National Languages- Medium of Instruction- Empowerment or Disempowerment?

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Abstract

Many countries in Asia, especially SEA, have as a result of independence, been insistent on having a national language policy for their respective countries. They have rationalised that a national language will bring the multiethnic groups of people in these countries together and create a united country. This paper traces choice and developments of language policy in Malaysia, Philippines and Pakistan and reveals that this objective is not always realised. In fact, the socio economic gap widens with those who can afford it sending their children to English medium schools and those who cannot attend national government schools where the superimposed national language is the medium of instruction. Furthermore, the national language policy even results in minority communities not being taught in their heritage languages and this further disadvantages learners.

Malaysia

Demographics of Malaysia

Malaysia is made up of Peninsular Malaya and East Malaysia (consisting of the states of Sabah and Sarawak) and has an estimated population of 31 million. Its population is made up of the following ethnic groups: 50% Malays, 25% Chinese, 10% Indian and 15% indigenous people who are mainly from Sabah and Sarawak. The principal languages spoken in Peninsular Malaya are Malay, English, Mandarin, and Tamil while in East Malaysia a dialect of Malay known as Sarawak Malay and Sabah Malay and English (generally by the higher social and economic class) is used for intra ethnic communication by the Bidayuh and Kadazandusun.

The number of individual languages listed for Malaysia is 140. Of these, 138 are living and 2 are extinct. Of the living languages, 11 are institutional, 6 are developing, 5 are vigorous, 100 are in trouble, and 16 are dying (Lewis, 2015:1). Thus, a number of speech communities are shifting away from the habitual use of their respective heritage languages and many minority groups in the country are increasingly using Malay or English to communicate (for details of these communities in Peninsular Malaya see David, Cavallaro and Coluzzi 2009 and for details of these see David and Dealwis 2008) Loss of minority languages could also at times result in loss of culture and ethnic identity (see David and Dealwis, 2009).
Malaysia's National Language Policy

The term language policy can be defined as a way in which a country and its government officially decides either through legislations, court decisions, executive actions or other means to determine how the language is used, cultivated, learnt and maintained (Crawford, 2000:1). Therefore, any language policy (and even the absence of a formal language policy constitutes, in effect, a language policy) reflects the social, political, and economic context of public education and influences what each generation brings to the task of educating its children (Huebner, n.d.:1).

Malay as the National Language

When Malaya gained its independence in 1957 the official national language chosen was Malay so as to maintain unity and promote easy and effective communication in the society. Chinese and Indian settlers came to Malaysia bringing with them distinct languages, beliefs and value systems (Gill, 2014:1). At independence, language was seen as the key to create unity among the diverse peoples of Malaya and making Malay the national language was seen as the way to allow increased interaction between the majority and minority groups within the country. Malaysia’s location, the strategic geographical location of the Malay homeland, on both sides of the Straits of Malacca and also, an important trade route, also contributed to the historical importance of the language as a trade language and lingua franca (Paauw, 2009:3). The decision to make Malay the national language of Malaysia in terms of location was influenced by the usage and popularity of the Malay language between Malaya and its foreign traders at the time. Today, Malay is spoken by 60.5 million people in 13 different countries. According to Ghazali, 2010:3 the government has been successful in ensuring that all its people are at least orally proficient in the national language.

Medium of Instruction in National schools and National Vernacular schools

Malaysia has a total of 10,154 schools and an overall total of 5,120,802 children who attend school. In 2013, the percentage of children in Malaysia who are documented as attending school are as follows, 0 to 4 year olds-25%, 5 to 9 year olds- 29%, 10 to 14 year olds- 29% and 15 to 17 year olds- 18%. From these figures it was determined the racial percentage that attends school are 55.2% Malay, 13.9% other Bumiputras, 18.4% Chinese, 6.2% Indian, 0.8% others and 5.4% non-Malaysians. Those who attend national schools are taught primarily in Bahasa Malaysia (Malay), those attending national vernacular schools are taught in their ethnic language (Mandarin or Tamil) and those attending private international schools are taught in English. This leads to the belief that even though Bahasa Melayu has been designated the national official language, Malaysia has adopted a liberal linguistic policy by allowing for minority languages to be used in systems of education (Gill, 2008:4). It has been reported that 90% of Chinese children attend vernacular primary schools and a substantial number of Indian children (50%) attend Tamil primary schools and many Malay children attend religious schools. The latter have mushroomed and there are now both government and private religious schools. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that private universities and some public universities including one that caters to Malays and bumiputras only use English as the medium of instruction creating a chasm between English educated and Malay educated graduates. It is felt in some quarters that vernacular
and religious schools do not promote unity. However, vernacular schools are guaranteed under the Malaysian Constitution and supporters of vernacular schools argue that vernacular schools do not create disunity. Other factors do.

**History of Malaysia’s Education System**

In 1951, before Malaysia gained its independence from the British, the education system in Malaya was devised to give British Malaya a structured education system with the hope that the need for vernacular schools (Chinese and Tamil) would decrease. This however sparked racial tension amongst Malaysians and the British resolved this by stating that national schools would have a bilingual system (Malay and English) while national vernacular schools would have a trilingual system (Chinese or Tamil, Malay and English). This allowed national schools to maintain Malay as the official medium of instruction but also allowed those who attended national schools to gain English proficiency while national vernacular schools chose their official medium of instruction based on their student’s ethnic backgrounds but also conducted Malay and English classes.

British Malaya, decided to adopt the Razak Report in 1956. The Report made it clear that although the intention of the government was to gradually introduce Malay as the national language, it also intended to maintain other local languages, and certainly attempted to ensure that every child was able to function in more than one language. Non-Malay children were to be encouraged to acquire Malay while Malay children were to be encouraged to acquire English, which was to be a compulsory subject in all schools (Gaudart, n.d.:6).

However, since the formulation of the national language policy in 1956 there have been several changes to the education system in terms of the medium of instruction and there has been constant debate about the use of English when teaching certain subjects such as math and science in English. In 2003 it was decided that maths and science would be taught in English and in 2012 that policy was abandoned and the government reverted to Malay as the language for all subjects. In the recent Budget 2016 the Prime Minister announced a dual language highly Immersive Programme for 300 pilot schools who will be given the option to teach Science or Maths in English or Malay to year 1 and year 4 pupils.

**Effectiveness of Malaysia’s National Language Policy**

When Malay was chosen as the national language it was seen as a way of uniting the various communities and ethnic groups in Malaysia. The government felt that if there was one distinctive language that all Malaysians could use as the lingua franca that would in turn create a sense of harmony and nationalism between Malaysians. To some extent we can see that using Malay as the lingua franca does facilitate interethnic communication. However, with the recent changes in the education system we find that there is an increasing socio-economic divide precipitated to some extent by the schools that students attend and the language of instruction.

Those who only have Malay language proficiency will find employment in small family owned businesses or in the public or government service. They would have difficulty finding employment in the private sector where knowledge of English and other vernacular languages is
required. They miss opportunities provided for studying or working abroad, and getting higher paying jobs and promotions. Unemployed graduates were mainly those from public universities where Malay is the medium of instruction. There is resentment among those who are only Malay language proficient who feel that opportunities are being given to those who are English proficient and also fluent in other languages.

Malaysians who are bilingual or trilingual who are able to speak the national language, their mother tongue and/or English have better prospects in finding employment. This is because there are more opportunities for jobs in the private sector for those who can speak Malay, English, and either Mandarin or Tamil. Some employees may even be paid higher wages because they are able to communicate in two or more of the ethnic languages allowing the company to have ‘niche’ employees that can target diverse segments of the Malaysian population. This often creates a socio-economic gap as those who speak more than one language generally obtain higher paying jobs.

The English language is a requirement in the private sector as much of the business in the private sector is conducted in English. Furthermore it is clear that English proficiency is also required both in Malaysia’s public and private sectors due to globalization and therefore only knowing the national language and/or other ethnic languages is proving to be a disadvantage for many. Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, the longest serving Prime Minister of Malaysia said that, “mastering the English language is crucial to progress, especially in the fields of science and mathematics. He argued that in this age, the English language is a global language, the lingua franca between different peoples and nations and much of the accumulated knowledge of mankind comes to us in the English language. If we only master Bahasa Melayu we cannot actively move forward in the world, especially in science and technology and international trade and commerce. Dr Mahathir added that there are new discoveries every day in science and technology by researchers and in order not to fall behind it is necessary to have a good command of the English language. The National language has its place and importance.” But it is a fact that in order to master the fields of science and mathematics we must master the English language” (Silva, 2015: 1-2). However, those who are proficient or trying to become proficient in English are at times viewed upon negatively. Many students at the Mara boarding schools who use English to communicate at one point in time were criticized by their peers. The fact is that many Malaysians, especially those in the middle class know that while it is important to know the national language it is also important to become fluent in the English language. Those who are English language proficient are able to be hired by companies conducting both domestic and international trade and thus earn more income than those who are limited to the national language. This in turn allows those who are English language proficient to enter into Malaysia’s higher income society widening the socio-economic gap that already exists between Malaysians.

So whilst having Malay as the national language may satisfy nationalistic aspirations and also facilitate interethnic aspirations lack of proficiency in the English language is an obstacle to learning and employment and also to accessing business opportunities at home and abroad. Knowledge of languages other than Malay and English will also be advantageous from an employment and business perspective. The fact that English educated or English proficient Malaysians enjoy better paying jobs in the private sector also creates social tension. There are other factors that create disunity or ethnic and religious tension but that is beyond the scope of this paper.
Closing

Malaysia’s national language policy was implemented because the government felt that a national language would bring the multiethnic groups of people in these countries together and create a united country. However, in the case of Malaysia we notice that in terms of communication it does allow the minority and majority groups to communicate but it does not necessarily promote unity. If we take Thailand or Indonesia as an example as these countries that also have a multicultural and multiethnic society, we find that regardless of a person’s background they tend to converse in the national language. However, in Malaysia people choose the language to converse based on the group they are communicating with. The middle class are generally English language proficient and will communicate in English whatever their ethnicity.

Malaysians (mainly the Malays and the Chinese but to a smaller extent the Indians - for details of the Indian response see Mukherjee and David 2011) will also generally use their ethnic languages when speaking to members of their ethnic community. But the explanation is a simple one. It does not mean disunity or lack of unity. English is the language of higher learning and of the private sector in Malaysia and there are a substantial number of Malaysians of all ethnicities who are fluent in English, unlike Thailand and Indonesia. And Mandarin, Tamil and other indigenous languages are widely spoken within the various ethnic groups. There are more than 60 thousand Malay children attending Chinese4 schools. These children will be able to converse fluently in Mandarin.

The education system in Malaysia has affected the socio-economic gap to some extent. The idea for national schools was to firstly provide students with a standard form of education by using the national language and also allow the various ethnicities to interact with one another. Creating unity through national schools to some extent has been effective. However, many believe that the acceptance of vernacular schools and international schools has also divided the society and created a larger socio-economic gap. This is because the gap widens between those whom are only fluent in the national language and those who are bilingual or trilingual with English as a strong second language.

Therefore, it is evident that Malaysia’s objective to implement its national language policy has not entirely achieved the objectives that it wanted or needed to achieve. This is not because of the choice of Malay as the national language but the failure to recognize the economic value of the English language and other languages.

Malaysian ministers have emphasized the importance of maintaining Malaysia’s national language while incorporating measures to advance English fluency within the school system. Many Malaysians do feel a sense of pride in their national language and understand the importance of knowing their national language. However, they also recognize the importance and economic value of knowing English and other vernacular languages. In fact in November 2015 Sarawak's Chief Minister announced English as an official language alongside the Malay language policy.

Malaysia has diverse peoples each with their unique language and culture. It would be tragic if these languages and culture was lost because no effort is made to support and sustain such
diversity. To some extent the government has had the dominant languages in East Malaysia - Iban and Kadazandusun languages taught. But many minority languages like the Mahmeri and Kanaq - some of the languages of the first peoples of the country, are diminishing. Identity is partly built on language and culture and there is much that is wise and beautiful that is embedded in each language. It is also possible for children to be bilingual and trilingual without much effort. Given the diversity of its people, given the importance of vernacular languages, and given the value of both the national and international language and given the necessity of preserving our heritage of diverse languages we should encourage stronger efforts of multilingualism in our schooling system.

The Philippines

Demographics of the Philippines
The Philippines is located in Southeast Asia consisting of 7,107 islands and 170 languages (Lewis 2009). It has a total population of 100 million people (Census, 2014). McFarland (2009) identified eight major languages such as Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilokano, Hiligaynon, Bikol, Samar-Leyte, Kapampangan and Pangasinan. Of the many languages, Filipino language which is based largely from Tagalog language is the national language. Moreover, Filipino and English are used as official languages of the country. This means that Filipino and English are the languages used in official domains of communication.

Filipinos speak different languages and dialects however Filipino, the Philippine national language, is widely spoken. Apart from Filipino, English is also used as an official language which serves other functions specifically in the government and education. Most Filipinos can speak English because it is used as the medium of instruction in the kindergarten, elementary, high school and college. Although bilingual education is encouraged, many people give importance to English because of its economic benefits particularly in seeking for job opportunities in the Philippines and abroad.

Philippine National Language
The national language of the Philippines was declared after the country gained independence. The selection of the Philippine national language was based from the recommendation of the National Language Institute (NLI) to use the Tagalog language as the basis of the Philippine national language. Prior to the declaration, NLI conducted a study on the various languages in the Philippines and the Institute was represented by a number of members who also represent from the different major languages in the country. NLI was headed by Jaime de Veyra (Samar-Leyte Visayan region) and some members such as Santiago A. Fonacier (Ilocano region), Filemon Sotto (Cebu Visayan region), Casimero Perfecto (Bicol region), Felix S. Salas Rodriguez (Panay Visayan region), Hadji Butu (Moro region), and Cecilio Lopez (Tagalog region).

Based from the results of the study, NLI recommended that Tagalog should the basis of the national language. On December 30, 1937, President Manuel L. Quezon declared the Philippine national language, Filipino, by virtue of Executive Order No. 134. However, in the 1986
constitution, “Pilipino” was changed to “Filipino” on the basis of existing Philippine and other languages (Art. XIV, Sec.6, 1986 Constitution).

The Philippine Language Policy
The language policy in the Philippines has undergone a number of changes particularly in promoting the national language at the same time maintaining English as a second language. The Philippine Bilingual Education Policy in 1974 (revised in 1987) states that English and Filipino are the languages of education and the official languages of literacy. The implementation of the bilingual policy was to make its people bilingual, capable of communication both in English and Filipino. Consequently, such policy has contributed to the abandonment of minority languages in the Philippines (Grimes 2000; Jernudd 1999; Kaplan & Baldauf 2003; Nical, Smolicz & Secombe 2004; Young 2002). Under the policy, the Filipino language was used as the medium of instruction (MOI) in schools at the primary level. In schools where Filipino is not used, the use of the vernacular language is permitted in the lower grades (i.e. grades one to four, ages 7-10) and Filipino is used as MOI in the fifth grade. In this case, since Filipino and English are not taught in the lower grades, they are taught as double period subjects in grades five and six. At the secondary level (ages 13 to 16) both English and Filipino are used as the media of instruction (Fonacier, 1987:145).

In light of the need to give importance to the vernacular language, a new policy in 1973 was implemented wherein the vernacular language is to be used as MOI at the primary level (i.e. grades one to two). However, such an attempt was not successful and the policy was revised by allowing English and Filipino as MOI in all levels and using the vernacular only as an auxiliary language (Fonacier, 1987; Llamzon 1977). The 1987 Philippine constitution (Article 14, Sec. 6) states that

“The national language of the Philippines is Filipino (…) the Government shall take steps to initiate and sustain the use of Filipino as a medium of official communication and as language of instruction in the educational system”.

Further Section 7 of the Constitutions states that

“For purposes of communication and instruction, the official languages of the Philippines are Filipino and, until otherwise provided by law, English. The regional languages are the auxiliary official languages in the regions and shall serve as auxiliary media of instruction therein (…)”.

It is evident from the Article Sections above that the Filipino language is to be used as the medium of communication and instruction in the country’s education system at all levels (primary to tertiary). The vernacular in this case shall be resorted to only when necessary to facilitate understanding of the concepts being taught through the prescribed MOI: English or Filipino (Sibayan, 1985; DECS order no 25). This policy provides opportunity to enhance and develop the national language, given the variety of languages existing in the Philippines. Additionally, there is
provision of the use of English and regional languages in the educational system, though Filipino is still given much priority. Allowing other regional languages to be used as auxiliary languages on the one hand is also a good option because of the wider linguistic knowledge and proficiency of Filipinos in English, and ethnic (regional) languages.

However, of late, the Philippine government has shifted back to the promotion of the vernacular/mother tongue (not necessarily Filipino given the variety of languages/dialects in the Philippines) in schools when the Department of Education (DepEd) institutionalised the Multilingual Education (MLE) initiative in 2009 which aims to promote the use of the mother tongue/first language over the second language, supposedly to promote better learning among the students. The government believes that students will learn better if such multilingual approach is effected. Under this scheme, two languages for instruction are used and policy enactment stems from the results of the Lingua Franca Education Project (LFEP) of 1999 and the Lubuagan First Language Component.

The LFEP was an experimental project for Grade 1 students (age 7) which aims at that time to “define and implement a national bridging program from the vernacular to Filipino and later English to develop initial literacy for use in public schools” (DECS Memo 144, p.1). The MLE was fully implemented in 2012 in all public schools with emphasis given to kindergarten and grades 1 to 3 levels (ie ages 5 to 9). This policy is also in line with the Department of Education’s policy of ‘Every child a reader and a write by grade 1’. About 900 schools including those with indigenous peoples have been modeling the MLE prior to the full implementation order of 2012, which used 8 languages in the roll-out. It should be noted that the Philippines is a multiethnic/lingual country so mother tongue in this sense is not necessarily the Filipino language (ie the National language).

The MLE is featured in two modes: (a) as medium of instruction and (b) as a learning subject/school course. It further states that:

The learners’ mother tongue (L1) shall be used as the medium of instruction (MOI) in all domains/learning areas from Kindergarten through Grade 3 except [for school subjects] Filipino (L2) and English (L3). The L1 will continuously be used as MOI in a transition or bridging process through (L1-L2-L1 or L2- L1-L2) Grade 3. The L2 will be introduced in the first semester of Grade 1 (…) and continuously developed from Grades 2-6. Oral fluency in L3 will be introduced in the 2nd semester of Grade 1 (…) [other] macro-skills will be developed starting 2nd semester of Grade 2 until 6 (DepEd Order 16, p. 3).

Mismatch policy and practice
The Philippines gives importance to its national language as exemplified, among others, in the inclusion of an annual nationwide celebration of “Linggo ng Wika” (Language Week) in schools to instill in students the significance of the national language for development.
However, the Sections in the 1987 Constitution as earlier discussed are not evident in practice in some educational institutions (basic to higher education levels). English is widely used and preferred in campuses despite the top down language policy in the Philippines which clearly advocates the need to promote and preserve the Filipino language. The 1987 Constitution (Article 14 Section 9) states that “the Congress shall establish a national language commission (…) for the development, propagation, and preservation of Filipino and other languages.” Countervailing the “Linggo ng Wika” celebration is the “Speak English” campaign in schools. Instead of enhancing the Filipino language in schools, English appears to dominate. Mismatch between policy and practice is documented (Gonzalez, 2003) and despite the clear mandate of the Filipino language as the official language of instruction in educational institutions, its subordinate status when compared to the English language is apparent.

The demand for the English language is supported by various stakeholders given that its acquisition would mean better opportunities for job securement, both locally and overseas. The massive migration of skilled and unskilled workers from the Philippines is documented by the 16.2 billion US dollars workers’ remittances and compensation of employees in 2010 alone (World Bank, 2012). This explains why institutions offering training in English is favoured by the general public and draws in rough how the Filipino language is advocated to develop a stronger sense of nationalism while preference is given to the English language by most, given its ability to open doors for better opportunities.

The use of the English language as means to act as tool for ‘interconnectedness’ is however pursued by some as constructed colonialism (Pennycook, 1998). English evidently in the Philippines is used as a social stratifier that enables economic advancement, and the feature of English-competent society where political-economic elites usually emerge (Tupas, 2003) all draw above in rough the colonial and imperialist feature of the language still advocated by some (references here). The line of reasoning that development and nationalism cannot ‘go together’, though rather sweeping, was argued by Sta. Maria about a decade ago that the Philippines must “set aside at this critical period of our development (…) over-zealous feelings of nationalism, which deter our efforts at improving the teaching of English” (ibid p.12). This usual measure of nationalism to language use during the debate of the bilingual policy however now has been taken over by an overriding theme that cognitive development improves significantly if the first language is used in instruction, with the socio-cultural aspect of national pride evidently still emphasized in the discourse but not necessarily taking precedence. Despite the increasing call to internationalise and the move towards promoting the English language in the country, advocates of the effectiveness of using the mother tongue as the medium of instruction for schools are now reviving the call to promote the “local” language. The institutionalization of the mother tongue based multilingual education (MLE) reflects this, notwithstanding the costs to be incurred for promoting such policy. This is of course promoted with the intention, as always, of the Philippine government to achieve the Education for All (EFA) goal in 2015.
Pakistan

Demographics of Pakistan

Pakistan is a highly multilingual, multiethnic and multilingual country. The total number of languages used in the country are 77 (Ethnologue, 2015). Urdu is the national language of the country while English functions as the official language. Urdu and English receive substantial institutional support in the domains of power especially in education; however, the other local/regional languages with the exception of the Sindhi and to negligible degree Pashto language remain excluded from all domains of power including education (Mansoor, 2004a; Mustafa, 2011; Rahman, 1996, 2002, 2005a; Rassool & Mansoor, 2007). At the same time, English is the most powerful language in institutional terms as it is used in the domains of power such as government, law, corporate sector, higher education, etc. (Rahman, 1996). In view of the institutional powers it wields within the country, and the global powers it holds in the outside world, most people view it as a ‘passport to privileges’ (Rahman, 2005), and a vehicle for social and economic mobility (Mahboob, 2002; Manan & David, 2013; Mansoor, 2004b; Shamim, 2008). The constitutional provision of the 1973 regarding language policy proclaims the official language policy in the following statements:

The National language of Pakistan is Urdu, and arrangements shall be made for it being used for official and other purposes within fifteen years from the commencing day (1973). Subject to clause (1), the English language may be used for official purposes until arrangements are made for its replacement by Urdu. Without prejudice to the status of the National language, a Provincial Assembly may by law prescribe measures for the teaching, promotion, and use of a provincial language in addition to the national language.

Language policy and planning

An overview of pre-independence language policies

Rahman (2011) writes that due to the efforts of the British Raj, Urdu was upgraded, and patronized as a vehicle of modernization. For instance, in the nineteenth century, it had been made part of the formal schooling in parts of north India. As part of the plan to establish Urdu as a modern language, “Modern subjects such as mathematics, accounting, and history—were neglected in the traditional Persian schools but emphasized in the Urdu ones” (p. 9). As far as the growth and rootedness of Urdu in the areas composing the present day Pakistan during the British period goes, Urdu had been seen as “a symbol of Muslim identity” (Rahman, 1996, p. 57). For instance, the Punjab University Enquiry Committee Report 1932-1933 (PUE, 1933) as cited in (Rahman, 1996, p. 57) shows that Urdu as well as Hindi had been recognized as vernaculars by the Punjab Education Code (PUE, 1933, p. 78). The report also suggests that Urdu languages had gained considerable popularity amongst students in Punjab as it was seen as a better tool for job seeking in the northern part of India. According to other sources, the vernaculars were media of instruction at the matric level in Sindh (RPI-S, 1938, p. 43). In those days, the vernaculars referred to Sindhi, Urdu, Gujrati
and Marathi in Sindh. Except for Sindhi, the other three vernacular languages were used in and around Karachi while Sindhi was spread all over interior Sindh. Unlike in Sindh where mother tongue education was used, in other provinces such as Punjab, Balochistan, North West Frontier Province (NWFP), and Kashmir, the mother tongues were not used in the education. For instance, Urdu rather than Punjabi, Pashto or any other indigenous language functioned in the court from 1855 onward (Chaudhry, 1977). Similarly, Urdu was the official language while Dogri was the language of the then rulers (Kaefvi, 1979). Likewise in Balochistan, none of the indigenous languages of the province were used in education such as Balochi, Burahvi or Pashto. There, too, Urdu had been used as the language of the mainstream institutions (Rahman, 1996). English languages was mainly the preserve of the upper classes and the elites, who according to Rahman (1996) served “the British as junior partners or opposed them with reference to Western ideas of democracy, human rights, liberty, and legality, but not language” (p. 58).

**Urdu as the national language—political motives and ethnic resistance**

Urdu language was basically the language spoken by what is termed as the Urdu-speaking Muslims inhabiting largely in the northern and some central states of India such as Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, Bihar and so on. In the provinces which compose the present day Pakistan, Urdu was not an indigenous languages as majority of the provinces and their populations used their own ethnic languages. The surge of Urdu as a major language began when the partition took place, and when Pakistan came into being in 1947. During partition, as a large number of Muslims who mostly spoke Urdu language, either migrated or were forced to migrate to Pakistan due to communal riots from the Muslim-populated states of the united India; therefore, their influx not only transformed the demographics of Pakistan, but also exerted enormous influence on the sociopolitical and sociocultural dynamics of the new-born country. The migrants whose majority settled in Karachi and other adjacent areas of Sindh, and partly in Punjab, are termed as ‘Mohajirs’, which means migrants. One of the major impacts on the sociocultural and socio-demographic landscapes was that of the patronization of the Urdu language. According to Rahman (2010), Urdu surfaced as the most potent political force during the earlier days was due to the fact that “since a very powerful section of the bureaucracy (being Mohajirs) spoke Urdu as its mother-tongue, there was an element of cultural hegemony concerning the special status of Urdu” (p. 21). In addition, since Mohajirs were considered more educated and cultured, and their language was deemed more advanced in literary terms than the other indigenous languages; therefore, “it was only natural that Urdu should be used instead of other less-privileged languages” (Rahman, 2010, p. 21).

Thus the decision to have raised the status of Urdu over the other major and minor existing ethnic languages was, premised on what May (2008) terms as the conventional one-nation one-language political ideology of the policymakers, who, in order to carve out a unified Pakistani identity, undermined all minor and major languages of the country. Crucially, in terms of numerical strength, there existed much larger indigenous languages than Urdu; however, those major languages such as Bengali, Punjabi, Pashto, Sindhi, Balochi and numerous other were turned into what May (2006) labeled as ‘minoritized’ languages.
Through top-down language planning, Urdu was strategically elevated to a national language despite fierce opposition from the ethnonationalist groups. The Bengalis in particular showed greater resentment and resistance to the institutional up-gradation of the Urdu and the deliberate neglect of Bengali and other major ethnic languages. Many believe that marginalization of the Bengali language was one of the reasons that triggered anger amongst Bengalis, which culminated in the separation of the former East Pakistan. The much-publicized Bengali Language Movement by the students who protested for the recognition of their language on 21 February 1952 led to several deaths. In commemoration of the event, United Nation now observes this day as International Mother Tongue Day. Importantly, those movements yielded results as the state was made to declare Bengali as associate national with Urdu in the 1956 constitution.

The resistance also rose from the activists of other ethnonationalist groups from other provinces calling for due recognition of their ethnic languages in the mainstream domains including education. Ethnic activists although recognized that Urdu could serve as “a useful link between the various ethnic groups. However, it has faced resistance because it has been patronized, often in insensitive ways, by the ruling elite in the centre” (Rahman, 2005a, p. 74). For instance, Rahman (1996); (Rahman, 1997, 2002) provides extensive coverage of the movements and riots that were mobilized by the ethnonationalists from Bengal, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (formerly NWFP), Balochistan and other parts of the country to press for the due status of their own languages. However, their movements were suppressed or seen with apprehensions. One of the major fears was that recognition of the major ethnic languages might trigger secession and give rise to separation movements. Putting the language-in-education policy-making in Pakistan in perspective, one finds that majority of the decisions have been top-down, undertaken by individuals with institutional authority and power conferred by the state. Historical evidence unfolds that even the very earlier decision typifies a top-down approach about status planning when the founder of the nation Muhammad Ali Jinnah proclaimed Urdu as the national language, with no or little consultation with the people at the bottom. For instance, Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1948) declared the supremacy of Urdu over the rest of the local/regional languages despite the reservation and resentment of the Bengalis and other ethnolinguistic groups over the issue of Urdu as a single national language. Scholars admit that the language history of Pakistan is fraught with numerous language riots and movements by the local/regional ethnolinguistic groups for the recognition of their own languages (Ayres, 2003, 2009; Rahman, 1996, 2010). Jinnah stated the state language policy in the following words:

…the State Language of Pakistan is going to be Urdu and no other language. Anyone who tries to mislead you is really the enemy of Pakistan. Without one State language, no nation can remain tied up solidly together and function (Jinnah, 2000, p. 150).

This created much resentment against Urdu and, indeed, may be said to have infused the element of personal reaction to or antagonism against the speakers of Urdu in the first twenty years of
Pakistan's existence. The main reason for the opposition to Urdu was, however, not linguistic or cultural. The main reason for the opposition Urdu faced in the provinces was because it was taken as the symbol of the central rule of the Punjabi ruling elite. Thus, the reaction came particularly from the Bengali intelligentsia, which Alavi (1988) also describes as the salariat people, who probably thought Urdu might prove disadvantageous because in this case, Urdu would replace Bangali in the lower domains of power, such as the media, administration, judiciary, education, and military. Therefore, the motive behind Bengali resistance was not only linguistic, it had also socioeconomic underpinnings. The marginalization of the Bengali language at various fronts, both status as well as economic, collectively paved way and "consolidated Bengali identity in opposition to the West Pakistani identity" (Rahman, 2005a, p. 75). Apart from Bengal, the imposition of Urdu as the sole national languages gave rise to ethnic mobilization by its intelligentsia and nationalist politicians, who used the marginalization of their ethnic languages vis-à-vis Urdu as powerful ethnic symbols, able to exert political pressure (Rahman, 1996). Those included Sindh, NWFP, Balochistan, and South Punjab; however, the scale of resentment in Sindh was relatively intense than in the rest of the provinces. In Sindh, the resistance even resulted in what we know as language riots in 1971 and 1972. Even in Sindh, the vitality of language issues was not solely linked to ethnic identity, economic and social power were also the motives which drove the Sindhis to resist the language of the migrants, who were settlers in the Sindh province after the independence (Rahman, 1996).

Urdu was declared as the sole national language because it served the political ideology of the state as it was deemed "a symbol of unity, helping to create a unified Pakistani identity. In this symbolic role, it serves the political purpose of resisting any ethnicity which could otherwise break the federation" (Rahman, 2010, p. 21). The political and institutional dominance of Urdu over the rest of indigenous languages reflects a situation, which Rahman (2005a) describes as 'Urdu imperialism', and a form of 'cultural hegemony' (Rahman, 2010). The policies of governments over the years suggest that the local/regional languages are yet to be recognized as cultural, educational or linguistic capital (Mustafa, 2011). Language planning is marked by a kind of institutionalized linguistic exclusivism. Ayres (2003) concludes that "Language-identified movements, deemed antinational by the center, were and still are dealt with primarily through authoritarian crackdowns...Accommodation has been eschewed" (p. 79). The policies have left the local languages as social ghettos (Rahman, 2005a).

**Urdu in education**

Ever since independence, Urdu has remained the most powerful languages in education. It is the medium of instruction in nearly all over the country except for part of interior Sindh where the ethnic language and the mother tongue is taught as a medium in schools. Pashto is also taught as a subject in parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, formerly known as NWFP. In the rest of the provinces, mother tongues are yet to be recognized in education, and a mother tongue based education is yet to establish despite the fact that the constitution of 1973 does promise education in what it terms as the regional or provincial languages; however, the constitutional provision also qualifies that
those languages may be taught in schools, but “Without prejudice to the status of the National language”. Scholars argue that the constitutional caveat (“without prejudice”) denotes that no such effort should be attempted for the promotion of regional languages at the cost of the national language Urdu (Abbas, 1993; Rahman, 1999). One also finds that given the powerful status conferred on Urdu in the constitutions, and in the education, Urdu has been accepted as a medium of instruction in schools for the pragmatic reasons. Rahman (2002) observes that when people tend to learn languages for pragmatic reasons, then they attach less importance to their own languages. For instance, Rahman (2005a) cites examples from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (formerly NWFP), Balochistan and Punjab where instruction was favored in Urdu and English rather than in the mother tongues or the provincial languages. To illustrate, Rahman (2005a) wrote that language activists ardently designed instructional material following governments’ move to introduce ethnic languages in schools at the primary levels; however, parents opted for “Urdu as the medium of instruction for their children” (Rahman, 1996, p. 169). Urdu has virtually displaced most of the ethnic languages both in perceptual as well as physical terms as studies find that Urdu receives favor over mother tongues in several language and perception studies (Manan, 2015; Manan & David, 2013; Manan, David, & Dumanig, 2014, in press; Rahman, 2005a; Zaidi, 2010). For instance, Manan and David (2013, p. 211) found their respondents making the following observations about their favorite medium of instruction policy:

- ‘I love mother tongue, but in Pakistan Urdu and English have more value’.
- ‘Mother tongues have no use outside home and community whereas Urdu is national language, and English is important both within and outside Pakistan’.
- ‘English is particularly key to future success, Urdu and mother tongues have very little significance as compared to it’.

Top-down national integration versus bottom-up resistance—conclusive remarks on the implication of national language policies

As in the case of Malaysia, The same may also be argued in the case of Pakistan. Although the state imposed Urdu, a numerically smaller language as the national language of a diverse multilingual, multiethnic and multicultural country to foster national unity and rally a diverse population around a single language; however, the history is witness to intense resistance, and volatility at the bottom-up level. The ethno-nationalist and ethnolinguistic undercurrents of resistance still pervade especially amongst some fiercely nationalist ethnic groups such as Sindhi, Baloch, and Pakhtoons. This can be witnessed in the recurring voices and demands for mother tongues based multilingual policies in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces. The same voices are echoed in other areas such as Gilgit Baltistan and Southern Punjab. At the moment, members of most ethnonationalist groups identify themselves with their linguistic/ethnic symbols identities than with their national identities. The imposition of a single language on a multilingual and multiethnic population has even evoked ethnic reaction rather than fostering unity. According to Rahman (2005a) the policies have made Urdu the obvious force to be resisted by other ethnic groups. This resistance makes them strengthen their languages by corpus planning (writing books,
dictionaries, grammars, orthographies) and acquisition planning (teaching languages, pressurizing the state to teach them, using them in the media). Therefore, given the volatile history of language movements and languages riots is concerned, it can be added that national integrity and the aspiration of successful nationhood and nationality cannot necessarily be established through authoritarian and assimilationist top-down policies in the form of a monolingual ideology—Urdu imperialism or cultural hegemony. Rather, as one observes, a greater provincial autonomy, equitable distribution of resources amongst all federating units, a uniform, classless education system, and a genuine democratic and egalitarian form of political system can bring about solid and sustainable nationhood. In addition, most importantly, if the state acknowledges, accepts, and celebrates the languages of its people, and views linguistic/cultural diversity as a resource rather than as a problem, citizens of all ethnicities and cultures will naturally incline towards patriotism and nationhood.

Education can play only a subsidiary or supporting role to promote unity. Each component of a plural society can achieve equal levels of proficiency in a common language and yet still remain divided. A well-known academic Kumaran Menon states (in private discussion) that a common language can only foster or support unity among the different components if other elements of society do not work to keep them apart, wittingly or unwittingly. In fact language, even a common language, becomes the supreme dividing force when intrinsic divisions are artfully maintained for political or other ends. For instance, if language in education is used to put down minority races, present a skewed view of history to achieve political or religious objectives the result could be resistance. It is clear therefore given the sociological and political background of a diverse society, that a common language by itself, cannot work the miracle of unity.

Conclusion

However, education can play only a subsidiary or supporting role to promote unity. Each component of a plural society can achieve equal levels of proficiency in a common language and yet still remain divided. A well-known academic Kumaran Menon states (in private discussion) that a common language can only foster or support unity among the different components if other elements of society do not work to keep them apart, wittingly or unwittingly. In fact language, even a common language, becomes the supreme dividing force when intrinsic divisions are artfully maintained for political or other ends. Take Malaysia for instance the different aspects of law and policies militate against unity - in education, in the taxation policy, in the way religion is treated, in basic rights etc. It is clear therefore given such a sociological and political background, that a common language by itself, cannot work the miracle of unity. In fact, language in these circumstances, becomes a divisive instrument because, for instance, it brings these other inequalities into sharper relief. It is no surprise that In fact, after almost 40 years of a common language policy, political leaders are still looking at a common language as a unifying instrument.

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