THE POLITICS OF LINGUISTIC MARGINALIZATION IN THE THIRD SPACE: A POSTCOLONIAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT
The politics of language is linked to power struggles among various tiers of society. The centre is usually imbued with colonial values, therefore peripheral groups aspire to reach it. Colonial and Native become "Others" to each other. Most Subaltern theorists list the causes for this otherness, with the Orientalist brand of colonialism as regarded by Edward Said. Linguistic choices trigger a constant display of inclusion and exclusion. A Eurocentric historiography underlines this difference. "Othering" has become an exercise in de-humanising the marginalized. This paper dwells on the dynamics of uneven power positioning among social hierarchies on account of linguistic choices. The impact of colonial language policies on postcolonial societies has been historically contextualized to note departures as well as compliance to the said policies in specific socio-political contexts. How this friction translates in the binary opposition evident in the centre/periphery black/white, master/slave, man/woman and the colonizer/colonized dichotomies will be studied to evaluate the uneven power positions. The struggle of the marginalized sections for survival by learning a language conditioned with better socio-economic and political prospects at the cost of Mother Tongue (MT) or Language 1 (L1) has been critically analysed to study the impact of marginalization. Postcolonial theory has been employed as a methodical approach to analyse linguistic marginalization. Politics and language are bound up when the latter is not considered neutral. This serves as a historical background to the phenomenon of linguistic marginalization.
Keywords: Colonialism, Subaltern, Native, Otherness, Binaries, Marginalization, Third Space

INTRODUCTION

The politics of language and representation unfolds power struggle among various tiers of society, vying for parity against the continuum of socio-linguistic identity. The marginalized contest to occupy the 'centre' and override the 'periphery' to precipitate their identity in this queer power positioning. The 'centre' at times conditioned with the 'colonial centre' is furnished as an epicentre of civilization, serving as a yardstick of advancement. The schematic conditioning of the marginalized initiates them into the 'politics of difference', where the inherent 'difference' of the colonial subjects with respect to the imperial centre becomes a measure of their perceived, subservient identity. The identity of the colonized 'other' is determined in terms of 'difference' from the imperial centre. The politics of 'difference' further precipitates into 'world orders', conditioning the schemata of people in erstwhile colonies.

'Representation' as a virtual inability attributed to the colonized is evident in the poignant epigraph; a short quote from Karl Marx with which Edward Said's time-honoured treatise on *Orientalism* opens i.e. 'they cannot represent themselves, they must be represented' (Said, 2006). Although this epigraph has invited debate and deliberations as to whether Marx's words refer to the people of the orient i.e. those living in Asia or North Africa or refer to people with a conspicuously different spatial-temporal context. The phenomenon of representation however becomes an exceedingly colonial venture, making this representation more of 're-presentation'; a polarized practice on behalf of the voiceless, nameless other.

Ronald Barthes (1915-1980), in "Myth today" illustrates 'living' as an act objectified by the intent to close the gap between the 'word' and the 'world' (Barthes, 1957). Thus, the function of language to condition the schematic consciousness of its referents results in the larger-than-life role of words such as 'Europe', and the 'West'; looming large upon the collective memory of the people even after formal independence. This refers to the mythical omnipresence of the imperial centre. Barthes contends that a myth operates by submitting the historical as a natural construct, thus highlighting a concomitant relationship between the historical and the contemporaneous (Barthes, 1957). Chakrabarty

elucidates that the 'historical' in Barthes is not circumscribed by all that is confined to history books for that too is an offshoot of a 'mythical representation'. History here signifies the very act of 'living' (Chakrabarty, 2000). In fact, Barthes demonstrates 'myth' in a manner analogous to Karl Marx's 'ideology' in *The German Ideology*, furnishing myth as a system of communication and signification rather than an idea or a concept (Chakrabarty, 2000). Colonizer/colonized, first world/third world, self/other, man/woman, white/black refer to the systemic communication of signs and symbols embedded within these dichotomies. It is imperative to note that these dichotomies are invariably furnished with a perceived precedence attached to the former construct. Therefore, the distinctions such as the First World and the Third World remain unabridged much the same way the mileage elapsing between them on the socio-economic continuum grows.

This 'difference' may express itself in 'deference' to anything remotely colonial in a bid to traverse degrees of 'development', those too sanctioned by the hitherto colonial centre. The locomotion from the periphery to the centre is driven by socio-economic motives, which becomes synonymous with the centre, or the 'heartland' of advancement. Thus, the power matrix does not have a locus in an abstract expression of power, nor can we measure political ascendency only in terms of exercising control over human or material resources. It is also related, in a queer way to the spatial aspect of power configuration and how this space offers opportunities to reconfigure power equations. The 'third space' is thus inhabited with an ambivalent consciousness where both precepts of a binary opposition are deconstructed at the same wavelength; the black man as a subject of his subservience and the white man as a subject of his perceived supremacy (Bhabha, 1986).

In this space, the conscious affirmation of these polarities splits and paves the way for the unconscious where the conceits are yoked together in an uncanny transition of shifting narratives; from superiority to servitude and from hate to love. The fissures and gaps unveil ruptures in the colonial narrative, each anticipating to take on the role of the 'other' whereby each exists in the space of 'otherness'; the colonized dreaming to exist in the colonizer's space of privilege and the settler hoping to exist at the subject's 'avenging anger' position (Bhabha, 1986). Therefore the third space is not characterized by a rigid compartmentalization, rather illustrates a hybrid amalgam of two disparate realities; having to be at two places with a pervasive simultaneity. Representation in this space is not an affirmation of an existing identity, rather an alchemical rendering of an image that comes to identify during the experiential reality.

The notion of the 'third space' can be contrasted against the term 'Third World', customarily rendered with capitals in the initials. The ambivalence of the 'third space' conspicuously stands out against the backdrop of an expressly colonial illustration of the Third World. The 'First World' and the 'Second World' are drawn from the systems of 'Production', be it Capitalism or Socialism while the Third World has its locus in the relative experience of colonialism. The Third World is defined from the vantage point of a complex interplay of extrinsic factors. History goes into the making of the First and the Second Worlds, as these systems of production chronicle the collective struggle of people, while the Third World is located at a particular moment in colonial history. Aijaz Ahmed argues that the First and the Second Worlds thus refer to those states who alter the course of history and create history, while the Third World is merely an object of history (Ashcroft, Gareth, & Helen, 1995).

The friction between "self-other" replicates the motifs underlying class struggle in a society. Franz Fanon describes how white labourers can emanate a stronger racist streak than white bosses unto the black men (Fanon, 1986). Andre Gunder Frank (1929-2005) argues that a society is modern owing to its exposure to the 'capitalist' world and that a lack of such an exposure is a litmus test of underdevelopment (Frank, 1966). Theorizing the capitalist world as a vantage point to look down upon the developing world unravels a pattern of class distinctions inherently at work in societies. The friction brings to the fore, different stakeholders of power, exercising control not only on the territorial front, but also on the cultural, economic, and political arenas in the form of countries or as power-mongers in societies, unfolding class struggle in a microcosm.

Contrary to the popular belief, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) makes a cautious departure in that, he illustrates the bourgeois less of a 'competitor' confronting the colonial forces and more of a 'collaborator', predisposed to upward mobility through compromise (Orwin & Nathan, 1997). Since the bourgeois is posited in an urban setting, removed from the 'natural rhythms' of pastoral life, he is closer to being a 'citizen', driven by economic pressures of 'making a living' (Orwin & Nathan, 1997). The bourgeois man who considers death as an antithesis to self-preservation and much so 'violent'

death, will opt for a non-confrontationist approach, preferring 'passing away' as a semiotic rendition of 'death' to more crude references to death and annihilation (Orwin & Nathan, 1997). It is small wonder that within a society the seemingly weaker segments wage a struggle of survival against the colonial forces while the rest are complacent with the status quo. The colonized are thus perennially poised in a position of the 'defensive', whereby the strata which impersonates colonial power replicate the master-slave binary to subdue the weaker segments of the society. The violence meted out to minorities, women and the underprivileged is two-fold and exemplifies 'repression from within' unceremoniously coinciding with 'suppression from without' in the face of ongoing colonial oppression. The rise of bourgeois is a leap in the direction of economics and history; further translating into the capitalist means of production and the advent of nation state respectively (Ashcroft, Gareth, & Helen, 1995). A third-world historian will be compelled to glorify Europe as the hub of modernity and speak from a non-western, 'subaltern' position looking up to the economic might and national aggrandizement of the mighty Europe.

Linguistic choices trigger a constant interplay of variance, a course of inclusion or exclusion of choices. The underlying difference on the ethno-linguistic and socio-cultural plane with respect to the colonized is considered as a yardstick to measure the distance of the colonized from the precepts of human civilization. The distance elapsing between the 'centre' and 'periphery' translates in the occident-orient or east-west dichotomy, an uneasy space fraught with friction. The colonial agency thus appropriates the collective unconscious of the marginalized through stereotypes meant to justify hegemonic advances in a society. The stereotypes serve a two-pronged function; firstly, the marginalized are conditioned into subservience as a given and secondly the colonizer's self-aggrandizement is established as a necessity to 'civilize' the uncouth and uncivilized colonial subjects. Thus, linguistic predicament lies at the heart of postcolonial anxieties referring to a class-based division precipitating into the ancillary divisions of caste, colour, creed and even gender. Issues of upward mobility based on the kind of exposure available to the speakers, their proficiency in the language goes on to showing that English should not be treated as simply a 'variety' in comparison and contrast to the varieties of English spoken by native English speakers. English therefore represents a value system, splintered at heart, based on this exposure. The values are largely incumbent upon how the linguistic divide moulds, shapes and perpetuates inequalities in terms of power and knowledge. Speaking on behalf of the colonized, marginalized and the peripheral brings to the fore, 'speaking for' and 'speaking to' phenomenon with its spatial implications of 'speaking 'from' and speaking 'of' variously including the postcolonial struggle and the class struggle in a microcosm. Even in struggling to be 'heard', the marginalized unconsciously take to employing the colonizer's language to 'speak back' (Ramanathan, 2005).

Thus, representation as a colonial enterprise can be contextualized historically. In fact, Dipesh Chakrabarty argues that almost all 'histories' furnish Europe as their 'subject (Ashcroft, Bill., Gareth, Griffiths., & Helen, 1995). Therefore history whether it is dealt with from an atavist, nativist or modern standpoint unravels an inherent set of repressive practices. European history is thus a master narrative in which all other histories be it Chinese, Indian or any other find themselves in a disadvantaged position of 'subalterneity'. Such a history is a double entendre, where colonized nations are both the subject and object of modernity embodied in a rift between the 'modern' upper class and the agrarian class which is yet to traverse degrees of modernization. Mimesis is thus a strategic mode of representation left to the hapless colonized to exist from within the meta-narrative of this split double. Having to offer history as a compulsory subject further brings to light a certain unnatural coercion which goes onto showing that it is driven by a mercenary end; both European colonialism and third-world nationalisms partner to enforce their subjective 'truths' (Ashcroft, Bill., Gareth, Griffiths., & Helen, 1995).

In the colonial perspective the case of *Minute on Indian Education* merits consideration. The 1854 dispatch from the Court of Directors of the East India Company stipulated the aims and objectives of colonial education policy in which English was categorically espoused as the medium of instruction. This further translated in the growing rift between the Anglophiles and the Orientalists of the age. Interestingly *Orientalism* was later redefined by Edward Said, as he ventured to subtitle the work as based on western conceptions of the Orient. In Said's discours, orientalism signified a white man taking upon himself to re-vision and re-present the orient thereby suggesting that the orient inherently lacked scholarship and erudition to lend voice to matters pertaining to orientalism. This was precisely the reason why Said invited criticism for equating the oriental discourse with western scholarship,

especially those who treated the hitherto colonized in a diminutive manner, whereas Orientalism as a term was used to mean studies in oriental languages and cultures.

The Anglophiles as the name indicates advocated English as a medium of instruction. (Thomas Babington) Lord Macaulay (1800-1859), one of the famous Anglophiles, made pungent remarks about indigenous languages in the famous *Minute on Indian Education*, laying down that a shelf of English literature was worth more than libraries in oriental languages (Macaulay, 1835). Macaulay seems to follow a predecessor Charles Grant (1746-1823), who propounded similar views much earlier in 1797: 'wherever we may venture to say, our principles and language are introduced, our commerce will follow'. Both Grant and Macaulay were members of the same evangelical group and both supported English from a colonial vantage point, deriding indigenous language and culture. This can be contrasted with the Orientalists of the age such as Sir William Jones, an Anglo-Welsh philologist.

Thus, in return language policy was introduced as a means of interpellation of the native to disconnect them from their cultural legacy. The Orientalist however encouraged the use of local languages and advocated the use of vernacular languages as the medium of instruction. The Orientalists laid down that employing Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit language had greater utilitarian appeal as these languages had enjoyed ascendancy in the past. They believed that employing these languages in official and local proceedings would not pose any challenge to the native and hence would mitigate chances of rebellion. The fact remains that whether it was the Orientalists, with their seemingly sympathetic approach to the local linguistic landscape or the Anglophiles with their robust advocacy of English and occidental scholarship, both strived to strengthen their rule in the Sub-continent. However, a close reading of the literary texts produced during the age of colonization demonstrates disparaging remarks with respect to the indigenous culture.

The diminutive rendition of the colonial subject as 'other' is punctuated with negative epithets such as 'swarms of stocky peasants', 'string of women', 'a horde of natives' and a 'flock of pot-bellied naked children' codifying the colonial subjects as 'other-than-human' in texts such as the *Burmese Days* by George Orwell (1934). 'Othering' is thus an exercise in dehumanizing the marginalized through negative stereotypes and can be treated in contradistinction to Eurocentrism which further adds credence to the European perspective. The European standpoint functions as the 'universal signifier' ascribing ascendancy to the 'west' and the values it has become synonymous with. Thus, a Eurocentric narrative goes beyond the connotations of privileging 'Europe' or the West for that matter; rather it shows how anything non-European is pitted against it. The world was therefore seen as either 'inside' Europe or 'outside' Europe. Stuart Hall (1932-2014) shows how this 'difference' translates into difference of representation (Hall, 1997).

Hoskins for example, vociferously decries such notions where Europe is considered as the seedbed of human civilization and Africa is portrayed as perpetually waiting for the Europeans to bring light to the African continent (Mellish, 2019). The *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad can be treated as a case in point. Although it was furnished as a critique of colonization, yet Chinua Achebe (1913-2013) argues to the contrary (Philips, 2003). Achebe lays down that the novel uncovers a prevalent trend to place Africa in binary opposition to Europe, delineating the former as 'uncivil', 'savage' and 'barbarous' while the latter is entrenched as 'civilized', 'refined' and 'humane' (Clarke, 2017). He is sceptic about the reader-response in acquiescence to the celebrated Western canon, thereby contributing to the tacit support of colonial supremacy (Clarke, 2017). Ngugi wa Thiongo (1964), the Kenyan author promoted writing in African languages as an anti-colonialist strategy on the part of the African people (Ashcraft, 1995). He considers literature written in English with a pinch of salt and not as 'purely' African. Although the colonized-colonizer equation is an interlocking of polarities in an estranged relationship; yet it unravels how the colonized or the hitherto colonized can be an 'exotic other' for the colonizer, and the colonial master on the other hand can serve as the 'vantage point' unto the colonized.

G.C. Spivak in *Can the Subaltern Speak* brings to light the colonial designs embedded within the colonial practices. For example, the tradition of *Suttee* was abolished by the 'white men' to save 'brown women from brown men', which still does not lend voice to the suppressed women rendered as a rudimentary existence, defined merely by the 'colour' of their skin. It rather works in the direction of bolstering the colonial rule, establishing the colonial master as a paragon of chivalrous values, undermining the local populace as a silent, anonymous multitude with inhuman disposition.

Spivak cites the case of a downtrodden, black woman who suffers marginalization at three levels; being a woman; being black and being economically underprivileged respectively. Interestingly,

if this character is transported to the First World, her weaknesses lends her the audacity to rebel against all manifestations of oppression. Bringing her to the Third World draws her close to annihilation; all the three weaknesses play against her. Thus, in the latter case all three attributes are not a signifier of emancipation, but a qualifier of subalternism (Spivak, 2006). Herein, the third space becomes pertinent which allows for an ambivalent and hybrid interface between the colonizer and the colonized. The colonizer manoeuvres the position of the indigenous languages to break the consensus built around a shared linguistic legacy and introduces colonial language and literature to strengthen foothold in a society.

Mark Kelley delves into the workings of 'knowledge' and production of truth as a function of language. He refers to F. Nietzsche who considers knowledge as an improvisation of the instinctual drives to further the primordial existence (Kelly, 2009). Nietzsche for example looks at 'ethics', another fancy word like knowledge as a means of exercising control, with a slight subversion of the conventional meaning i.e. the control of the strong by the weak (Kelly, 2009). If a seemingly non-political aspect of knowledge as 'ethics' can branch out into the sphere of power politics, then knowledge itself is to be looked at as an appropriation of a 'political intervention' (Kelly, 2009). Nietzsche does not see a kinship between 'knowledge' and 'things that should be known'; hence knowledge is but an attempt at imposition of a systemic 'order' on a world ridden with inherent chaos (Kelly, 2009). Since language is the vehicle of knowledge, it is at times as an artifice or an innovation dictated by authoritarian precepts in the hands of the colonial master. Knowledge and the host of benefits associated with it such as classification, simplification and juxtaposition is considered by far an 'overlooking' of the essence (Kelly, 2009). Jacques Derrida likewise considers language as a whole as innately dissonant where the written discourse only camouflages meaning, and language here takes on the role of written language in falling short of meaning (Kelly, 2009). Hence what the colonizer considers as imparting 'knowledge' is many a time a politically driven move, employed to further authoritarian control.

The early 19th century ushered in an era of proliferation of vernacular languages. Courses were offered in Marathi, Persian, Bengali, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telenga and Canarese Hindustani by the Fort William College which concurrently also taught English, Greek and Latin (Rahman, 2008). Very soon the British abandoned the vernacular languages under the concern that it was going to result in 'Indianizing' the civil service. Thus, Persian which was already abolished as language of courts of law was now among the abandoned vernacular languages hitherto taught at Fort William College. This pattern was recurrent as we find that Sir William Jones, a seasoned scholar of Oriental languages, accredited with the propagation of Sanskrit literature, translated the Indian laws into English. Despite being a proponent of Oriental literature and his contributions to Sanskrit literature, he rendered the laws into English, a move meant to concretize colonial ascent (Cannon, 1971).

Language cannot be considered as a neutral artefact especially because language policies are sanctioned by the state. The three tiers of language planning i.e. status planning, acquisition planning and corpus planning determine the breadth of uses that a language will be exposed to as official or national language. Policy making thus remains the prerogative of the state rather than the academia and is institutionalized by the state machinery rather than scholars of linguistics. It is at times the institutions of the state which direct the use of language such as standardization of a language or a variety of languages. Thus, language policies are driven by geo-political and socio-economic motives.

At times acquisition planning and status planning are used interchangeably. Language planning borders on language acquisition in tandem with institutions of the state to decide upon the medium of instruction in educational institutes. Thus, language policies cannot be considered as an objectification of linguistic goals of a society. Many a time patronage for a certain language at the cost of vernacular languages can result in an uneven socio-linguistic opportunities.

This has led to the idea of 'Esperanto', an apparently 'neutral' diction that cuts across cultures without having to privilege any group. The idea of Esperanto as a language that does not carry the benchmark of any national, social, ethnic or religious order was propounded by a Polish physician Dr. Zamenholf to contend the political underpinnings behind the selection of any particular language (Kachru, 1992). Although a number of debates around the idea are still inconclusive regarding the fate of such a 'universal' language, yet the idealists among the linguists still hope for its success.

The politicization of linguistic marginalization is evident in the eon-old Ukraine's struggle for liberation. The Urdu-English disparity can be read in the Ukrainian-Russian divide. The history of ethno-linguistic marginalization of Ukraine can be traced back to the Czarist and Soviet occupation up

until 1991 when Ukrainian officially became the state language of the newly independent Ukraine. Yet it has not been a smooth-sailing for Ukraine on the ethno-linguistic front. Since Russian had been deeply entrenched in the non-Russian states of the Soviet Union, despite Ukrainian being the official language in Ukraine, language crisis continues to thwart political stability. The disintegration of the Soviet Union drastically affected language distribution of the Russian language. Russian remained the medium of communication in almost fourteen successor states; those included in the Soviet Union. Secondly the growing outreach of Russophone communities across the globe has lent language the status of a soft power. Both Russian and Ukrainian are commonly spoken in Ukrainian cities, yet Russian still enjoys ascendency over Ukrainian in some cases (Bowring, 2012).

Right after independence of Ukraine, polls have indicated that at least one out of three Ukrainians prefers to speak Russian. There has been an intermittent linguistic shift in terms of identity claimed by Ukrainians and Russians. According to the results of first census conducted in 2001 after the disintegration of USSR in Ukraine, 77.8 per cent claimed to be of Ukrainian descent while 17.3 per cent claimed Russian and 4.9 per cent claimed other ethnicities (Bowring, 2012). On the other hand, many among the ethnic Ukrainians declared Russian as their mother tongue, while ethnic Russians identified 'Ukrainian' as their mother tongue (Bowring, 2012). Thus the Russian speaking Ukrainians have been considering themselves as an oppressed community within Ukraine. More so, the election of Volodymyr Zelensky as the 6th President of Ukraine in 2019 highlighted Ukraine's changing contours of linguistic landscape. Territorially Ukraine can be classified into three distinct groups: Central and Western regions where Ukrainians are prone to speaking Ukrainian; secondly the Southern and Eastern regions where the Ukrainian populace is conversant with Russian and thirdly, Eastern regions where a segment of Russian population speaks Russian.

Russian has been bracketed with colonial ascendancy threatening the status of Ukraine. Ethno-linguistic riots have erupted ever since Ukraine became an independent state. Conscious efforts have been made to relegate Russian to a subordinate position in a bid to promote Ukrainian. Thus, the linguistic divide between Russian and Ukraine does not mark a split between two countries, it is rather emblematic of soaring conflict within the Ukrainian society (Mirovalev, 2021).

The ethno-linguistic strife gained momentum between 1991 and 2012 when Ukrainian was deemed as the sole state language while Russian was relegated to a secondary, regional status. Thus, the results of the parliamentary and presidential elections were affected and polarized. This precipitated in the repeal of language law of 2012 in February 2014, following the removal of President Viktor Yanukovych and annexation of Crimea. The armed Russian intervention in Donbas thereafter was propounded as a means of safeguarding the identity of Russian speakers (Arel, 2017-18). Ironically despite state measures to promote Ukrainian, Russian continued to be spoken with persistent predominance. Ukrainian was the medium of instruction in educational institutions, but Russian remained in common currency at work and in media. The Russian speaking Ukrainians have been deemed as the by-products of Russia's hegemonic designs and have been compelled to adopt Ukrainian as the language of communication. Thus, the policy of re-Ukranianization of eastern Ukraine has been implicitly embedded in the state policies (Arel, 2017-18).

Language as a marker of identity can become the breeding ground of conflicts. This brings us to a queer matrix between language preference and state loyalty. Language preference is at times used as a marker of state loyalty. Many indigenous speakers have given up on Russian in order to exhibit loyalty to the state language despite the facility and ease with which they spoke Russian (Mirovalev, 2021). Speaking a certain language is thus considered a litmus test of loyalty or hostility towards the state.

Ukraine is far from bilingual with its complex ethno-linguistic configuration. Minorities speak Hungarian, Romani, Yiddish, and Greek. After a span of almost three decades after the independence of Ukraine, 53 per cent claim to speak it in the private environs of their homes while 29 per cent prefer Russian till to date. Yet the language law passed in 2019, making Ukrainian mandatory in all public spheres has put the masses in jeopardy. President Volodymyr Zelensky seemingly strived to set aright the linguistic equilibrium, thereby resorting to speaking Russian occasionally during his election campaign in 2019. Yet the state patronage in the favour of Ukranization continued under his regime.

He has been quoted as saying that those who raise ethno-linguistic or religious issues only seek a temporary hype, something that stands out in stark contrast to his earlier statements during the election campaign. The centre and periphery play a pivotal role between language choices. The recent May 19,

2021 approval of the action plan is a huge breakthrough, promulgating Ukrainian in all facets of public life for the period 2022-2030. Termed as 'gentle Ukrainization', this plan envisages an avowed support for Ukrainian against Russian as a means of countering Russian designs and occupation on parts of Ukraine.

CONCLUSION

Language policies are thus crafted by state machinery to ensure adherence to certain languages at the cost of others. Celebration of linguistic diversity is pivotal to promoting peace and harmony in a society. On the other hand, the colonial model of debunking a certain language and introducing either the language of the colonial master or attributing a language with cultural supremacy is still employed as a means of furthering hegemonic motives. The current Ukrainian language laws have made Ukrainian mandatory by state officials and civil servants (Kudriavtseva, 2021). The law further envisages development of a free access database of Ukrainian dictionary, promoting Ukrainian in media and film industry, including dubbing of films and television transmissions. The plan also suggests offering Ukrainian abroad as a foreign language (Kudriavtseva, 2021). The question remains whether efforts at promoting a language should inevitably imply neglecting other equally significant language varieties in common currency.

The peculiar way linguistic disparities are dealt with in the political arena results in either state recognition for a certain language or with a blatant disregard for other languages. Therefore, politics and language are closely intertwined where the latter is not considered a neutral medium. The conceptual shift in terms of language preference, language as a marker of national identity, and the political implications of language with respect to gender, minorities and religious communities highlights the political underpinnings surrounding language issues.

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