THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLITICS AND LANGUAGES IN INDIA

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Abstract: *The present paper examines the relationship between languages and politics in terms of subject matter and objectives of language policy and language planning, the status and content of languages as the subject of language policy, language policy settings, model of language status and language policy in countries around the world, majority and minority language and the like. It also examines these issues of language policy and their operation in modern India vis. a vis. the presence of a national and official language and the influence of parties on political policy in resolving conflicts through language.*

Keywords: *politics, language policy, official language, national language, linguistic diversity.*

Introduction

The relationship between language and politics is two dimensional. Language is a tool of politics, as well as an object of politics. The first case refers to conducting politics through the use of particular language. Language here acts as a tool or instrument to influence society to achieve certain political goals, in the sense of "language manipulation". In recent times, within this framework, the problem of "neuro-linguistic programming" (NLP), defined as the impact of verbal and non-verbal communication on the human brain in order to gain control over human movement, is also being actively studied. Opposed to these goals is defense (and self-defense) against linguistic manipulation (Maqbul: 1969: 18). The second case, on the other hand, refers to the policies pursued in relation to the language itself, i.e. "language policy". Western researchers often use the term synonymously with "language planning". The history of the term shows its connection with the terms "planned language" (E. Wüster) and "constructed language"

(O. Jespersen). The derived terms planning and construction linguistics, therefore, denote the scientific fields to which the theory of language policy belongs (or can be associated). Besides, there are also other terms such as the contrast between "analytical" and "synthetic" linguistics (W. Ostwald) as a basis for adequately determining the position of language policy in language studies or language policy in an interdisciplinary network (linguistics and political science).

Aspects of the relationship between Languages and Politics

The **subject matter** of language policy and language planning consists of the following: (i) a specific language (e.g. Hindi), (ii) a group of languages defined according to various criteria, e.g. by their origin, like Indo-Aryan or Dravidian languages; by interaction in a multi-linguistic state - ethnic languages in India; by interaction in the international arena - world languages, etc.); (iii) linguistic situation or a type of contact and interaction of languages); (iv) communicative situation - acceptable or unacceptable use of certain language classes - dialectics, jargon, vocabulary taboos, etc. - in speech communication; the formation of speech behavior and through it linguistic character. (Maqbul: 1969: 19).

The **Objectives** or main goals of language policy and language planning when applied to a specific language consist of (i) preserving the existing language or (ii) changing the existing language. Other possible goals of language policy can also be (iii) restoring the functioning or reviving of a dead literary language (e.g. the modern history of Hebrew); (iv) creating a new literary language (history of Indonesian and other languages); Language planning (but not necessarily language policy) can also pursue the goals of (v) creating regional meta-language systems e.g. Krizanich's common Slavic languages or modern efforts to create a common Scandinavian language standard, etc.; and (vi) creating a global meta-language system,

for instance, creating an international artificial languages such as Esperanto.

The **status** and **content** of languages is also the subject of language policy. The status of a language is understood as the role of that language in a certain status compared to other languages operating in the same status. This relates to the role of the language outside the state, i.e. in the international arena, compared to other languages that also operate in the international arena.

A language policy aimed at preserving or changing the status of a language always has a simultaneous impact on other languages operating within the same state or on the international stage, since a change in the status of a language entails simultaneous change in the status of other languages. *Status in language policy* is therefore always complex: it involves influencing both specific languages and language groups, both the general linguistic situation and the communicative behavior of members of the language community (Kuznetsov: 2007: Electronic sources).

The body of the language is understood as its internal structure (phonetics, spelling, grammar, vocabulary, terminology), as well as the relationship between the existing forms of the language (written form and non-written, literary language and dialect). A language policy that aims to preserve or change the corpus of a language (linguistic policy) does not imply an impact on other languages; it only targets one language. Such a language policy may have the following goals: First, to maintain the norms of a given language (speech culture) and protecting that language from structural intrusion ("linguistic interference") of other languages, the influence of dialects or jargon; and secondly, to enrich the structure of a given language, for instance, creating script and meta-dialectical literary norms for previously unwritten languages, the creation and development of terminology, etc.

The **subject** of a language policy under normal conditions, is identical to the subject of state policy: the subject of policy in both cases is state power in the specific forms of a

certain country, whether monarchy or republic, democracy or dictatorship, etc.. Language laws fall under the exclusive jurisdiction of the state. Language policy is an essential component of national policy in multi-linguistic countries and, due to this aspect it becomes an element that shapes the system of constitutional decisions of the state and therefore the power of the state government. Thus, there is an adverse impact of language policy on the state (Maqbul, 1969: 20).

Other subjects of language policy include public organisations, movements and parties; language institutions of various configurations (e.g., language academies), language instruction, and schools (see N. Ya. Marr,"The language policy of Japhetic theory") and influential figures of national culture, etc. The specifics of a language policy implemented in the international arena are determined by its subjects: associations of states, federal and international organisations and institutions.

A language policy may be defined as a system of measures taken by the state, associations of nations, influential public organizations and cultural figures aimed at preserving or changing a language, a language group, a linguistic or communication situation. Language policies vary across states, are formulated differently in mono-national and multinational states, and can also differ in regions within the same state when it comes to national population composition. They differ and their constitutional status (autonomy at different levels) does not coincide. Therefore, it is necessary to spatialise language policy, i.e. bind it to a specific territory and to a specific political and administrative structure.

Current language policy models vary in the level of conceptualization that underlies the principles of language policy. The two basic principles that form the ideological foundation of opposing language policies are first, the primacy of human personality and citizenship over the interests of the state and the national linguistic community; and second, collective and state interests are placed above the interests of individuals and citizens.

Language policy models also do not overlap in terms of the methods used - state regulation or public self-regulation; systematic determination of language policy or its systematic implementation). In particular; making a hard or soft language policy; taking into account or not taking into account the opinions of national linguistic minorities, etc. and the results related to them: as a rule, the rigid orders from above lead to exacerbation of ethnic and linguistic conflicts, while more flexible methods help balance the national and linguistic interests of different groups of the population.

The history of language policies is crucial to understand how the status or official status of a particular language in various countries is determined. It helps in forming a clear idea of the state of ethno-linguistic conflicts of the 19th-20th centuries in cities and colonial countries, the conflicts of the post-colonial period, cultural and linguistic diversification and ethno-linguistic conflicts in post-industrial societies as well as the political-economic context of these processes: integration and disintegration trends.

Efforts to bring "peoples of the same kind" closer together using language policies and language design methods are best illustrated by the idea of pan-Slavic unity and a "common (pan-Slavish) language"; the search for trans-Scandinavian linguistic unity (samnordisk) – "pan-Scandinavian" as a linguistic project and as a linguistic-political experiment); "Medieval Turkish language" (ortatürk) in the context of pan-Turkism and pan-Islamism; Finno-Ugric unification movement. Here, there is a conflict between the illusion of a national language and political reality.

There are different models of language status and language policy in countries around the world. Language situations and language policies in multilingual countries like Spain (Galicia, Catalonia, Basque Country) and Belgium (Flemings and Walloons), Switzerland, Yugoslavia or language construction and planning

language in Norway may differ from that of single language countries. Thus the question of majority language and minority language has to be taken into consideration. The problem of the vitality of the languages of small peoples and their languages and measures to preserve secondary languages and the "folklorisation" of languages all have to be taken into consideration while determining a language policy.

Language Policies in the Republic of India

Indian languages are very diverse and complex. Languages spoken in the Republic of India belong to several language families, the major ones being the Indo-Aryan languages spoken by 78.05% of Indians and the Dravidian languages spoken by 19.64% of Indians. (Encyclopædia Britannica Online 2014). Both families together are sometimes known as Indic languages (Reynolds, *et.al.*:2007:293–307). Languages spoken by the remaining 2.31% of the population belong to the Austro-Asiatic, Sino–Tibetan, Tai–Kadai, and a few other minor language families and isolates (Moseley:2008: 283). According to the People's Linguistic Survey of India, India has the second highest number of languages (780), after Papua New Guinea (840) (Seetharaman: 2017). However, *Ethnologue* lists a lower number of 456 (*Ethnologue*. 22 May 2019).

Article 343 of the Constitution of India stated that the official language of the Union is Hindi in Devanagari script, with official use of English to continue for 15 years from 1947. Later, after a constitutional amendment, The Official Languages Act, 1963, allowed for the continuation of English alongside Hindi in the Indian government indefinitely until legislation decides to change it ("Official Language Act" meity.gov.in.). The form of the numerals to be used for the official purposes of the Union is to be "the international form of Indian numerals"("Article 343 in The Constitution Of India 1949") which are referred to as Arabic numerals in most English-speaking countries ("Constitution of India"). Despite some misconceptions, Hindi is not the national language

of India; the Constitution of India does not give any language the status of a national language (*The Hindu.* Ahmedabad).

The Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution lists 22 languages, (Languages Included in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constution [sic]. Archived 4 June 2016 at the Wayback Machine) which have been referred to as scheduled languages and given recognition, status and official encouragement. In addition, the Government of India has awarded the distinction of classical language to Kannada, Malayalam, Odia, Sanskrit, Tamil and Telugu. This status is given to languages that have a rich heritage and independent nature.

To regulate the difficult language situations in India, the Government of India must continuously implement language policies. Quite often, a "national" and an "official" language are essentially the same, but there are legal differences between the two concepts. A "national" language is a language that has the highest status relative to other languages within a particular state or autonomous region. First of all, this is the language according to the constitution of a certain country. As a rule, the state language is the language of the largest number of people or ethnic groups in a given state (Rodionov: 2011).

UNESCO experts in 1953 proposed to distinguish between the concepts of national language and official language. According to the developed definitions, a national language is a language that performs an integrating function in the political, social and cultural spheres of a given country, one of its symbols. An official language is the language of government, law and judicial proceedings. But these definitions are advisory and not binding on all states.

Immediately after gaining independence from the British Empire in 1947 the new government in India made Hindi the official language. However, because English was the official language of the colonial period, widely understood by representatives of many ethnic groups in the country, as well as the prestigious

language of communication of social elites, the Indian government also declared English as the official language for a transition period of 15 years. Thus, India has become a country with two official languages.

Under the Constitution, the Official Languages Commission was established in 1955 with the mandate to make recommendations to the government to limit the functions of the English language and expand the use of the Hindi language, but the commission never completed this task. Therefore, it was decided to use English until all the necessary conditions for switching to Hindi were met (Gandhi: 1982: 116).

In 1967, the Official Languages (Amendment) Bill and the Official Languages Resolution were introduced into Parliament. The 1967 Bill contained a number of additions to the 1963 Bill, and as for the Resolution, it was designed to widen the use of Hindi and modernize it. An important place in this activity belongs to the introduction of the "bilingual formula", according to which students who finish secondary school must be fluent in three languages - one mother tongue and two foreign languages (Hindi - is main language, official language and language of domestic communication) and English – as an auxiliary official language, language of higher education and international communication) (Gandhi: 1982:28).

The formation of national languages is one of the most important steps in the process of democratically resolving ethnic issues in a multinational country. The unity within a state of communities speaking the same language is of great importance for the development of each national language in India and the expansion of its social reach (Dykov: 1963:35).

Indian languages and dialects are extremely diverse. So, for example, the Tamil or Bengali languages have succeeded in retaining their vitality and power. These strong and resilient languages challenge Hindi as the national language. Many people believe that their native language is no worse than Hindi. And if their language and

dialect cannot become a national language, then it would be better to simply make English the only national language in India (Baziev: 1973:38).

Language Policy and Compulsions of Compromise

The first compromise, the dominant local languages (i.e. regional languages) were taken into account when delimiting state boundaries. The identification of "state languages" makes it possible to combine administrative boundaries and linguistic areas. At the same time, the main "state -level - languages" include local languages that have a lower status than the two state languages. In addition to language, factors related to religion and culture is also taken into account (Nikolsky: 1986: 46). After much heated debate and protest, the Indian Constitution finally provided for the presence of 18 "major languages", which received the status of official languages of each state. Some of the languages that are mother tongues of south India belong to the Dravidian language family. The other languages are spoken mainly in northern India and belong to the Indo-Aryan language family. The main language of these languages, Hindi, also has the status as the official language of India.

The second compromise was that the policy of using English as the official language was extended indefinitely. Although Hindi is spoken by the majority of India's population, due to the linguistic diversity in the country, the state status of this dominant language raises many suspicions and protests. As a result, Hindi, which is based on ancient Sanskrit, cannot compete with English in terms of public acceptance. In the conditions of struggle between "their" languages, the language of the old metropolis not only lost its long-standing negative label as "the language of the colonists", but also acquired the role of a compromise neutral language accepted by all parties (Klyuev: 1978: 43).

In relation to a state with a parliamentary democracy, no issue, or least of all, the language issue affecting the emotions of the masses, can

be considered in isolation from the research on the activities of political parties. There are many political parties in India, operating on a national, regional or state or national scale, but the attention will be focused only on the main major parties here.

Language Policies and Political Parties

We shall now examine some instances of language policies of some political parties. The National Council of the Communist Party of India (CPI) in April 1965 announced the urgent need to replace English with Hindi. The CPI has stated that the correct resolution of the language problem necessarily includes encouraging the equitable development of all regional languages, while accepting Hindi as the lingua franca of India. The party also offered to protect the Urdu language.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) advocates equal status for all Indian languages. According to CPI (M) members, Hindi should not be given priority and the shift in emphasis from English to Hindi will take place concurrently with the shift in the states from English to regional languages; Furthermore, the latter had to be done with the help of the central government (Gandhi: 1982: 73).

The Dravida Munnetra Kazhgam (DMK) party vowed to fight against the domination of Hindi language and increase the influence of Tamil language, and demanded that until Tamil and other main languages of Indian are accepted as the official language, status quo must be maintained for the English language. The DMK is the only political party based exclusively in Tamil Nadu, which explains its stand on the language issue.

The Indian National Congress is one of the oldest political organisations in India, founded in 1885. The Indian National Congress (INC) has always advocated the promotion of Indian languages, considering Hindustani - a form of Hindi is the official (national) language of India, and the party gradually restricted the use of English to particular areas of national life. The

passing of the Official Languages Act 1963 and the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 1967, which declared the continued use of English as an official language indefinitely and were passed by Parliament, while the ministers who are members of the INC Congress were in power was somewhat against the party's stated policy.

In their manifestos of 1998, 1999 and 2004, the INC did not pay much attention to language but focused on supporting religious and linguistic minorities. The party promised to provide education and government jobs to Muslims in Kerala and Karnataka. The INC also stated its intention to establish a Ministry of Minority Affairs to coordinate processes related to pressing issues like poverty, social, linguistic discrimination, etc., as well as integration of minority groups into the community. One of the party's goals was to establish the Maulana Azad Education Foundation, through which it could spread education and literacy in small communities. In addition, the INC took upon itself the responsibility of establishing the Maulana Azad National Urdu University in Hyderabad, which was tasked with training people in technical disciplines in Urdu, as well as providing opportunities for women to receive secondary education in Urdu on society and education. And another important announcement of the Indian National Congress is that the party will give Urdu the status of second official language in the states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

Comparing the tasks set by the Indian National Congress party in its manifestos (1998, 1999 and 2004) and their implementation in 2011, it should be noted that the results can be considered satisfactory to a certain extent. In 2006 the Ministry of Ethnic Minorities took over those tasks. The issues raised were partially realised by the establishment of the Maulana Azad Educational Foundation and Maulana Azad National Urdu University. Even the party's official website is presented in three languages - Hindi, Urdu and English. However, the party has so far not given Urdu the status of second official

language in the states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

Furthermore, even more than 75 years after India gained her independence, English is still the most widely used and prestigious language in India, especially in the challenge of globalisation. But for a long time no one considered that situation as a "British threat" to the country's linguistic environment, cultural identity, or especially national sovereignty. However, the promulgation of the Draft National Education Policy, 2019 on May 31, 2019, which recommended compulsory learning of Hindi in non-Hindi speaking states, heralds an important cultural element in the nationalist agenda of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). There was immediate opposition in South India, with Tamil Nadu-based Dravidian parties terming the move as a 'Hindi imposition'. The controversial reference was withdrawn, but the Union Budget 2019 allocated Rs 50 crore in favour of appointment of Hindi teachers in non-Hindi speaking states, proving that the agenda by the BJP is still continuing (Vater and Sen 2019). Union Home Minister Amit Shah's statement on September 14, 2019 that Hindi, being the most spoken language in India, should do the work of uniting India is bound to cause new waves.

Conclusion

India's experience thus is unique in addressing language issues and implementing a language policy. It shows how carefully one should be to approach the solution of problems related to linguistic and ethnic tolerance, especially in difficult socio-political conditions such as those that currently exists in India. Thus, the linguistic structure of Indian society is extremely complex. Indians from lower social classes still use their native language in daily communication. As for the middle-class social class, here the role of middle-class language is performed by "state languages" that are limited within the boundaries of each state. And the highest position belongs to two administrative languages, including English, one of the world languages.

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