satisfying answer to the fear of personal oblivion, through identification with a "nation". Secondly, national identity offers personal renewal and dignity by becoming part of a political "super family", and thirdly it enables the realization of feelings of fraternity, especially through the use of symbols and ceremony (Smith, 1991, 160-162).

It is important to note that identity is not a monolithic entity, but rather a work in progress. Castells has observed that as identity is constructed, three categories can be recognized: (1) legitimizing identity, in which the dominant aspects of society are recreated (2) resistance identity, in which marginalized groups develop an identity and

(3) project identity, in which new identities are created and which can in turn influence a dominant identity (Castells, 1997: 8).

Identity can thus be seen as part of a collective mental state that is a necessary condition for survival, but one that can become severely disordered through a distorted sense of coherence.

In their attempts to create and control the powerful forces determining national identity, rulers throughout the ages have employed many strategies. This paper will examine several experiences in creating and managing national identity through one of its most fundamental components, national language.

After examining the case studies of India, Indonesia, South Africa and Sri Lanka, it becomes clear that political leaders in all of these states have made a serious attempt to construct national identity through language, which they have chosen to call "national language (s)", but have met with varying limited degrees of success.

To show that governments attribute great significance to national language in the creation of national identity is the primary objective of this chapter, but it will go further and establish a set of preconditions for the success of the operation.

Development of a Concept of National Identity

National identity was often studied by political analysts over several centuries, such as de Tocqueville, (1835) in *Democracy in America*. Since World War II, many American political scientists have revived the national identity concept in which they found particular relevance for "young" (i.e. post-colonial) nation-states, often employing Erikson's concept of the "identity crisis". The importance of printing to the development of national consciousness was stated by Anderson (1983:41-49), who also related the process to language and empire.

The *Webster Dictionary* defines nation as "... a community of people with a territory, history, economic life, culture and language in common, possibly united under a single government, while the linkage between culture and identity need to be

emphasized (Boran, 2001). Individual identity has its own internal organization and continuity but has flexibility and is in a constant state of change and adaptation. Where a sense of identity is not strong, stress can cause disorder, disintegration and breakdown. Collective identity can exist on many levels, from a family unit, a sporting team, a business enterprise, an ethnic group, a nation or a group of nations which may exist within or across the borders of a particular state. Identity can thus be said to refer to the categories in which membership is claimed and the sense of meaning associated with each category. The major function of group identification in Tajfel's theory is the enhancement of self-esteem through the favorable comparison of one's own group with an out-group (Tajfel, 1978).

Thus a group, be it sectional, local, regional or existing within or beyond the borders of a state, will have to attract and retain its members' support if it is to continue to exist, in an increasingly globalised environment of competing attractions: at state level there will be the potentially competing pull of ethnolinguistic separatism which will somehow have to be accommodated (Safran, 1994) and similarly at various other levels.

National identity can also be looked at subjectively as a psychic process. In this way one can paraphrase Brewster Smith's (1978: 1053-1054) definition of individual selfhood and define national identity as: a process of collective self-awareness; having boundaries; having continuity in space and time; being in communication and communion internally and externally; engaging in enterprises with the world with forethought and afterthought; appraising performance; feeling responsible for actions carried out collectively and individually and holding others responsible for theirs; with the end product being successful adaptation or survival. Not all of this process occurs within the medium of language: there is music, painting and plastic arts, landscaping, physical sports and other non-verbal achievements such as mountain climbing. To a great extent, though, national identity takes place in language and thus language plays an essential role in its construction as both medium and message (Fishman, 1973). National identity requires agreement within the collectivity about the legitimacy of

inclusion within a political boundary though not necessarily ethnicity. Erikson calls this sense of agreement *ideology*, that is, a force which "... unifies the striving for psychosocial identity..." (Erikson, 1968:63), and this term does in fact combine political, social and economic organization, about which there must be substantial consensus. Where it is salient, religion can have a strong influence on the creation or destruction of a sense of collective identity; this Erikson called a "striving for an omnipotent identity" (Erikson, 1968:63).

Defining the Ideal of the Nation-State

While *nation* is a particular body of people, the *state* is a politico-legal concept, "... (a) distinct set of political institutions whose specific concern is with the organization of domination, in the name of the common interest, within a delimited territory." (McLean and McMillan, 2003: 512), but in many cases there is not a close correspondence, making the concept subject to some controversy. Even so, it is an ideal to which many political leaders, and populations, aspire.

Before the invention of the nation-state, the empire was the main organizational form, with the creation of the Roman Empire and the German Holy Roman Empire. Only when the latter collapsed were nation-states able to come into their heyday, which lasted from the birth of modern France and England until the present when supranational forms such as the European Union (EU) are emerging. Basically economic units such as the EU are by no means the only avenues for the development of future organizational forms: religion as in pan-Islamism is another powerful organizing criterion.

Even though comparatively recent, the nation-state, is by far the most popular and ubiquitous ideal organizational form covering all of the Earth's landmass, though often under conditions of contest and conflict. Approximately 85 per cent of these aspiring nation-states have been created after 1945, and often only through war and other difficulties and usually attempting to unify peoples of highly diverse language,

culture, tradition, religion and racial origin. States cannot be built instantaneously as it takes considerable time to develop the capacity to feed, house, employ and protect a population. It is necessary to develop the infrastructure required to deliver the services of health, education, welfare and justice which all need expenditure of precious foreign exchange resources. A political and administrative system is necessary in a nation-state, but in practice it may function in any one of an infinite variety of ways from enlightened rule to repressive dictatorship.

When a nation-state has emerged, its population may develop feelings of attachment and loyalty based on dependence: thus national development is not only material and technological, it is a cultural, intellectual and psychological process.

Symptoms of the Failure of National Identity

A strongly positive sense of national identity can be assumed in a state that is well-integrated, has a sense of direction, purpose and achievement ("unified striving" in Erikson's terminology (Erikson, 1968:63) or which meets the criteria of Brewster-Smith's definition (1985). A weak or failing sense can be observed indirectly through the manifestations of violence: political assassination and aggressive war. The persecution of religious, racial, ethnic or language minorities is also a symptom of the attempt to create national identity by exclusionary tactics and is thus an example of negative nationalism, using Fishman's terminology (Fishman, 1973).

The relationship between economic performance and the continued existence of a nation-state should also be borne in mind: economic decline and rapid loss of income are a major source of disruption to national identity, a cause of violence and generalized sense of crisis undermining the nation-state, as can be seen in the case of the Weimar Republic (Staub, 1989).

Though the negative means of deliberate identity engineering through genocide, enforced migration, religious persecution and attempted enforced language shift may appear to work in the short run, over a longer period of time their success is debatable.

Historical Attempts at Identity Construction Through Language

There are many instances of rulers attempting to suppress identity through the suppression of language. For example in Great Britain, the Acts of Union of 1536 and 1543 forbade the legal use of Welsh and the Education Act of 1870 favored English in opposition to Welsh schooling in Wales and Gaelic in Scotland (Bourhis, 1984:12). Similar policies were also followed by other colonial powers when dealing with the indigenous languages of their subject peoples in various parts of the globe. Examples of language promotion also exist. In 1539 Francois I decreed that French would be the sole official language of France. In the revolution of 1793, the Ile-de-France dialect of French was promoted as a symbol of nationalist unification, in an early example of language status planning. The Ile-de-France dialect became standard French and laws were later passed to suppress such other languages spoken in France as Breton, Corsican, the languages of Occitania, German in Alsace and Dutch in the Pas-de-Calais. In the 1880s the Education Acts of Jules Ferry successfully promoted French unilingualism at home, while French continued its international role as the language of diplomacy up to the end of World War I, and is still being promoted today at home and abroad (Bostock, 1986:3-4).

Another example is that of Austro-Hungary. In the early 1780s Joseph II decided to switch the language of state from Latin to German. In the interests of modernizing and mobilizing a nation Hungarian was passed over only later to be introduced as language of the state in the Kingdom of Hungary in 1844 (Anderson, 1983:81).

Thus although the nation-state is certainly a "socio-cultural artifact", or an "invention" or "imagining" (Anderson, 1983:14-15), it is one to which people have throughout the ages devoted enormous energies, often using language as an access point and a raw material. As has been noted, the development of the nation-state is a process of creation in the economic, political and psychological domains.

Although a strong sense of national identity is a necessary condition of survival in a nation-state, there are many strategies and policies in addition to the development of a national language or languages. Horowitz (1985) has proposed a range of policies to reduce conflict including federal and power-sharing arrangements, and Hennayake (1992) has drawn attention to the interactive nature of ethnonationalism whereby, for example, Tamil ethnonationalism in Sri Lanka can be interpreted as a product of Sinhalese ethnonationalism.

National Language and National Identity: India

India, with 1.155 billion the world's second most populous nation-state and largest democracy is a miracle of survival in view of its complex history of language, race, religion and religiously-based hierarchy, ethnicity and colonization. A mixture of Dravidian and Aryan elements form a racial core, but there are still some 20 million aboriginal peoples scattered throughout remote areas. India has great cultural diversity, intensified by a caste system of four major castes and some 2000 sub-castes hierarchically organized on the criterion of purity. This is linked fundamentally with the majority religion of Hinduism, but there are also substantial minorities of Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains and Parsees, often with their own stratification systems to a greater or lesser extent replicating the Hindu caste system. Below the caste system are some 130 million Dalits, whose status of "untouchability" was abolished by the constitution in 1949 and for whom elaborate measures to establish quotas in the legislatures, education and public sector employment were created and which have been and are still violently contested. Overlying other hierarchies is a deep separation into traditional, rural custom-bound society and a dynamic, materialistic, technologically orientated urban middle class. In its languages, India has been described as a "socio-linguistic giant" (Srivastava, 1990:38) and has over 1600 languages of very widely differing numbers of speakers.

Over this historically developing and interacting compound of race, religion,

caste, class and language was the imposition of British rule from 1757 to 1947. The aim of British rule, in common with other colonial powers, was political control and economic exploitation of a possession through the creation of an elite, operating through local structures of government and hierarchies. Religions and traditions were left in place to the greatest extent compatible with the overall objective. Although India was at first ruled by a commercial enterprise, the East India Company, and remained so until soon after the Indian Mutiny of 1857, when it received colonial status, its earliest European rulers realized the importance in the management of an identity based upon subordination. In his notorious "Minute on Education" of 1835, Thomas Babbington Macaulay wrote that an English education system would produce "a class of persons, Indian in blood and color, but English in opinion, in morals and in intellect" (Anderson, 1983:86). The English system of education for India's native elite produced gifted administrators, most notably Gandhi and Nehru, whose goal of independence was achieved in 1947. The main thrust of their campaign was through the creation of a sense of a new non-colonial Indian identity: "Nehru said that Gandhi had given India an identity", as Erikson observed (1968:65), in recognition of the need for national identity as a prerequisite for the creation and survival of a new nation-state. As language of colonial administration, English played a role, but also one of nonviolent revolution. However the unity of the struggle for independence was short lived and the newly emerged nation was soon to undergo partition.

The Constitution of the new nation-state declared that Hindi in the Devanagari script would become the official language of the Union but that English could be used for official purposes until 1965; the impracticality of this proposal meant that English was later accepted as an auxiliary official language. Violent language riots in various parts of the country, particularly in southern India caused the Central Government to back down and in 1967 to pass a law removing the obligation to use Hindi as official language throughout the country and in States. The Central Government then made it clear that while it was the aim of India that Hindi should be the main official language and increasingly spoken in all parts of India, the actual implementation would depend

on the voluntary participation and implementation by the non-Hindi speaking States.

Among Indian languages, Hindi was seen as an obvious choice for promotion as national language. Old Indo-Aryan, known in its classical form as Sanskrit, had ceased to be dominant and even a living language, before 1000 C.E. and although retaining a special place as the sacred language of Hinduism, it was not considered as a potential major national language unlike Hebrew in Israel. In the period of Muslim domination, Persian was a dominant language of administration for the period of Muslim domination but lost in prestige with the ending of that period and the later arrival of the British who promoted local vernaculars for the majority other than the English-medium elites.

Of the Indian languages, the British promoted the lingua franca of the Delhi region known to linguists as Khari Boli and to themselves as Hindustani. This language, which incorporated a large number of Persian loan words, had a simplified Indo-Aryan grammatical structure and also had the largest number of any of the subcontinent's languages, though still under 40 percent of the total (Shackle, 1989: 402). In addition Hindi was very closely related to Urdu which is a dialect of Hindi spoken in the Delhi region but which from the 16th century accepted a large number of Persian, Arabic and Turkish words. There is also a difference of script, Hindi being written in Devanagari characters and Urdu in Perso-Arabic script (Katzner, 1977: 176-179). After the partition of India in 1947, Urdu became the special language of (then) West Pakistan, now Pakistan, but still had the large majority of its speakers located in India.

At the time of independence India was thus an aspiring nation-state with some positive sense of identity, distinct from that of the "divisive and negative identity" or "Passive Indian" identity, as Erikson (1968: 65) described it, possessing in Hindi a candidate national language that was stronger on several criteria than any other Indian language, but still administered in the imperial language of English. English was also the language used by Indian intellectuals in organizing for independence and as a vehicle for their own expression of identity, one of whom, Tagore, had gained international prestige when he received the Nobel Prize in 1913 for his English

translation of Gitanjali (Robinson, 1989:417).

However, as already noted, India is a "sociolinguistic giant", and in recognition of this each State's official language was granted official status along with the classical language of Sanskrit after a reorganization of the States along language lines in the Seventh Amendment of the Constitution in 1956. The official languages of India at present, as specified in Schedule VIII of the Indian Constitution, are in order of the number of speakers: Hindi, Telugi, Bengali, Marathi, Tamil, Urdu, Gujaranti, Kannada, Malayalam, Oriya, Punjabi, Kashmiri, Sindhi, Assamese, and Sanskrit.

At the national level a "three language formula" was introduced in 1956, and further developed in the National Policy on Education of 1968, and again in 1986. This policy states that in secondary education, State Governments should "vigorously implement" a policy in which a modern Indian language, apart from Hindi, and English, is studied in the Hindi-speaking States and Hindi, a regional language and English in the non-Hindi-speaking States (Srivastava, 1990: 44).

While the Central Government has not forced Hindi upon the population, neither has the language gained greatly in use or in status as a symbol. In the view of Pattanayak "Hindi did not become an emotional symbol for people of different cultural ancestries" (1985:405), and neither did it even become an effective instrument in the daily life of the Hindi zone itself in his estimation (Pattanayak, 1985:405). In one view Hindi is seen as a vehicle for Hinduisation in religion and culture rather than the development of an Indian identity (Pattanayak, 1985:405)

Despite over 60 years since independence, English, as the dominant language of wider communication, remains the main vehicle of Indian identity as a unified nation, even though the total number of English speakers is estimated as being between 1 percent and 4 percent of the total population (Pattanayak, 1985:402). English could thus be said to keep India together but at a price difficult to estimate

Viewed in terms of the criteria indicating a breakdown of national identity, India appears to have achieved a moderately strong sense of identity at the level of the nation-state though with some considerable continuing difficulty. The assassination of

three political leaders (Mahatma Gandhi, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi), the frequent use of the State of Emergency, and the heavy reliance upon a former colonial language all indicate difficulties. The non-universality of the National Language and the occurrence of language riots at various times (at present in Uttar Pradesh) are also indicators of weakness. The separatist movement in Jammu Kashmir is a major threat to national unity at present, but is a movement more related to religion than to language, having Kashmiri and seven other languages in use including Urdu, which is closely related to Hindi. India has not pursued policies of genocide against ethno-linguistic or religious minorities, though community-based genocide of between 500,000 and 1 million occurred during Partition and today the state is 80 percent Hindu in religious composition. India's main problems of national identity are therefore ones of several separatist movements, which are also influenced from across its borders and also an elite/mass dichotomy in which the use of the former colonial language maintains and exacerbates an influence. In common with the majority of other developing countries, India is forced to rely upon a language of wider communication for its economic, political and administrative functioning, as reflected in the granting to English of Associate Official Language status.

India thus provides a case where the attempt to build national identity through an indigenous national language has met with limited success. (Laitin, 1997).

National Language and National Identity: Indonesia

With 230 million inhabitants Indonesia is the world's third most populous and largest Islamic nation-state (though not officially Islamic) and is geographically an archipelago of more than 3000 islands. For most of its history outsiders have heavily influenced the resource-rich Indonesian archipelago. Early in the Common Era, Indian traders brought Hinduism with them and in the 7th and 8th century C.E., major kingdoms closely connected with India had been established in Sumatra and Java: it was in this period that the famous Buddhist temple of Borobudur was built. In the

period of the 7th to 13th century the Buddhist kingdom of Sri Vijaya flourished in Sumatra while in Java a succession of Hindu-Buddhist states culminated in the kingdom of Majapahit in the 14th and 15th centuries. At this time too, Arab traders brought Islam, and this religion gradually replaced Buddhism and Hinduism, except for the latter in Bali. In the early 16th century the Portuguese established a few small settlements and from the end of the century were joined by other Europeans, especially the English and the Dutch. In a long and complex process, the Dutch, first as the Dutch East India Company and then after 1800 as the Dutch state, came to dominate the archipelago by the early 20th century. The Netherlands East Indies came to an effective end with the Japanese occupation in 1942. Dutch rule had not gone unchallenged: in 1825 Prince Diponegoro of Java led a long but unsuccessful war against the foreign rulers and in 1906 and 1908 the Balinese hereditary rulers led suicidal and unsuccessful uprisings against the Dutch.

In the early 20th century an independence movement had arisen and eventually came under the leadership of Sukarno and Hatta. At the end of World War II independence was declared on August 17, 1945 and the Dutch recognized this in 1949 after four years of intermittent and sometimes heavy fighting. In May 1963, West New Guinea, which was still held by the Dutch, was transferred to Indonesia and became Irian Jaya after a brief period of United Nations administration. In 1975, following the withdrawal of Portugal, East Timor was invaded by Indonesian troops and in 1976 was incorporated as the 27th province of Indonesia, but achieved independence in 2002 after a very violent transition.

Through Language to Identity in Indonesia

Bahasa Indonesia, as the language of Indonesia is called, is one of the world's most successful examples of the mounting and deployment of a national language, an achievement made even more noteworthy by the fact that it was in a country with over 400 indigenous languages. Due to the trading significance of the Straits of Malacca and

the fact that the Port of Malacca which was the chief trading port of south east Asia in the 15th century, one of the local languages, Malay, achieved a special status of *lingua franca*. In addition Malay was simpler than Javanese, which, according to Alisjahbana, is in fact for foreigners more than one language on account of the various levels of expression according to age, rank and other criteria (Alisjahbana, 1966:59). Written records of Malay date from the 7th Century CE and originally the language was written in an Indian script similar to that still in use in Javanese. Some inscriptions and four lines of a poem in Malay, written with Indian characters carved in a stone, were found at Minye Tujuh on Aceh (Johns, 1963:410). Later with the arrival of Islam the Arabic script was used. The Portuguese had some impact on the Malay language, particularly through the development of several creoles. Among these were Jakarta Portuguese, which is now probably extinct, Malacca Portuguese which is still believed to be used by some 3000 people (Grimes, 1992: 664) and Singapore Portuguese, which may also still exist today (Crystal, 1987:339).

The Dutch came naturally to use Malay from their earlier contacts with the archipelago, especially in commercial and domestic contexts where it was seen as unrealistic to expect local traders and their family members and their slaves to learn Dutch. The adoption of the Latin alphabet for writing the language was strongly influenced by Bible translations and, in the course of the 19th century, by growing use of Malay in administrative contexts. In the early 20th century the colonial administration had a variable language policy with regard to promoting Dutch or Malay, particularly as a medium of education (Alisjahbana, 1966:60).

In the early part of the twentieth century many Indonesians demanded increased access to Dutch instruction as a means of entry to the administrative and professional elite and for a while this was encouraged by the administration. Official policy until around 1930 was to encourage the learning of Dutch rather than Malay by Indonesians. At that time many of the Dutch came to oppose the teaching of Dutch to Indonesians because it would increase the competition between Dutch and Indonesians for elite positions and consequently an increased demand by Indonesians for access to the

privileges of Europeans (Alisjahbana, 1966:63).

Unwilling to wait for official recognition, Indonesian intellectuals began agitating for their own national language, a fundamental component of their struggle for independence. In a now famous meeting in 1928, the All-Indonesia Youth Congress, the policy of "one mother country, one people, one language" was adopted. Malay was selected as the basis of that language, on account of its status as *lingua franca* and language of Islam throughout the archipelago (Johns, 1963:413). However, the task of transforming a traditional language, Malay, into the modern one of Bahasa Indonesia, which would serve as the vehicle for the identity of a new still as yet unborn nation-state was great, particularly as there was not a great body of literature, or a widespread habit of reading literature, or even literacy. In 1933 three young writers established the magazine *Pudjangga Baru* (New Poet) as a venue for new ideas and it had a remarkable influence until it ceased publication in 1942. As with any non-classical language, there were problems of acceptance. In 1939 for example, a commentator called Bousquet contemptuously dismissed Malay as a "preposterous language" (Johns, 1963:414).

The impact of World War II in the form of Japanese takeover of Indonesia in early 1942 greatly helped the development and implementation of Bahasa Indonesia, firstly by removing all official status for Dutch and suppressing its use and secondly, by recognizing, encouraging and using Bahasa Indonesia as a language of communication, economic activity and entertainment, though subject to strict censorship, and the language was given an official role of serving the ends of the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere (Johns, 1963:422). As Japan sought to fully exploit every human and material resource in Indonesia, the role of the language was continually expanded, and with it, developed feelings of solidarity among Indonesians. The hardship and cruelty of the Japanese occupation created the climate for a mature and powerful literature expressed in Bahasa Indonesia: two famous writers were the poet Anwar and the prose writer Idrus, about whom it was observed that "... (t)ogether they established the viability of Bahasa Indonesia as a language of the modern world" (Johns, 1963:423).

The Constitution drawn up for the Republic of Indonesia in 1945, stipulated in

Chapter XV, Article 36 that the National (State) Language is Bahasa Indonesia. In attempting to return to power at this time, the Dutch however, had no choice but to recognize Bahasa Indonesia as an official language in their short lived Federal States of East Indonesia and Pasundan (Alisjahbana, 1966:66). After 1949, the language underwent much planned corpus development in lexicon, syntax and orthography and rapidly gained acceptance throughout the length and breadth of the archipelago, in an extraordinarily successful way

"Thirty years ago, almost no Indonesian spoke *bahasa Indonesia* as his or her mother tongue; virtually everyone had their own "ethnic" language and some, especially in the nationalist movement, *bahasa Indonesia/diestmaleisch* as well. Today there are perhaps millions of young Indonesians from dozens of ethnolinguistic backgrounds, who speak Indonesia as their mother tongue." (Anderson, 1983:122).

In addition, the language now has an international dimension and is the subject of a treaty with several neighboring countries (Bostock, 1994).

The sense of Indonesian national identity would appear to correlate with the acceptance of the national language, but the country does have a history of ruthless suppression of ideological dissidence and separatist movements.

In 1965 there was an abortive military coup in which the Indonesian Communist Party (P.K.I.) was implicated. In the savage repression, which followed, an estimated 500,000 were killed. Shortly after, Sukarno transferred power to General Suharto, Chief of Staff of the Army, who subsequently was elected President by the People's Consultative Assembly. Under Suharto's "New Order", real power has gone from the democratic process to the armed forces, and in 1984, all political, social and religious organizations were required to adopt the official ideology of *Pancasila* or belief in a supreme being, humanitarianism, national unity, democracy by consensus, and social justice.

The imposition of national unity by force was clearly shown in the situation in East Timor, the former colony from which the Portuguese withdrew in 1975 and which achieved independence in 2002. In these situations, a national identity is being imposed by force through the introduction of a national language, a national ideology which attempts to assert national unity and national political and administrative control concentrated in the hands of powerful local governors.

With the exception of Aceh and Irian Jaya, and some other areas, a fairly strong sense of national identity does appear to have been achieved in Indonesia. The development of the national language has played a major role, but so unfortunately, has severe military repression.

Through Language to Identity: South Africa

The African continent has huge sociolinguistic complexity: more than half the world's surviving languages are found there and over 5,000 language names have been identified in sub-Saharan Africa (Spencer, 1985: 387). South Africa has nine major African languages which are spoken by 67 per cent of the country's population of 40 million but not until the achievement of majority rule in 1994 did these languages have official status that had been reserved for Afrikaans and English.

With colonization by Europeans, Dutch was implanted in southern Africa in 1652 and continued to have some official recognition after the takeover of the Cape Colony by the British in 1814 when English became official. When in 1910 the Union of South Africa was created as an independent dominion within the British Empire, Dutch was given equal status with English. Because of its isolation from the Netherlands and its contact with African languages, Malay, English, French and Portuguese, the 17th century Dutch became transformed into the new language of Afrikaans, sometime between 1800 and 1850. At first looked down upon by both English and Dutch speakers, it gradually gained respectability. In 1875 a group of teachers and clerics in the Cape founded a Society of True Afrikaners to stand for 'our language, our nation, our land' and produced a newspaper written in Afrikaans and stressing the uniqueness of their 'God-given destiny' (Worden, 1995: 88). In 1918 a secret society, the Afrikaner Broederbond, was established and by 1929 it was instrumental in creating the Federation of Afrikaner Cultural Associations with the purpose of unifying Afrikaners and propagating a strong sense of language, culture and race-based identity among them. In the meantime, Afrikaans had in 1925 replaced Dutch as equal official language of South Africa with English, a situation that was to remain until majority rule.

Language Policy Under Minority Rule

The period of minority rule can be seen as battle between races but also as one between Afrikaners and white South Africans of British background, with the languages of Dutch then Afrikaans and English as the subject of contestation as the vehicles of identity within their respective collective mental states. This was particularly meaningful for Afrikaners, '...(I)n nationalist thinking, the peoples' very existence was manifested in the "living language" of Afrikaans' (Giliomee, 1997: 122).

The period can also be interpreted as an interface between these two colonial languages and the vernaculars. Here two distinct approaches to colonial rule have been identified: that of the Latin-speaking Europeans (French, Portuguese, Italian and Spanish), and that of the Germanic speaking Europeans (British, Dutch, German), whereby the former tended to be culturally and linguistically arrogant and dismissive of 'native cultures' and indigenous languages while the latter tended to be more racially arrogant insisting on a segregation of the races but more tolerant of vernaculars (Mazrui, 1988: 89). Moreover, while tolerating African languages, the British were reluctant to spread English because of the political implication of possible mobilizations through the common medium of communication, and also a desire to '...maintain the linguistic distance between the Englishman and his colored subject, as a way of maintaining the social distance between them ...' (Mazrui, 1988: 98).

When the Afrikaners gained dominance through minority rule in South Africa in 1948, they used language policy as an important component in the total range of policies designed to put a brake on the 'Westernization' of the African population: "(l)anguage policy was part of this deceleration of the Westernising process'. Afrikaners preferred "Bantu Education" as a device of keeping Africa "African" and white power supreme!" (Mazrui, 1988: 90).

Bantu Education, the education policy of the Afrikaner dominated Nationalist Government, attempted to steer Africans towards Afrikaans. It did this through making as its central feature a policy called Mother Tongue Education, which meant that education for Africans was required to be in the vernacular up to and including tertiary level. This policy caused much distress, and an official commission in 1963

received reports from common opinion that the standard of English had declined considerably. Education policy did attempt to steer Africans towards Afrikaans in what appeared to be becoming more and more a choice between Afrikaans and English, where Afrikaans was seen as a symbol of white oppression and a language of racial claustrophobia whereas English was seen as a language of Pan-African communication (Mazrui, 1988: 90). It was the issue of the order for black school pupils to be taught in Afrikaans not English that triggered the explosive 1976 Soweto riots in which 600 people died. In addition, as the 'homelands' that had been created under the apartheid policy accepted 'self-government', they one after another chose English and an indigenous language as their official languages (Giliomee, 1997: 123).

As the future for Afrikaans started to appear insecure, a new ally was found in the mixed race people, a predominantly Afrikaans-speaking group almost as numerous as the Afrikaners themselves. In this way, after 36 years of excluding the mixed-race people from the Afrikaner collectivity, the ruling National Party changed its definitional criteria of an Afrikaner to include anyone who spoke Afrikaans (Schiff, 1996: 219).

It is thus possible to interpret South African language policy under minority rule as an attempt to influence collective mental state by division into a multiplicity of separate collective mental states, with an overall aim of securing and enhancing the future of one group at the expense of the others, to a major or minor degree. For blacks it sought through the 'mother tongue education' and the non-offering of English, to create a collective mental state of insecurity, depression, dampened sense of realism, exclusion and habituation to violence. For South Africans of British background it aimed to create some feelings of insecurity, depression, and some hint of the likelihood of violence, but offered the possibility of inclusion in the Afrikaner collectivity as a viable solution. Among Afrikaners, it sought to create a mental state of a secure future, and a mood of elation through the delusion of a God-given destiny based on an unrealistic belief in the sustainable viability of a policy of exclusion of Africans, under laid with a habituation to a putative ever-present threat of violence.

The explanation of how South Africa went from minority to majority rule is the subject of much speculative analysis, but it can be argued that language policy has played a major part.

South African Language Policy After Majority Rule

The Constitution of the new South Africa was adopted in 1996 and Section 6 of Chapter 1 Founding Provisions laid down the principles of policy as to language. It recognized 11 official languages and stated that practical and positive measures must be taken to elevate the status and advance the use of the indigenous languages, while 'all official languages must enjoy parity of esteem and be treated equitably'. (South Africa, 2011). Although all official languages are constitutionally equal, there is great difference in demography, written literature and international use.

It is difficult to assess the impact of this new language policy, and it is certainly an area of contention in various areas, especially education (Van Schalkwyk, 1999) (Beukes, 2004). However, there is an interesting question that arises: why did the ANC-led majority government adopt such a generous policy towards Afrikaans, bearing in mind all that they had been through? It is possible that the answer is related and concerns the management of collective mental states. Much has been written describing the collective mental state of the Afrikaners as one of collective fear of loss of identity through loss of language. In the words of Giliomee: "... there was every prospect that a black government would elevate English to the status of being the sole official language, spelling the end of Afrikaans and the Afrikaner culture--and with it the demise of the Afrikaner people." (Giliomee, 1997: 123).

The fact that newly independent Namibia chose English as sole official language, though with recognition of educational rights in other languages, (Namibia, 2011) was not lost on Afrikaners. In fact SWAPO had long made it clear that Afrikaans, the lingua

franca of Namibia, would be replaced by English. (Phillipson, Skutnabb-Kangas & Africa, 1986: 78).

The ANC-led government may well have followed a policy of language retribution towards Afrikaans, aiming to destroy the language through the destruction of its status, but instead chose to follow a path of status enhancement for the nine indigenous languages, while offering to Afrikaans a continued place as an official language in the new South Africa. In other words, the choice for Afrikaners was between a policy of controlled status reduction or free fall into the abyss.

The post-apartheid position offered to Afrikaners was thus one of some security, limited depression, an end to delusion, some inclusion and a reduced prospect of violence, with language policy making a significant contribution to this, in other words, an offer far better than might have been expected.

The future role of language policy in the political development of South Africa will be critical. There are fears that have been aroused by the ANC-led government refusal to grant approval to either exclusive mother-tongue education or single language schools and universities (Giliomee, 1997: 137), have been one area of tension.

In the case of the African languages, it is necessary to destigmatize them from the hangover of their previously assigned position of inferiority but also to give them enhanced status by a process of what has been called 'reverse covert planning', as equality is not in itself enough to achieve the desired outcome (Kamwangamalu, 1997: 122). A cause of major concern in the post-Apartheid phase is the effect of the 'all-mighty English language' on the survival of all other languages (Kamwangamalu, 1998: 122), and the implications of these issues is currently being assessed by the Pan-South Africa Language Board, which was created in 1995.

Although Afrikaans must come to terms with the negative connotation of its earlier association with Apartheid, there are signs that this is happening. In 1996, Matthews Phosa, the premier of Mpumalanga, one of the new provinces of South Africa, published an anthology of poetry in Afrikaans (Van Rensburg, 1999: 88).

These considerations reflect the major concern caused by the hegemonic power of the English within the highly fluid linguistic situation in South Africa. Moreover, English is impacting on the discursive formations of the African languages (McLean, 1999, 10).

The situation confronting the speakers of languages other than English in South Africa is in fact no different from those in other countries, but the ethnopolitical symbiosis between state and nation requires that that groups avoid the psychological devaluation caused by the devaluation of their languages Breton, 1995: 76).

In the light of the above discussion, one could say that the maintenance and development of the new South African state depends upon the emergence of a new collective mental state, to which language policy can make a contribution by avoidance of what has been called 'linguistic exclusion' (Ridge, 1996: 33).

National Language and National Identity: Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is the island nation of 20 million separated from the southeastern tip of the Indian subcontinent by the 80 km wide Strait of Palk and which was formerly known as Ceylon and before that Taprobane. The most ancient of the inhabitants are the Veddas, a mountain people whose ancestors were conquered in the 6th century B.C.E. by the Sinhalese who came from Northern India. Settling in the north of the island, the Sinhalese developed an elaborate infrastructure including an irrigation system and introduced Buddhism from India in the 3rd century B.C.E. Sri Lanka became a major center of Buddhist activity: a cutting of the tree under which Buddha gained enlightenment was planted at Bodh Gaya, and the temple of the Tooth at Kandy is another extremely important Buddhist sacred site.

Proximity to the Indian subcontinent resulted in many invasions, mostly by Tamils. In the 12th century C.E. a Tamil kingdom was established in the north of the island and the Sinhalese were driven southward. Arab and Chinese traders made regular trading visits and the Portuguese conquered parts of the coastal fringe in the early 16th century. These possessions were taken over by the Dutch in the next 100

years and then the British in 1795, which gained possession of the whole island in 1815 when the Kingdom of Kandy was conquered. There were rebellions against British rule in 1815 and 1845 but the British were able to establish plantation industries of tea, coffee and other crops, and imported a large number of Tamils from nearby southern India to provide the necessary labor.

During World War II an independence movement arose and the island was finally granted independence in 1948. The population has remained in ethnic composition roughly 70 percent Sinhala-speaking Buddhist-practicing Sinhalese, 12 percent Tamil-speaking Hindu-practicing Tamil, with the rest of the population being Muslim or Christian and identifying with either main language group, but with English language playing an important role in administration, the economy, and education. In justice no less than five legal systems operate: the Roman-Dutch, the English, the Tesawalamai, the Islamic and the Kandyan.

From this complicated mixture of languages, religions, customs, races and ethnicities, Sri Lanka (then still called Ceylon) as a newly independent member of the Commonwealth, faced the task of developing a sense of national identity sufficient to sustain national integration and single statehood, a goal that its giant northern neighbor of India had failed to achieve.

The subsequent history of Sri Lanka shows how difficult this task has become, with a major cleavage between Sinhalese and Tamils leading to language riots, assassinations, terrorist bombings, civil war and the suspension of democracy in numerous States of Emergency. Attempts to make Sinhala the sole national language and Buddhism the sole official religion have exacerbated the situation.

Under British rule, English was the official and prestigious language, and prior to independence there was a Swabhasha movement for Sri Lanka's "own language" which embraced both Sinhala and Tamil (Edwards, 1985:179) but after independence the communities became more and more separated. Sinhala is an Indo-European language descended from Sanskrit but whose rounded script more closely resembles that used for the Dravidian languages of Southern India. (Katzner, 1975:201). Long cut

off from its distant relatives in Northern India, Sinhala is spoken by 14 million Sinhalese in Sri Lanka but not widely outside of the country. The sense of isolation that some Sinhalese feel about their language is relevant to an understanding of the political imperative of Sri Lanka's Sinhalese to safeguard and strengthen its position. As a writer of Sri Lanka Tamil origin was to state

"The Sinhala language ...was in danger of extinction - and with it the Sinhala people. Where else in the world was Sinhala spoken but in Ceylon?" (Sivanandan, 1990:217).

In the post-independence period, Sinhalese majority agitation led to a 1956 declaration of Sinhala as the sole official language of the nation. In 1958 serious riots erupted between Sinhalese and Tamils over the issue of language rights, the Tamils seeking recognition of their language and a Tamil state under a federal system. Later that year the Prime Minister, S.W.R.D. Bandranaike was assassinated by a Buddhist priest who believed that concessions towards the Tamils had gone too far. In 1972 in response to further protests from Tamils, the Sinhalese-dominated government changed the constitution. However not only did it reaffirm the dominant position of Sinhala but also gave state blessing to Buddhism (Edwards, 1985:179). After considerable agitation Tamil was given some official status in 1977 (as was English in 1983). Economic disparities along community lines continued to widen and major bloodshed occurred. In 1981 a State of Emergency was declared and in 1983 a Civil War began between the Tamil Tigers of Elam (LTTE) and the Sri Lanka State, with various atrocities on both sides. In 1987 an Indo-Lanka Peace Accord was signed under which India would cease to supply the LTTE, in exchange for concessions by the Sri Lankan Government to the Tamils of the North East. In making these concessions it should be noted that the Sri Lankan Government was being already severely extended with what was virtually another civil war: that with the Janatha Vilnukti Peramuna (JVP) or People's Liberation Front, an ultra-left-wing Maoist group committed to the overthrow of the Sri Lankan

government by violent means, and at present still in control of parts of the South West.

While the extreme nature of the violent conflicts has received widespread media coverage, precise numbers are not available. One estimate of the total number of deaths since the beginning of the civil war is over 70,000, mostly Tamils (Imtiyaz and Stavis, 2008: 135).

Without underestimating the importance of the contribution of economic and political autonomy factors, it is possible to interpret the Sri Lankan/LTTE conflict as a pathological expression of an emotional state of rejection of the view that the Tamil language and culture should be removed from the soil of Sri Lanka. In the words of A. Sivanandan: "...it was ... intolerable and unjust that the (Official Languages) Act in giving voice to the Sinhala masses should have shut out the Tamils." (1990:215).

The Tamil language, it should be noted, is not a small and localized competitor with Sinhala but is in fact one of the major languages of Southern India, the official language of Tamil Nadu (formerly Madras); it is the oldest of the Dravidian languages and is spoken by some 70 million people in India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Fiji, Mauritius and other locations of the world-wide Tamil Diaspora. The conflict is not simply one about language: it is a conflict of two competing national identities within the space of one state, where the national identities are predicated upon the two religions of Buddhism and Hinduism and where cultural myths and legends are reified into highly developed schemes. (DeVotta, 2007), Although the competing religions profess non-violence or *ahimsa* to the Buddhists, violence is still seen as necessary (Kapferer, 1988:100). The assassination of Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in India in 1992 is believed to have been carried out by Tamils with a Sri Lankan connection, unable to accept his concessions to the Sinhalese, and in 1993 Sri Lankan President Premadasa was assassinated, followed shortly after by the assassination of Opposition Leader S. Dissanayake.

In this way, Sri Lanka has been a theatre of war between the proponents of competing national identities, with civil war in the North and savage terrorist violence in Colombo and other large cities where there are substantial minorities. The promotion

of Sinhala as national language and the tardy and limited official recognition of Tamil are not the sole cause of the failure to emerge of a single Sri Lankan national identity but are implicated as both cause and effect. Both language-based identities show evidence of insecurity and as has been stated earlier, deprivation of identity leads to major psychological disorder. In 2010, the Sri Lankan civil war came to a bloody end with the defeat of the LTTE and the loss of another estimated 40,000 civilian lives (Hodge, 2011).

Conclusion

The study of language and identity in these states shows that the impulse towards the ideal of national identity, which is vital to their survival as nation-states, is not all that strong in any of them. National identity cannot be built directly but national language can contribute greatly to the emergence of a nation-state as did English in Great Britain, French in France and German in Austro-Hungary.

The political leaders of India, Indonesia, South Africa and Sri Lanka have all sought to create and enhance national identity through national language(s). Although national identity cannot be directly observed, its breakdown can be interpreted from observation of a number of imprecise but quite unmistakable indicators. Both India and Sri Lanka have seen political leaders assassinated and some terrorist activity. Religious conflict is acute and violent in India and Sri Lanka, but particularly in the latter where Buddhism is the official state religion. The main official languages of Hindi in India and Sinhala in Sri Lanka have encountered considerable opposition, and there is still much reliance upon English in both states. India and Sri Lanka have also remarkably persisted with a democratic political process though Sri Lanka has had many more States of Emergency.

Superficially Indonesia's sense of national identity seems to be stronger, judging by the wider acceptance of the national language and the apparent acquiescence of much of its population to its military rule and official ideology. But Indonesia's unity

has been created by the use of force as displayed in the quelling of the regional rebellions of the 1950s, the genocide of the PKI supporters in the 1960s and the repression and attempt to block independence in East Timor and the ongoing repression in Aceh and Irian Jaya

In South Africa, the transition to majority rule could have been badly mishandled if Afrikaans and none other African languages had not been granted recognition as official languages. Even so, the unstoppably expanding role of English as a language of wider communication is presenting a challenge to the building of a national identity in South Africa, but this is also a challenge worldwide.

Abstracting from these case studies, it is possible to propose some criteria for the selection of a language as national language if it is to be used successfully in developing a sense of national identity:

- (1) It should not have excessively negative colonial associations
- (2) It should desirably be already a lingua franca in widespread use
- (3) It should not be too closely identified with one particular ethnolinguistic group
- (4) It should have the credibility of a significant population of native-speakers and
- (5) Other ethnolinguistic groups whose language(s) have not been selected as NL should not be experiencing actual or anticipated language grief (Bostock, 1997). Where this is the case, multiple national languages can be a desirable policy option.

It is thus possible to finally conclude that the case studies confirm that a direct relationship exists between national identity and the survival of a state as some kind of nation-state. In addition, the importance given by leaders of these states to creating national language(s) is confirmation of the view that there is also a powerful relationship between national language and national identity.

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