## Introduction

Why this volume

In 2011 Italy celebrated 150 years of unification, an important milestone not only for the history of the Italian State but also for the history of the Italian language.

The political unification of 1861 marked a new phase in the discussion of a standard Italian language understandable to everyone. This discussion, the famous *questione della lingua*, which originated already in the thirteenth century with Dante and his essay *De vulgari eloquentia,* has continued for almost seven centuries. Did it culminate in a victory for standard Italian and the defeat of all the other languages present within the territory of the new Italian state? Or did it rather end with the fortuitous coexistence of different languages?

In books on the history of the Italian language, the creation and promotion of the standard Italian language is often described as a meaningful solution that was instrumental in creating the Italian nation. But was it actually that important? In other words, *is language one of the main parts of national identity?* This is the crucial question that we would like to explore in this volume.

Two different observations sparked my interest in this question. The first one is general and is connected with the history of the Italian language. During a course on Italian dialectology that I teach at the University of Oslo, my Norwegian students were very surprised to hear of the importance of the standard Italian language. They could scarcely believe me when I told them of the standardization of Italian, the weakening of dialects, and the important role that television plays in disseminating the standard Italian language. I understand their surprise: in Norway, everybody, including news presenters, can use his or her own dialect. This led me to ask myself: Do such differences mean that the role of language is different for each nation?

The second observation is personal but highly representative of modern society. Looking at plurilingual children, I was wondering how they felt, living in and speaking the language of one country but also speaking another language with their parents who are trying hard to maintain their own identity and transmit it to their children. This reflection was stimulated by my little daughter, who once told me at the age of two and a half that she could not learn French, because in that case she would also be French – and since she was already Russian, Italian, and Norwegian (the three languages that she uses daily), being French as well would be too much. This led me to wonder: Does language define our identity?

These two observations will be discussed in the two parts of this book. In both parts, language is the protagonist. In the first part, “Language = Nation?”, different faces of language are introduced, such as standard language and national language. The contributors describe the role of language in different societies. What kind of relationship can there be between political and linguistic unification? What was the process in different countries? Can a language actually unify a nation? These are the questions that the authors seek to answer.

The second part, “Language = Identity?”, describes the relationship between language and the speaker: on the one hand, language can help someone be integrated into a new society, but on the other hand, language is also important for preserving the original identity. Is it possible to find a balance between these two opposite tendencies? In what way do attitudes to a given language change in conformity with the status that the language has in a society? Can we say that different societies have different solutions for maintaining their language? These are the questions that the authors discuss in the second part.

We will see that the answers to the main questions are both highly individual and very general, and depend on the given society and the given language(s) that are used. That is why the more situations we analyze and the more points of view we discuss, the easier it may be to find a valid answer that will fit one individual case. For that reason, in the afterword, we asked the contributors some questions about their national identity and its relation with the language(s) they use and the country where they live.

Why this title

Many studies have been dedicated to the Italian *questione della lingua* (literally, “problem of the language”). In recent years in particular, during the period of the celebration of 150 years of unification, the discussion on the role of the language in the creation of the Italian nation has risen again.

The *questione della lingua,* used in the Italian context, is a very large notion that includes, first of all, the discussion conducted over several centuries about the linguistic norm, but also the discussions about what name to give to the standard language (*toscano? fiorentino? lingua italiana?*) and about the relation between the languages used by the same speakers in different situations. On the one hand, the conflict between Italian and Latin was for many centuries crucial to the linguistic situation in Italy, where even in the 16th century the Latin was used as the written language of scientific texts. [[1]](#footnote-1) On the other hand, for a long time Italian was opposed to the dialects, i.e. Sicilian, Napolitan, Lombardian etc. – considered as the natural languages of the people – and had the role of the cultural elite’s language. (For more details about the *questione della lingua*, see e.g. Marazzini 2013).

Only after unification did the Italian language slowly become the common language of communication for the Italian people. In this process a very important role was played by school, obligatory military service (when recruits from the South Italy were sent to the North Italy and vice versa), and later, in the 20th century, radio and (especially) television. Now, in the 21st century, the problem has been reversed: many Italian regions try to protect their local dialect. The discussion on the language adopted a new perspective and is now concentrated on the opposite question: did Italian become the natural language of the Italian people? (see, e.g. Brevini 2010).

Thus, the notion of *questione della lingua* in Italy defines a very long and complicated process that lasted at least five centuries (from Dante’s essay *De vulgari eloquentia* – 1304-07 – until the unification – 1861) and includes different aspects and phases.

The chapters of this volume describe the situation on five continents and show that those aspects which emerged in the discussion of language in Italy also emerged in different states in different parts of the world. Many other countries, like Italy, were involved (or are still involved) in a process of unification where the language is one of the important factors – the status of the language had a crucial role in the creation of the national identity and was considered as one of its most important components (and even one of its most important symbols). Hence, we will see that although the *questione della lingua* characterizes different states, it leads to a different status of the language in different states. This fact shows, on the one hand, the universality and the eternity of the problem, but on the other hand, its individual development in each concrete country.

The first chapter by Patrick Seán McCrea describes the process of the standardization of the French language and the role of French in the French State, where the language is considered as one of the national symbols and is compared to a civic religion for Frenchmen (Cerquiglini 2003).

The Portuguese language, described in the next chapter by Diana Santos, is one of the main parts of the Portuguese identity: “my homeland is the Portuguese language” wrote Pessoa in the thirties of the 20th century. Literature played an important role in the creation and the transmission of this image through the generations, like for example, the two one-century-old children books analyzed in the chapter. The central position of the Portuguese language is manifested in different situations and events, among them the linguistic situation in Mozambique, the East Timor crisis and the new orthographic agreement.

In the third chapter, based on the analysis of the political and sociological functions of language, the role of the English language in American society is compared to the role of the Italian standard language in Italy. Both countries had to unify different states with differently-speaking people and used the language for this purpose. However, the outcomes were different due to the other factors involved in the process. In this chapter (as in the previous two) the significant role of literature and the school is also taken into consideration.

In the next chapter, literature has a central place. Applying Decolonial Theory (E. Dussel, W. Mignolo, A. Quijano) to the analysis of García Márquez’s narratives (*One Hundred Years of Solitude* and “Big Mama’s Funeral”), Nelson González-Ortega creates a whole theoretical and methodological apparatus to discuss the role literature plays in recreating fictionally the nation-State building process in Colombia as well as the creation of national identity.

While the first four chapters describe the process of the formation of the national identity and the place of language in it, the following three chapters discuss the modern situation in different societies, analysing the process of the formation (in progress) of a new identity. The same components play a crucial role in this process: the school and literature are always the leading elements, but a new element also emerges. Since language is seen as one of the main conductors to the culture, the problem of the cultural identity connected to the language and to the national identity comes up. The situation in Italy over recent centuries provides a clear illustration of this problem. Italian was for a long time the language of the Italian elite, while the dialects were used by the people. Therefore, two cultures coexisted (and continue to coexist) in Italian society: the Italian culture (and the literature in Italian) and the dialectal culture (and the literature in dialects) (Brevini 2010).

The last three chapters of this volume describe a modern situation when two or more languages coexist for the speaker on different levels: across the whole society (as in Alexander Kasonde’s study), in smaller groups (the chapter by Marco Santello) and individually (the chapter by Elizaveta Khachaturyan).

Alex Kasonde's chapter describes a highly multilingual situation in Zambian society where English coexists with the national languages (seven speech forms are considered as such). But the use of English in general education and its prioritisation in official communication lead to a loss of the national identity, since without using the African languages it is impossible to perpetuate the African cognitive system.

Marco Santello’s chapter analyses the status of bilingual Italian speakers in Australian society and the attitude towards bilingualism as self-reported by the bilinguals themselves. The responses to a set of questions asked to participants of the survey can be interpreted as an answer to the *questione della lingua* in an Italian and a non-Italian context: in talking about their cultural identity, all participants indicated identification not only with Italian and Australian cultures but also with their Italian local regional identity (still important for the Italians more than 150 years after unification).

Elizaveta Khachaturyan’s chapter discusses how, through the teaching of the language and of the culture, textbooks can shape the cognitive system of the speaker. This process is important for different groups of language learners: for native speakers, for foreigners learning another language (FL), as well as for bilingual children acquiring different linguistic systems and with them different aspects of culture which shape their sense of national belonging.

As we will see, all the cases studied in this volume have something in common with the linguistic situation in Italy, but at the same time they are very different. The research reported here may provoke much discussion and raise further questions. If this happens, it has succeeded, since one of its aims is to stimulate our reflection about ourselves and the “other”. To conclude this introduction I am tempted to say “to be continued”, because the *questione della lingua* remains one of the central questions for the individuals living in the modern society

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**Part I:**

**Language = Nation?**

Chapter One

Standard Republican French  
and French Nationalism:  
“Une et Indivisible”

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Introduction

The link between nation and language is an old one. Language has long been called upon to symbolize a nation, and hence nationalism (Haugen 1966: 927). The notion can be traced back to either Biblical times (Fishman 1972: 44) or to Ancient Greece (Hobsbawm 1992: 51). In the Biblical era, within the Judeo-Christian tradition, language was regarded as a defining characteristic of a nationality: “Holy people, Holy land, Holy language” (Fishman 1972: 44). In Ancient Greece, those who did not speak Greek were labeled “barbarians” (Hobsbawm 1992: 51).

With regard to the modern nation-state, which began in the late 18th century, France is credited with exemplifying a strong interdependency between language and nation (Haugen 1966: 930). “The French language is an affair of State” (Paveau and Rosier 2008: Back cover). Since the foundation of the modern French nation-state (mid-1790s), France has called upon Standard Republican French to inculcate love of the French nation into all of her inhabitants (Dédirat and Hordé 1988: 94). The French government has even pointed to the fact that the French language needed to be the unifying factor in the construction of French identity (Bell 2001: 175). In the French conception, the nation is a contractual system in which the so-called “common” language must be imposed on the entirety of the population, especially upon those who do not know it, in order to mold a nation. The imposition of the “common” language is done in a manner to imply that the inhabitants should have already known it, rather than as if it were foreign to them (Sériot 1997: 42). The *Académie française*, as the linguistic and literary arm of the State (Rickard 1992: 4), also proclaims (as we shall see) that the French nation was forged through the French language (*Académie française* in *Libération* 2008).

Just like the French Republic is “une et indivisible” under the Jacobin conception of the centralized and unified nation, this essay argues that the French language and French nationalism are also “one and indivisible” (Hobsbawm 2007: 18). French unity is expressed through the French language. “The French language is not *a* core element but *the* core element of modern French identity” (Zeldin quoted in Neville 2000/2001: 112[[2]](#footnote-2)).

In order to argue that French language represents French nationalism, the concepts of nation and nationalism must first be understood. Furthermore, the role of language within these concepts must also be comprehended. The first sections of this paper will thus tackle the concepts of nation and nationalism and the role played by language within them. The next section will examine the notion of standard language. The final section will analyze important moments from the history of French in France in order to demonstrate the symbiotic relationship between the French language and French nationalism.

Nation and Nationalism

The concepts and definitions of “nation” and “nationalism” are variable and differ by domain and often by scholar (Hutchinson and Smith 1994: 15).

# “Questions of definition have bedeviled [nationalism as a] field of study, and there is no agreement among scholars about ‘subjective’ and ‘objective’ factors in the definition of nations” (Hutchinson and Smith 1994: 15).

Due to these possible variations, even well-established nations pose problems among scholars. For instance, while scholars agree that France can be categorized as a nation, they disagree on when it became a nation due to different criteria. Some point to the early Middle Ages, while some point to the 14th century, whereas others point to the Louis XIV-era (Connor 1994: 155).

Due to the numerous possible criteria employed to define a group of people as a nation, historians, nationalists and scholars have over the years tried to develop varied and complex criteria in order to differentiate nations from other groups of people with a collective identity (Hobsbawm 1992: 5-9). Ethnicity and Nationalism scholar and founder of nationalism studies, Anthony D. Smith, describes a nation as

# “a named human population occupying a historic territory or homeland and sharing common myths and memories; a mass, public culture; a single economy; and common rights and duties for all members” (Smith 2000: 3).

Smith’s theory tends to adhere to the primordial stance, in which nations are believed to be ancient and natural entities based upon a common ethnic core. His theory also demonstrates the functionalist view that nations include a series of institutions that perform specific functions.

Through his acclaimed book *Imagined Communities*, International Studies professor Benedict Anderson defines a nation as “an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (2006: 6). It is imagined since even the members of the smallest nation will never all meet; limited since it has finite boundaries; sovereign because nation-building occurred in an age of enlightenment and revolution favoring man-made over divine-ordination; community in that despite any inequality, the nation is seen as “a deep, horizontal comradeship” (2006: 6-7). Anderson’s philosophy adheres to the modernist stance, which believes that nations are modern constructions. Furthermore, his philosophy demonstrates the constructivist view that nations are ideologically created, rather than natural entities.

# “Nations as a natural, God-given way of classifying men, as an inherent … political destiny, are a myth; nationalism, which sometimes takes pre-existing cultures and turns them into nations, sometimes invents them, and often obliterates pre-existing cultures: *that* is a reality” (Gellner 1983: 48-49[[3]](#footnote-3)).

As philosopher and social anthropologist Ernest Gellner explains, in the constructivist point of view, nations and nationalism are not God-given entities, but are rather man-made through political ideologies, which distort histories and memories for the desired outcome – the creation of a nation through nationalism. Just as nations are not predestined to exist, nationalism precedes nationhood (Hobsbawm 2007: 9-10). “Nations do not make states and nationalisms but the other way round” (Hobsbawm 2007: 10). Nations also represent a two-part system wherein they have been primarily constructed from above by the state, but cannot be fully comprehended unless studied from below from the point of view of “the people” regarding their assumptions, desires, needs and interests (Hobsbawm 2007: 10). Scholars must study the people’s point of view in order to ascertain how effectively the people have adhered to or internalized the political ideology.

Historian E. J. Hobsbawm states that the concept of nation has become so widely and imprecisely used today as to be of little use (1992: 9). Since no definitive criteria exists to label a collective group inhabiting the same territory as a nation, Hobsbawm recommends first looking at the notion of nationalism in order to *a posteriori* identify a nation since scholars generally agree that nationalism creates nations and states choose different criteria in order to create unity (1992: 9).

With regard to nationalism, Hobsbawm defines it as “primarily a principle which holds that the political [state] and national units [nation] should be congruent” (1992: 9). In his turn, Smith defines nationalism as

# “an ideological movement for the attainment and maintenance of autonomy, unity, and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential nation” (2000: 3).

Smith, along with John Hutchinson, a nationalism lecturer, highlight the collective identity of a people, in which collectivity implies autonomy, unity and cultural homogeneity (Hutchinson and Smith 1994: 4-5). Anderson does not define nationalism *per se*, but rather alludes to it being the collective cultural roots of an imagined community (2006).

Concerning nationalism in general, and national symbols specifically, Ernest Gellner points out that national flags and anthems, as well as other symbols of national identity, such as language, tend to be considered sacred, as if they were religious, rather than political (Gellner 1983: 56). These national symbols arouse emotion, and can thus stir a people to action on behalf of their nation. Language can thus be considered “sacred” wherein its speakers become devotees of it.

The overarching similarity in the aforementioned definitions of nationalism is the ideas of unity and identity. Therefore, in this paper, nationalism will be defined, via the constructivist view, as an ideology that strives for national unity through feelings of national attachment and adherence to a national identity (Fenet 1976-1977: 101).

Language and Nationalism

Sociology of language scholar Joshua Fishman states that language is often seen as the most salient collective symbol for national identity due to the fact that the unity of language is viewed as more enduring than other symbols (Fishman 1972: 49). Since modern nations desire to represent themselves as eternally distinct, language is often tapped as the secular symbol of the nation, while carrying with it all the sanctity that religion has given to texts, systems of writing, as well as word imagery. This process demonstrates why many cultural and national militants believe that boundaries between languages are more fundamental, impermeable and durable than are political, religious or territorial boundaries. Language is thus seen as a natural division; it tends to be commensurate with a people, a culture and an approach to life (Judge 2000: 49). Since language is viewed as the symbol of uniqueness, authentic nationalism is thought to reside in language. Therefore, linguistic differentiation is often used to highlight the separateness of a people, whereas linguistic similitude is often used to highlight the unity of a people (Fishman 1972: 49-50).

Within the national domain, language is much more than a simple code for communication. It is a symbol infused with values and morals. People make an intimate symbolic linkage between a national language and national identity. Unlike a national anthem or a national flag, a national language produces and performs a national identity. The language provides the words through which to think and to speak and thus it melts citizens into a national mass (Ost 2009: 313).

Concerning the role of language in nation-building and the life of a nation in Europe, cultural historian Peter Burke proposes two different periods; one preceding the French Revolution of 1789 and one following it. Burke argues that from 1789 on, a change occurred in both government and language wherein prior to 1789, governments were not truly concerned with the language spoken by the people; however, after 1789, governments consciously developed language policies to build nations since language was deemed to express as well as to help create national communities (Bell 2001: 171). “We might say that language was ‘nationalized’ at this time or that it became an instrument of the ‘cult of the nation’” (Burke 2004: 160).

# “There were indeed cases where the leading nation or *Staatsvolk* tried actively to suppress minor languages and cultures, but until the late nineteenth century this was rare outside France” (Hobsbawm 2007: 36[[4]](#footnote-4)).

“The French insistence on linguistic uniformity since the Revolution has indeed been marked, and at the time it was quite exceptional” (Hobsbawm 2007: 21).

Standard Language

As we have just seen, there is a universal tendency for groups to use language as the symbol of their collective identity in order to bond members of the group together, as well as to differentiate them from members of other groups: “us versus them” (Lodge 1993: 85). However, with regard to nations, not all languages are equal.

After the fall of the Roman Empire, Classical Latin remained the sacred language of its former territory; however, newly independent and/or developing nations soon saw the importance of creating a national, sacred language of their own (Beaune 1991: 267). Like Latin, languages that are linked with nations and nationalisms are most often “standard languages”, rather than “vernacular languages”, wherein standard languages are not natural languages in that they have been created through manipulation. Sociolinguist Richard Hudson states, “Standard languages are the result of a direct and deliberate intervention by society” (Hudson in Battye, Hintze and Rowlett 2000: 9). Standard languages were established over several centuries and in response to objective and subjective pressures. Objectively, a standard language takes on a functional purpose, as it becomes the means to communicate, govern and educate effectively by suppressing variation and resisting change. Subjectively, and ideologically, since one form of language, or one language, is chosen over others, attitudes tend to emerge with regard to the standard, or the chosen one, as being more elegant or clearer, or simply better than the others (Battye et al. 2000: 9-10).

According to the credited pioneer of sociolinguistics Einar Haugen, the creation/standardization of a vernacular language is a national necessity (1966: 927). Since a nation can be seen as a society that combines familial, tribal and/or regional groups, it stimulates a loyalty above these groups, while at the same time discourages any loyalty to any other such groups or nations. The ideal is thus internal cohesion and external distinction. As the encouragement of such loyalty demands free and intense communication within the nation, the national ideal requires a single, shared linguistic code of communication, which is a standard language (Haugen 1966: 928).

“The development of linguistic norms [standardization] shadows the structure and evolution of social groups” (Lodge 1993: 85). The standardization process involves selection of a certain vernacular, codification of this vernacular, acceptance of the codified language, as well as a desire to use it in all domains and then elaboration of the new language by creating terms for new concepts (1966: 931). Through this process, Haugen points out that when a nation selects a vernacular, it is for political, rather than linguistic reasons. Therefore, no single choice will please all those involved. For the emerging, selected language to gain national prestige, it is usually chosen from one locale and this locale will be used as the standard reference for usage. In other words, this chosen locale will have the social authority to define “correct” or “acceptable” usage. While this reference may cause linguistic inequality, again, it is social or political, rather than linguistic (Haugen 1966: 931-933).

Standard Republican French

Haugen describes Standard French to be the most highly standardized of the European languages and believes it to be the most immediate heir to Classical Latin. Standard French has since become a model for other standard languages (Haugen 1966: 930). In France, the process of standardization of French was intimately tied to the history of the French nation itself. As the French developed a sense of cohesion around a centralized government, its language became an important symbol of their unity (Haugen 1966: 930). While it may be relatively easy to describe Standard French as Parisian French, the matter is much more complicated. Today, two schools of thought exist concerning the origin of the language we know today as Standard French: the national and the academic (Cerquiglini 1998).

The first version of the national origin story holds that Standard French was the language of the French king that had been purified and fixed in the 17th century “based upon the ‘good usage’” of the French court (Cerquiglini 1998). However, in the 19th century, the national version was tweaked in order to “demonstrate” a continuous link with Classical Latin by creating the notion of the spoken, central dialect *Francien* of Paris and the Ile-de-France as the forefather of the king’s French (Cerquiglini 1998).

Conversely, the academic version holds that Standard French is based upon a written *koiné* of the *Langue(s) d’oïl[[5]](#footnote-5)* domain and that *Francien* never truly existed and was simply invented in 1889 by French linguist Gaston Paris (Lodge 1993: 115 and Cerquiglini 1998). A *koiné* is a standard language of sorts that is created through contact with mutually intelligible dialects (Lodge 1993: 114). Since the *koiné* of the *Langue(s) d’oïl* domain was written, as opposed to spoken, it is usually referred to as a *scripta* (Cerquiglini 1998). Former General Delegate to the French Language and to the Languages of France Bernard Cerquiglini believes that Gaston Paris created *Francien* around Paris in opposition to Berlin and Germany. After France’s 1871 defeat by Prussia, the German Empire was unified through Berlin and Martin Luther’s language. Gaston Paris thus came to France’s linguistic rescue by pointing to the central importance of Paris and its unique language (Cerquiglini 1998).

Standard French became Standard Republican French[[6]](#footnote-6) when revolutionaries of 1789 used it to write the *Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen* and decided to turn it into the new language of the newly free French people. Aristocratic jargon was removed, new democratic terms were incorporated into the language, such as “*liberté”*, “*fraternité”* and “*égalité*”[[7]](#footnote-7), synonyms were eliminated and weights and measures were standardized to the metric system (Guilhaumou 1989: 69-80). French spelling was made uniform throughout France (Lodge 1993: 164). The Jacobins wanted to transform the French language itself into a pure, clear and rational tongue, purged of all grammatical and lexical irregularities and confusions (Bell 2001: 175).

Clearly as Haugen’s thesis suggests, the French developed a sense of cohesion around a centralized government and its language became an important symbol of their unity (Haugen 1966: 930). However, we do not have to rely upon the view of an American linguist of Norwegian heritage to believe in the importance given to the French language in France and French society. A famous 1833 phrase of renowned French historian Jules Michelet, author of the 19-volume *Histoire de France*, already pointed to the pinnacle link between the French language and French unity or French nationalism: “The history of France begins with the French language. Language is the principal sign of a nationality”[[8]](#footnote-8) (Michelet quoted in Verrière 2000: 154). Regardless of whose notion one adheres to, which are basically synonymous, the events through which the French populace was ultimately unified through the French language will be explored.

The French Language and France: A Love Affair

# “In few countries has language played a greater role in constructing national identity than in modern France. French is first and foremost a political idiom, enshrined by the leaders of the Revolution and the Third Republic as the language of the Republic and the Nation” (Cohen 2001: 1).

The French language also finds itself front and center in French culture and society. Speaking “proper French” is interpreted as being patriotic and deemed a necessity in French society (Cohen 2001: 2). The French believe it their duty to correct “improper” French or mistakes they hear made around them (Cohen 2001: 2-3).

# “Many French people […] speak of their language with love. Their education, their history, their very identity are all bound up in the language they have been explicitly taught to revere” (Adamson 2007: xiii).

# “[The French] have all been taught, particularly in the two centuries since the Revolution, that their beloved language is an essential element of the Republic and of their identity” (Adamson 2007: xiii).

# “Cultural icon, tool for social cohesion, instrument of foreign policy, symbol of the Republic, and source of national pride, the French language has long stood at the heart of definitions of citizenship, of society, and of the nation” (Cohen 2001: 3).

“In France, the French language enjoys nothing less than ‘divine status’” (Zeldin quoted in Neville 2000/2001: 112).

For over five centuries, the monarchy, writers, intelligentsia, administration, national education system, media and populace have extolled the numerous ascribed attributes of the French language. Metaphors dealing with the pinnacle position held by the French language in French society abound:

# “The French language is a pedestal/a pillar of French identity, the cement of national unity, a national treasure, the sap of the tree, the language of light/the Enlightenment, a dawn (presumably in a world full of shadows), the eldest daughter of Greek and Latin, and so forth.” (Neville 2000/2001: 115).

# “Language is one of the very few issues to transcend party politics and left-right cleavages. Expressions of undying love for the language are commonplace among politicians of all tendencies, who compete for the status of defender/savior *par excellence* of the French language” (Neville 2000/2001: 114[[9]](#footnote-9)).

Former French Prime Minister, from 1976-1981, and center-right politician, Raymond Barre, presented a specific view of the French language and its functions in French society:

# “The first of the fundamental values of our civilization is the proper usage of our language. There is, among the young people, in their loyal practice of French, a moral and civic virtue” (Barre quoted in Cohen 2001: 2).

In this statement, Cohen pointed out that Barre had identified three fundamental functions of the French language. The first, it provides “a form of civic clue that binds citizens to the Nation” wherein to speak and write proper French represents loyalty to France (Cohen 2001: 2). The second, the proper mastery of French represents much more than a mere linguistic skill, “it is a means to cultivate personal excellence and tend to one’s virtue” since French is a basic component of civilized life (Cohen 2001: 2). The third, all French citizens are called to learn French “– indeed, it is their civic and moral duty to do so. To be French means to speak French” (Cohen 2001: 2).

Pinnacle Moments in the History of France   
and the French Language: Creating Unity

The French language, or what would later become the French language, was first employed as a national symbol during the Oaths of Strasbourg in 842. After the death of Charlemagne’s heir, the Charlemagne Empire was split between Charlemagne’s three grandsons. Upon the defeat of Lothair at Fontenay-en-Puisaye, half-brothers Louis the German, ruler of East Francia, and Charles the Bald, ruler of West Francia, proclaimed their allegiance to one another and against their eldest half-brother Lothair, ruler of Middle Francia as well as Holy Roman Emperor. Louis the German swore his oath of allegiance in *lingua romana*, while Charles the Bald swore his in *lingua teudisca* (Verrière 2000: 139-143). Each king in the language of the other king’s subjects, rather than in Latin, specifically pledged the oath, in order to shore up sovereignty and legitimacy rights (Verrière 2000: 139 and 142). This event marks the seminal moment in which language and territory were first linked in the histories of both France and Germany (Verrière 2000: 144). In other words, the Oaths of Strasbourg created the future Kingdoms of France and Germany along linguistic lines.

Several centuries later, Latin nonetheless remained the administrative language for most of the former territories of the Roman Empire. In order to curb the reign of Latin in France, François I signed the *Ordonnance de Villers-Cotterêts* in 1539, in which articles 110 and 111 made French the sole official language for all legal and administrative matters in France (Judge 2007: 16). In France, French also encroached on Latin in the domain of education. While the Sorbonne remained committed to the use of Latin, the *Collège de France* (originally *Collège Royal*) was created to teach in French. French thus entered the classroom for the first time in 1530 (Walter in Oakes 2001: 55).

Under the *Ancien Régime[[10]](#footnote-10)* (1515-1789), the French language was not employed as a tool for French unification. During this era, the French language was simply the medium of the monarchy, its court and the chancellery. Kings of the *Ancien Régime* were more concerned with amassing territory than in/with creating national unity. The French populace residing in the provinces also identified with their locale, rather than with France as a whole (Robb 2007: 6). What unified the French populace, if anything truly did, was the divine status conferred upon the king combined with their faith in the Catholic Church (Fenet 1976-1977: 100). The notion can best be summed up through the motto: “One king, One faith, One law” (Alessio 2010 and Burke 2004: 163).

With the proclamation of the Republic on September 22, 1792 and the Catholic Churches’ support of the monarchy, the new republican government sought to unify the French populace. Since French territory was inhabited by many different *pays[[11]](#footnote-11)* – ethnic groups – or *ethnies* – self-defined groups based upon language – (Gerson 2003: 40), the revolutionaries avoided the notion of ethnicity and thus based Frenchness and entrance into the French nation upon political citizenship and the desire to live together (Renan 1997: 32). However, the revolutionaries believed that true unity needed to hinge on some observable unifying factor other than citizenship and the desire to live together. As a result, the revolutionaries turned to the French language. The aforementioned motto was thus replaced with the following one: “One state, One nation, One language” (Judge 2000: 44).

In 1790, the *Abbé Grégoire* conducted the first linguistic survey of France and on June 6, 1794 provided the following results in his *Rapport sur la nécessité et les moyens d'anéantir les patois et d'universaliser l'usage de la langue française[[12]](#footnote-12)*: French was the exclusive language of only 15 *départements[[13]](#footnote-13)* out of 83 – more than six million rural citizens did not understand French, another six million could minimally speak French, only three million spoke French properly and still fewer were capable of writing it (Bell 2001: 178). These statistics lead the Jacobins to devise an official program to eliminate the regional languages of France, as well as to make the French language uniform throughout the Republic. The following, infamous invective by Bertrand Barère de Vieuzac clearly illustrates the hatred of the regional languages by the Jacobins:

# “Federalism and superstition speak Low Breton; emigration and hatred of the Republic speak German; counter-revolution speaks Italian and fanaticism speaks Basque. Let us break these instruments of injury and error … For our part we owe it to our citizens, we owe it to our republic, in order to strengthen it, that everyone on its territory is made to speak the language of the Declaration of the Rights of Man” (de Certeau, Julia and Revel 1975: 295 and 298).

Clear in Barère de Vieuzac’s rant is the idea that the regional languages prevented French unity, which was so desired by the French administration. “Under the French Revolution, the republican state began castigating local idioms, a particularism that the united nation could ill tolerate” (Gerson 2003: 540). To further assist in the destruction of the regional languages and the spread of French throughout the French Republic, the royal provinces were abolished, renamed and repartitioned into *départements* in an attempt to sever the ties between province and language (under the feudal system, each province had its own language) (Diderot and d’Alembert 1765 (12): 174). However, truly cutting ties between territory and language would be neither easy nor swift. “We no longer have provinces, but we have thirty *patois[[14]](#footnote-14)* which recall their names”, decried Grégoire (Bell 2001: 175). A national narrative was also developed in order to assist in the abandonment of the regional languages in which they were equated with the feudal past and backwardness, while French was equated with the republican future and modernity (Bell 1995: 1407).

It would not be until the Third French Republic, begun in 1870, that France would be able to enact Grégoire’s national language policy (Bell 2001: 177). Under the Third French Republic, it became evident that schools would be the perfect venue in which to *Francisize* the young generations. Pupils would be required to learn in French. However, this idea was easier conceived than implemented as most teachers were not fluent in French. Therefore, in the early 1800s, the French state began teaching the French language as well as French history to its teachers so that they would be well armed in order to “inculcate” love of France into France’s youth (Oakes 2001: 62). In 1921, a citation from *Le Bulletin Officiel*, a Ministry of Education publication distributed to all teachers in France, read,

# “Our teachers […] are well aware that the teaching of French is not only about working for the maintenance and spread of a beautiful language and literature, it is also about strengthening national unity” (Désirat and Hordé 1976 quoted in Oakes 2001: 62).

Again, the true role of the French language – unity – is expressed through this governmental statement.

The Third French Republic made “spelling the touchstone of educatedness and a uniform spelling system the chief indicator of a uniform language, symbol of a united language” (Lodge 1993: 164). In 1833, François Guizot, Minister of Education from 1832-1837, attempted to define the domains of instruction:

# “the teaching of reading, writing, and arithmetic would furnish essential skills; the teaching of French and the metric system would implant or increase the sense of unity under French nationhood” (Weber 1976: 331).

School attendance became mandatory in 1852, which spread French as well as love of the *patrie[[15]](#footnote-15)*. In fact, teachers believed these two elements to be their main mission (Bell 2001: 209).

The schools, as well as the military and civil service, were intended to civilize the peasants and as a result transform them through French language acquisition into cultured Frenchmen. However, the process of *Francisizing* France through the schools took a great deal of time. For some students, school was the only occasion in which they heard French, and usually, it was not good French. As a result, it would not be until World War I that the Jacobins’ plans were finally realized. Frenchmen, speaking many different local languages, came from regions all over France to join the army. In order to fight off the enemy, the French had to work in unison; in order to work in unison, they had to be able to understand one another. Since the national language of France was French, it was the language used for communication (Weber 1976). After the war, the French again had to cooperate in order to rebuild their devastated country; again, this required one language, French. Between the two world wars, the entire French populace finally became Francophone (Zeldin 1982: 352).

Several decades after the French administration saw its goal realized a potential problem loomed in the distance – European integration under the European Union. After France’s acceptance of the Maastricht Treaty, in which member states surrendered additional powers to the European Union, a June 25, 1992 constitutional amendment inserted the statement “the language of the Republic is French” into Article 2 of the Fifth French Republic constitution. The French government wanted it made officially clear to the European Union that only French was allowed in France (Ager 1999: 130). The original phrasing, which implied even stronger importance of the French language to France, was “French is the language of the Republic”; however, the wording was changed due to uneasiness from other Francophone communities – Belgium and Quebec – arguing that the proposed phrasing could be interpreted to mean that French was only the language of France; or even worse, that France and the French owned the French language (Ager 1999: 130). Debates surrounding the amendment once again concluded that “French expresses national identity; not that of an ethnic group nor that of a political tradition, but that of the territory and of the culture”; “language is an integral part of national culture” and “French is a symbol, together with the anthem, the motto, the flag and the liberties, of the French Republic” (Ager 1999: 131).

Also in June of 1992, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe voted to give the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*, a charter designed to protect and promote historical languages in Europe, a convention, which would make it legally binding (Judge 2007: 141). In November of 1992, the Convention was opened for signatures of member states. Once having been signed and then ratified, the *Charter* would become enforceable in March of 1998 (Judge 2007: 141). On May 7, 1999, the French Minister for European Affairs signed the *European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages* with the understood approval of President Jacques Chirac; however, on June 15, 1999, the *Conseil Constitutionnel[[16]](#footnote-16)* ruled that the *Charter* was incompatible with the French Constitution (Judge 2007: 141). The *Conseil* stated that the *Charter* conflicted with Articles 1 and 2 of the French Fifth Republic Constitution, wherein Article 1 states that France is *“*one and indivisible” and Article 2 states that “the language of the Republic is French”. The French government thus refused to ratify the *Charter* and continues to do so to this day (Judge 2007: 141). Again, in French national ideology, ratification of the *Charter* would be seen as undermining, if not destroying, the unity of the French Republic (Judge 2007).

Two years after a constitutional amendment listed French as the official language of the French Republic, the Toubon Law (1994) was passed into law, which specified several domains in which French must be used in French society – education, employment, commerce, media and scientific meetings and publications (Ager 1999: 135). The Toubon Law was created in order to protect French linguistic patrimony in France as its Article 1 declares,

# “French is a fundamental element of the personality and heritage of France. It is the language of teaching, work, (commercial) exchange and public service” (Ager 1999: 10).

Jacques Toubon, the Minister of Culture and namesake of the Toubon Law, felt it necessary to state, “The French language [is] *the cement of our national unity* and a fundamental aspect of our heritage” in reference to France’s duty to protect French in France (Toubon 1994 in Judge 2007: 22[[17]](#footnote-17)). In reality, the law indirectly protects French’s status, while purporting to protect French consumers (Judge 2007: 23).

Nonetheless, fourteen years later, after two centuries (since 1790) of pursuing linguistic uniformity, the French government apparently decided that the regional languages of France no longer posed a threat to French unity. On May 22, 2008, the *Assemblée nationale[[18]](#footnote-18)* voted unanimously to allow the entry of the regional languages into the constitution. On June 12, 2008, the *Académie française[[19]](#footnote-19)* released a unanimous declaration criticizing the decision of the members of the *Assemblée nationale* as “an attack on national identity”. The *Académie française* highlighted the fact that the French language had built France.

# “For more than five centuries, the French language created France. It is only fitting that our Constitution has recognized this fact in Article 2: ‘The language of the Republic is French’”[[20]](#footnote-20) (*Académie française* quoted in *Libératio*n 2008).

The Academy objected to the regional languages being placed in Article 1 behind the phrase “France is an indivisible, secular, democratic and social Republic” since they would appear before the French language, which had forged France, which was located in Article 2. After several months of debate, on July 23, 2008, Article 75.1 was added to the French Fifth Republic constitution, which states that “the regional languages of France belong to the patrimony of France” (French Constitution 2009).

In the past decade, due to the perceived decline in the importance of the French language on the international scene, the French and the French administration have declared the French language to be in crisis, and thus French identity and France, too (Paveau and Rosier 2008: 23-24). In present-day France, the close association between language and nation indicates that defending one equates to defending the other.

# “Those who attack French, or use French of poor quality, are also attacking France; if French is not protected, then France will be destroyed. At this point, protection of the language is protection of the nation” (Ager 1999: 88).

The nation becomes equated with society and the state, and Standard French becomes its “sacrosanct symbol” (Ager 1999: 88). “[The French language] serves […] as the flag, the religion and the Homeland” (Eloy 1994: 408).

Since French is seen as “perfect” and “unchanging”, any proposed reform to it, whether orthographic or phonetic, meets with strong opposition among the French citizenry (Paveau and Rosier 2008: 132). Language reform attempts are interpreted as “an attack on the fabric of (traditional) society and the identity of France” (Ager 1996: 125). Proposed spelling reforms from 1901, 1975 and 1989-1990 thus failed. During the last proposed reform, some of the French populace even chose to send a direct signal to the *Centre national de la recherché scientifique[[21]](#footnote-21)* (CNRS), which had decided to study the proposed reformed, in that

# “some of its questionnaires were defaced with right-wing slogans or soiled with excrement by people who found even the idea of *discussing* spelling reform to be a left-wing attack on the sanctity of the language” (Schiffman 1996 quoted in Oakes 2001: 75).

Furthermore, since French is seen as having been “perfected”, the French no longer “create” French, in the sense that they do not see themselves as the potential agents of French's evolution; rather they take possession of it; once in possession of it, they may then enter the French culture and become stewards of the French language. Their *mission civilisatrice[[22]](#footnote-22)* is thus to preserve its purity by teaching others *correct* French, which implies that the French as a whole speak correct French (Gordon 1978: 5). “Everywhere one [a French person] corrects, one standardizes and one prescribes in the name of the ‘clarity of French’” (Paveau and Rosier 2008: Back cover[[23]](#footnote-23)).

Opposing Views

Over the years, scholars have proposed different frameworks in which to view French's role in French society, but in fact, they are not in conflict with the view presented here. Two of these views will be examined here. One framework equates French with high culture, whereas another equates it with religion.

In the Middle Ages, through the notion of *translatio studii[[24]](#footnote-24)*,scholars believed that French embodied the transfer of high culture, through the realm of high learning, from Athens to Rome, and then, from Rome to Paris (Beaune 1991:267) *.* Where the culture of Athens had been one of philosophy and mathematics; that of Rome had been one of law, while that of Paris had been one of theology. Paris (France) did not simply inherit a culture, but rather expanded on two previous ones in order to create a new, grander one (Beaune 1991: 275-278). Even more recently, during the French colonial period – 17th century to mid-20th century – the French language has been presented as culture wherein newly conquered peoples were taught French since it was believed that learning French would endow them with culture so that they would become “civilized” (Gordon 1978: 5-6).

In a *Le Monde* article of November 26, 2003, Bernard Cerquiglini, the former Director of the National Institute for the French Language and the former General Delegate to the French Language and to the Languages of France described the French language as the French civic religion (Cerquiglini 2003). Following this framework, French dictionaries represent the Bible and French grammarians, and the French themselves, represent the clergy, wherein the clergy assist parishioners with their faith and questions about it. As has already been mentioned, the French do not hesitate to correct one another’s French and even feel it to be their moral duty, which mirrors the assistance of the clergy in the religion framework. Based upon Gellner’s view that national symbols tend to become viewed as sacred as if they were religious (Gellner 1983), Cerquiglini's analysis of French as a civic religion is highly parallel to the view of French in the framework of nationalism. In both views, French is seen as sacred, stirring emotion and causing the French populace to act on its behalf. Moreover, both religion and nationalism unify people through their doctrines and philosophies. Are not those the ultimate purposes of both nationalism and religion?

Conclusion

This essay has explored the concepts of nation, nationalism and standard language, in general, and for France, in particular. As has been shown, the concepts of nation and nationalism are far from steadfast notions. Until the terms have been standardized, if it is even possible to do so, scholars will have to continue to define their use of the terms. After having analyzed the definitions by several, important scholars, an aggregate nationalism definition, wherein nationalism was defined as an ideology that aims for national unity, was employed in this paper. The revolutionary French administration purposely chose to unite the French populace through the French language at the expense of France’s other languages. Since the French revolutionary administration equated the French nation and its unity, or French nationalism, with the use of the French language, the two have become entwined or “une et indivisible”. This indivisibility has even been recently highlighted among the French themselves. In 1985, the newspaper *Le Monde* declared, “France is the French language” (March 24-5 quoted in Oakes 2001: 64). An opinion poll conducted in March of 1994 found that 97% of the French were proud of the French language (Judge 2000 in Barbour and Carmichael 2000: 78) and most respondents reported identifying themselves as primarily French, and only secondarily as belonging to a French region (Judge 2000 in Barbour and Carmichael 2000: 82). An additional survey conducted in 2009 found that 68% of the French populace viewed the French language as *the* symbol of French identity (TNS-SOFRES 2009[[25]](#footnote-25)). French unity thus appears to be truly expressed in French, which “claims to be the specific characteristic of French identity” (Citron 1997 in Fenet 2004: 23), as argued in this paper.

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Chapter Two

Portuguese Language Identity   
in the World:  
Adventures and Misadventures   
of an International Language

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1. Introduction

The relationship of most Portuguese-speaking people with their language can be described this way: their country may be in crisis, things may be far from perfect, but our language is beautiful, transcends us, and we are attached to it no matter political differences or actual border conflicts. Fernando Pessoa’s remark “my homeland is the Portuguese language” is frequently (over)used – and possibly misused (Lourenço, 1999) – to convey this attitude. In this paper, I will argue for this brotherhood in language (and consequently cultures) as part and parcel of our identities, reappearing at different times in history and in different issues in the lusophone (i.e., Portuguese-speaking) world: the view of Camões as multinational inspirer, children's literature in times of crisis, the Timor invasion and how Portuguese reacted to it.

This text evolved from a contribution to a Language-Nation-Identity workshop held in Oslo on the occasion of the celebration of 150 years of the Italian nation (and national language), as a contribute to clarification (but also problematization) of the many issues related to, or that can be brought to bear on, the complex issue of identity, national identity and the role of language. Since the workshop joined a number of scholars with very different language (and therefore cultural) backgrounds, I thought it appropriate to provide a short history of the Portuguese language and its role in shaping the modern world, both culturally and linguistically. In this respect, I touched upon two aspects which seem particularly relevant in an international context, namely a) The relative homogeneity of Portuguese compared to other national languages with very differentiated dialects, and the several explanations offered for this; b) The early use of Portuguese as *lingua franca*, linked to the importance that language itself has had in the political acts throughout history. This was removed from the present paper, but can still be inspected in Santos (2014).

I also brought to the fore an analysis of two children's books published in 1907, which I considered highly relevant not only as an example of national identity building in a time of crisis, but also because the first one is a colourful introduction to the reunification of Italy (which was the trigger for the present paper in the first place).

This literary text – two volumes for children written 100 years ago, *Céu Aberto* and *Em Pleno Azul* by Virgínia de Castro e Almeida – beautifully illustrates the use of literature in Portuguese as a strong pillar of national identity, in Portugal, in a moment of crisis and imminent political change (republicanism would replace monarchy in three years' time). They are especially relevant to the current context of discussing national identities around the Italian case, since the setting of the first book is a trip in Italy and the recent political events of unification are described in a very positive light. The second book takes place in Switzerland, presented as a model of modern political and economical ways.

This paper is structured as follows: The minimum bare facts on Portuguese as language are laid upon in section 2, followed by a cursory description, based on official sources, of the current situation of Portuguese in the world. In section 3, I present the literary text so that readers without knowledge of Portuguese can get a concrete idea of some pieces of cultural identity. In section 4, I attempt to briefly introduce the huge area on national identity in Portugal, mainly to give the reader pointers to the many experts. Section 5 presents my own analysis of a) the linguistic situation in Mozambique, b) the question of Timor and its identity, c) the current orthographical agreement just signed by all countries where Portuguese is official language, d) the digital era and its consequences for Portuguese, and e) the role of Portuguese in Brazilian national consciousness.

I end the paper proposing a program on corpus-based research on identity in the lusophone world, given current technological possibilities.

2. Some consequences of History for language

There is no place here for a brief history of the Portuguese language, but the interested readers are suggested to look at my own publicly available five pages text, and especially the references within (Santos, 2014).

In a nutshell, Portuguese is a remarkably homogeneous language and it has a long history of both dissemination and study.

As a country and as a people, it always tended to consensus and compromise, and through that attitude it also developed a strong and identity-forming language. The Portuguese diaspora is undeniably important and contributed to the language (consciousness) and national consciousness of all involved. By being forced – a or choosing – to emigrate, and by returning, Portuguese “movers” have contributed to renewal and tradition alike.[[26]](#footnote-26) This constant migration and return has contributed to Portuguese history in many ways. Also, the presence of the sea (and of boats) from times immemorial contributed to two contrary ingredients of Portuguese identity: on the one hand, to solitude, to a feeling of one's own limits and belonging to the land; on the other hand, to a sense of adventure and of meeting the other by sailing into the sea.

The history of Portuguese is original also because its gravity center moved to another region with the consent (or through the actions) of the Portuguese themselves. While one could say that the same happened to English, the way it occurred was radically different: it was not by British choice that USA became independent and later on more powerful. Likewise, as far as Spanish is concerned, the fragmentation of hispanophone America after bloody wars against Spain did not allow for one major competitor of Spain. In any case, this power dislocation did not occur without problems, and in fact one can observe little regard for a global (international) language policy in Brazil (according to the former Science and Technology minister José Mariano Gago, some years ago, the Portuguese government preoccupation with language was never reciprocated by the Brazilian authorities, despite several attempts from Portugal). Likewise, see e.g. Lourenço (1999), there is a strong cultural fashion among Brazilian linguists and writers from the 70s on to minimize the huge Portuguese cultural influence on the way Brazil is, stressing American Indian and African roots instead. While these positions are no doubt based on well-meant research, it strikes me that their conception of a white European Portugal is even further fetched from reality than the mythical national romantic Indians of e.g. José de Alencar, whose novels play in Brazil a similar role to Fenimore Cooper's in North America.

Why do I call this a myth? Because African influence in Portugal is not to despise, either (see e.g. Henriques (2009) and Zonta (2009)), not only because of the slave presence: the mobility (to go overseas and back) of Portuguese and Brazilians plays an important role in Portuguese history as well. Forty years ago, descolonization in 1974-76 brought a million African people to mainland Portugal – people who lived in Africa and decided to choose Portuguese citizenship and not Mozambican, or Angolan, for example. The influence of their language in current Portuguese spoken in Portugal has, as far as I know, still to be studied, but certainly cannot be discarded: it is yet another sign of the importance of migration and movement in the lusophone world.

So, the myth of Portugal as a small white European country just like before the 1400s, replacing a truly global civilization, is a huge mistake that only diminishes both countries and their common past.

In any case, it is important to note that, even though this whitening and minimizing of Portugal can be considered a “teenage” disease of a big and young country like Brazil[[27]](#footnote-27) that will tend to disappear when Brazilians understand their important role in modern world, the influence of the Portuguese literary canon has always been very important in Brazil. Again, I can only provide as a random indicator for this claim the episode of (Portuguese) Eça de Queirós's *Crime do Padre Amaro* scene in one of the most archi-Brazilian books, *Gabriela Cravo e Canela* by Jorge Amado, as strong indirect evidence. Conversely, it is common knowledge that Brazilian authors have always been loved and admired by the Portuguese elite. More important still, the influence of “Brazilians” (as the Portuguese emmigrants to Brazil who returned to Portugal were called in the XIXthe century) in the Portuguese national consciousness is significant, as the literature of the time proves – see *A Brasileira de Prazins* by Camilo Castelo Branco or *A Morgadinha dos Canaviais* by Júlio Dinis.

But back to the present: Now, on the twenty-first century, there are eight countries with Portuguese as official language (and one territory, Macao), joined multinationally under the *Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa* (CPLP) since the 90s, see http://www.cplp.org/. According to international statistics from 2010,[[28]](#footnote-28) there are 240 million native speakers. This means that Portuguese is, for whatever these figures are worth,

* the third most spoken European language in the world,
* the sixth language in the world in terms of native speakers,
* the most spoken language in the Southern hemisphere[[29]](#footnote-29)

Also in terms of Internet presence, it has a solid weight, according to the published numbers.[[30]](#footnote-30) It is also the only language, as far as I know, which has a museum devoted to it. Located in São Paulo, Brazil, opened in March 2006: http://www.museudalinguaportuguesa.org.br/; and the only language which has had a dedicated project/portal/network for its computational processing for the last fifteen years, http://www.lingua teca.pt/.

Portuguese is also included in long-standing projects and networks concerning the Romance languages, such as *União Latina*, and several ibero-american organizations and communities, but in these it tends to play a minor role, compared respectively to French or Spanish. There are, of course, different ways to measure the cultural weight of a language or nation, including global knowledge of major actors, major historical facts, Nobel prizes obtained, and number of translations from and into other languages (see Calvet, 2006, 2008). In all these, French stands much higher than Portuguese – but this is easy to understand, since one is observing mainly through the English web or world. A little counter measure tried in 2011-2011 was to raise interest for cultural studies on the Portuguese Wikipedia with *Págico* (Mota et al., 2012).

There is also the economic value of a speaker, for a multinational company to decide about supporting its language in products, something that Portuguese speakers all know too well, in the computer science world. Dutchmen and Scandinavians tend to get better product support because in average they are much richer. This has been true in the 90s of IBM, Microsoft, and, in fact, all major computer companies, although there is no open documentation on this.[[31]](#footnote-31) But even at the time of writing it must be surprising that big natural language processing (NLP) projects such as Google N-grams[[32]](#footnote-32) have not yet considered Portuguese, while smaller languages like Hebrew or Russian are included. Still, given the recent economic boost in Brazil, considered as one of the most promising emergent countries, this may change.

3. Children's literature building up, or rebuilding, national identity

Ever since the Portuguese golden age – which is perfectly represented by Camões in several respects – literature has been an important source of creating and feeding a national identity, supported by two pillars: language and race mixing. The imperial “ideology” in Portugal was, for many years: Those who spoke Portuguese, the language of Camões, were Portuguese. The more races and mixed people Portuguese gave origin to, the more Portuguese we all were.

In addition, note the following saying, known by all Portuguese: *Deus criou o branco e o preto, o português o mulato* (“God created white and black people, the Portuguese created the mixed ones”). This is something always emphasized – *Portugal deu novos mundos ao mundo* (“Portugal gave new worlds to the world”) is perhaps the most quoted verse of *Os Lusíadas,,* the epic poem by Camões – but, in this paper what I would like to stress is, it also gave to the world new people who became Portuguese. Note another extremely cited verse of *Lusíadas,* glorifying the Portuguese diaspora with *alma por todos os cantos repartida* (“soul divided/shared among all world corners”). Interestingly, one of the most famous scholars who stressed this is the Brazilian sociologist and writer Gilberto Freyre, a key intellectual in the “racial democratization of Brazil”, see Freyre (1933).

Contrary to the British empire, where the concept of British citizen was an addition to an ethnic or racial substrate – a Bengali or a Rhodesian did not become English – for a long time Portuguese made and created more Portuguese: in Goa, in Angola, in Brazil. The distinctive trait was: to be a Christian, and to speak Portuguese.[[33]](#footnote-33) It is enough to travel to Goa, Macao or Brazil to see how similar the colonial architecture was to mainland Portugal. This is not supposed to be a defense (or an attack) of Portuguese imperial policies, just a reminder that it was rather different from other colonial empires better known to my expected audience.[[34]](#footnote-34)

My intention here is to look at a one century-old children's book as representative of children's literature in a time of national crisis, and therefore in need of reinforcing national identity. In the end of the nineteenth century, Portugal lost the right to a large part of Africa to England, Portugal's oldest ally as the mantra taught in Salazar’s history classes goes, but never letting this go in the way of making profit – for a political history of the alliances between the two nations and especially regarding their colonies, see Oliveira (2007).

The books in question, *Céu Aberto* and *Em Pleno Azul*,[[35]](#footnote-35) were written by Virgínia de Castro e Almeida, a woman who was a Portuguese cinema pioneer, and who lived abroad, particularly in France, for some time; see Magalhães & Alçada (1990). Her views are clearly modern for her time: she is republican and an admirer of Switzerland, as becomes clear from the plot. She uses the boat trip of three Portuguese children from Lisbon to Italy and their travels from Genoa to Napoli to teach art, science and history in the first book. The second reports their adventures in two Swiss boarding schools (one for boys, one for girls), and she continues teaching various subjects while also suggesting various pedagogically revolutionary forms of school organization.

One interesting detail in the second book is how she introduces Camões, giving at once the measure of how important he is/was in an international context and automatically increasing the pride of the young readers to “have'” such a poet. (I have no idea how realistic the scene could have been at that time – as an adult, I am inclined to believe it as utterly improbable, but as a child I believed it completely, and I suppose the same happened to all my compatriots who read it during the many years those books were available.) The scene is as follows. The boys had just met a new (older) student in the train, Pedro, whom they discover to be Portuguese as well, and he mentions *Os Lusíadas* as his favourite history book – and in a passing remark he refers to Camões's tragic life, which raises the attention of a talkative, extrovert German woman friend, who asks for more. This way the reader gets served a number of facts about Camões's life, together with the high praise of an old man who mysteriously intervenes – and whom we later find out to be not least than the Swiss president himself!

(The story swiftly continues defending a republican regime, and then proceeds to further interesting episodes including the story of Wilhelm Tell, so for a young reader there is nothing special in the particular Camões section, which is read with the same interest as everything that comes before and after. However, some reflection convinces me that it is hard to find a better way to implant the following implicit ideas: “Camões is known by the whole world”, “Camões is the best or one of the best poets that ever existed”, “We Portuguese who have Camões are lucky”... It is in fact interesting to see that, while a variety of Italian painters and sculptors, and German musicians, are mentioned in the two books, no other writers appear at all.

Another interesting detail of this book series is the prominent place given to Brazilians. In the first book, one of the grown-ups who caters for the children’s education in Italy is an elderly Brazilian man. In the second book, the older girl whom Rita meets in her boarding school, Constança, is the female counterpart of Pedro, displaying all virtues and qualities of the perfect modern woman (of the time), and she is Brazilian.

Again, this is no accident of the plot, especially given that the three children are presented as polyglots: they speak French and German perfectly (and can communicate flawlessly in Spanish), so they would not need companions of the same language. The message is clear: Brazilians, because they speak Portuguese, are almost like us, or just like us, or, why not spell it out unashamedly as it was meant to be understood, as good and nice and friendly and understandable as us.

Books such as these are important to create and strengthen national identity, by promoting a feeling of shared pride (and knowledge), as well as providing role models for (child) readers. The children in the books have (or get, and then convey) a national conscience above the usual, because they are moving in an international setup. That is, if those kids had not been in international boarding schools or in a multinational context (such as a boat cruise), they would hardly ever talk about Camões or national character, but, being confronted with other stories and nations and role models, they learn to be proud of their own country and history (and the reader with them).

But let's move from the fictional and rose-coloured stories to the work of the experts in history and society.

4. National identity: is there a Portuguese soul?[[36]](#footnote-36)

Portugal is one of the oldest countries in Europe, and also one which suffered least changes in its European borders and more changes abroad (by this I mean the territorial borders/influence, from the XV to the XX century – it is also the European empire that lasted longer[[37]](#footnote-37)). It is of course endowed with the usual lore of mythical and historical ancestors, and with a long history where it can fetch heroes and/or compensate for lack of current power. It is not possible in the twenty-first century to ignore the many forces and reconstructions and re-creations that, in all times, tried to give the Portuguese, its (many, different depending on the epoch) national character(s). I cite, just to give an idea to outsiders, several Portuguese myths: that Ulysses funded Lisbon, that the Holy Virgin appeared to our first king before a major battle against the Moors, and 800 years later in Fátima to defend the Western world against communism, and, probably the most important of them, that D. Sebastião, the dreamer king, will once come back and give us back our empire.

There is, however, a solid foundation for our Portugueseness in the epic poem of Camões, *Os Lusíadas*. Both the poem's contents, and its author, are the source of many myths or mythical retellings, namely connected to an utmost adventurous life of the poet. Camões is also essentially connected with Portuguese and lusophone identity in that it is commemorated in the same day, the 10th of June, as Portugal and the Portuguese-speaking communities in the world, see CIN (1983).

Interestingly, also a lot of national identity in the popular mind is connected with language: *saudade[[38]](#footnote-38)* is a national word, as well as *fado*[[39]](#footnote-39)*,* words that the man in the street will proudly present as not having correspondence in other languages.

As could be expected, there is a wide and rich literature about Portuguese national identity, which, following Sobral (2003), I will classify in three kinds: the mythical, the sociological, and the (modern) historical, of which I will simply cite three good representatives for the interested reader: respectively Eduardo Lourenço (1999), Boaventura de Sousa Santos (1994), and Sobral himself, Sobral (2012), together with Mattoso (1988).

Just to give an idea of the first school, Lourenço (1999) describes the (identity-cultural) relations between Brazil and Portugal in terms of a father-son complex that makes Brazilians ignore the Portuguese essence in Brazilian culture, while Portuguese people imagine Brazilians as their continuation, both (he claims) delusional and immature positions. But, as we all know, identity and ingrained myths have to be visited and reappropriated or discarded by every generation, and there are also many interesting books offering new visions of Brazilian/Portuguese history for the layman in Brazil, see e.g. Gomes (2007) or Narloch (2011).

But, and to get back to the main topic of the present paper, language and identity, let me recall Deutsch’s (1953) analysis of one nation as a community of communication, which entails that the intensification of a national community is related to economic development processes such as urbanization and schooling – in which a common language is paramount. I obviously subscribe to Deutsch's (1953:188) suggestion that “the essential aspect of the unity of a people (...) is the complementarity or relative efficiency of communication among individuals”, so it is not surprising that a linguistic vision can also say something about identity and (inter)nationalism. One could therefore raise a “linguistic school” as a fourth explanatory alley of identity. It is in this direction that I will try to show in what follows that language – in this case, the Portuguese language – is an important key to identity and for the cultural understanding of the lusophone world.

5. Several cases involving the Portuguese language

In this section, I will present several different cases that show in practice the importance of language for Portuguese speakers around the world.

5.1 The linguistic situation in Mozambique

Mozambique is an example of a country where the Portuguese language is dramatically increasing, because it is felt and thought by the (middle class) population as the language of culture and power, and the *lingua franca* for communication in the whole country. Faced with the impossibility to choose one African language among the 20 or more existing in the country, the rulers after independence took the administration language as a neutral and practical choice. This is not the whole story, though: It is important to note that most of the revolutionary intelligentsia had been formed in metropolitan Portugal and also the communication with the other African independence movements was done in Portuguese. In fact, most of the new political class had Portuguese as their native tongue, together with the fact that quite a few whites (belonging to a cultural elite) had chosen to stay. So, it is easy to understand that, since the Mozambican revolution was done in Portuguese, so the state after it remained so. All educational infrastructure, albeit little and underdeveloped, was in Portuguese as well, and the Portugal of revolutionary times was a source of help and of people (*cooperantes*) who wanted to help build the new Mozambican country. Also Brazilian help came to the land, for they felt they belonged to the same language community. It is not my role to discuss the correctness of this choice, see Katupha (1986), Firmino (2008) or Reite (2013) for discussion; what I want to mention here is that the population who speaks Portuguese now is much larger than at the time of independence, and that Mozambican linguists are studying both the influence of African (bantu) languages in the Mozambican variety, and the influence of Portuguese in those languages as well (Gonçalves, 1998, Gonçalves & Stroud, 1997-2000, Firmino, 2005, Silva, 2003).

This, in my opinion, reflects the appropriation of a communicative tool, imposed on or taught to peoples with other native languages, for the creation of a new (Mozambican) identity, which naturally contains some of the culture implicitly present in the language, and from which it will evolve. Instead of rejection, it represents a move for co-ownership and co-partnership, which is very probably a result of the fact that a new “language”, or discourse, of the political left, appeared both in Portugal and in the new African countries.

5.2 The East Timor invasion by Indonesia and Portuguese reaction

Another case that shows the relationship of people with their co-speakers in the antipodes, is the recent history of East Timor, invaded by Indonesia after independence from Portugal in 1975 and only finally freed and independent in 2002, see Gunn (1999), Mascarenhas & Silva (2000), and Magalhães (1999, 2007) for the history of this process. One should note that solidarity with the East Timorese cause was a social phenomenon in Portugal, where there was an (almost) 100% boycott to Indonesian products and where news of any legal and political international moves regarding this issue were TV-news openers. Also, several thousand refugees came to Portugal during the occupation. Given that terrible humanitarian situations occur all around the globe, and that very few Portuguese had ever been to Timor (and vice-versa),[[40]](#footnote-40) it is only the common language and culture, the belief that “they are one of us” that can explain this phenomenon and its resonance with Portuguese public opinion. As mentioned in Magalhães (1999), Portuguese leaders took every step they could to solve the problem, and to this date still a significant number of Portuguese teachers and experts travel to Timor to help build the country. Also, as discussed by Esperança (2001) and Goglia & Afonso (2012), Portuguese as a language has significant (symbolic) weight in East Timor for several different reasons (such as religion, and connection with independence fight).

5.3 The orthographical agreement

Another interesting example which I would like to bring here is the last orthographical agreement among all countries that have Portuguese as official language,[[41]](#footnote-41) which – because it concerns one of the most important values for the people – has to be ratified by the parliaments of each country.[[42]](#footnote-42) After hot fights and discussions in their countries, publishers in Portugal and Brazil followed the law and changed the orthography in their books as dictated by the law. This is not a particularly interesting issue, were it not for the fact that Angola[[43]](#footnote-43) decided to reject the agreement and continue to write in “old Portuguese”. The majority of the population may not be native speaker of Portuguese, but their Portuguese is not going to be agreed upon by other countries! Given that there are significant economical advantages in sharing the same orthography, it seems foolish not to harmonize with the others – but only foolish if you do not understand the emotional value of a language. The argument, in fact, for not ratifying the agreement was based on the claim that the agreement did not contemplate changes in Angolan Portuguese.

5.4 How to establish a digital language policy for Portuguese

If there is one area in Portugal in which all political forces are together, such area is language, as cultural heritage and pride, so it is not surprising that different governments have always tried to do something about language “promotion”. What I can offer here is simply a testimony of some of the moves in the digital era for supporting Portuguese, given my own role as a minor actor in the establishment of language politics.

Minor as it is, my own personal experience can be suggestive of the different turns that linguistic identity in a digital age can take.

From starting to defend our national variety from Brazilianisms, even developing a machine translation prototype between the two varieties (Santos & Engh, 1993), I soon came to the conclusion that the strength and the momentum was in joining all varieties of Portuguese in order to improve its computational processing, and that the right way to proceed would be doing a general grammar which catered for the many varieties of Portuguese. This was proposed to Microsoft Research in 1998, but they did not want, at that time, to invest in Portuguese – reasons for this are not open to me, since obviously we had no access to their business secrets or partner alternatives.

Still, I got the chance to do something in that spirit, now in a purely public way, commissioned by the Portuguese authorities. After a national (in fact, even international, if one counts the international experts) meeting to discuss what should be done, see Santos (1999), Linguateca was born, as far as I know the largest and oldest resource center/network for a single language, inspired by the American Linguistic Data Consortium (LDC), but whose organization had to be different due to the different characteristics of research in the different countries.[[44]](#footnote-44) In Linguateca, linguists, scientists and engineers share their tools and language resources for the computational processing of their language, while also several evaluation contests for Portuguese were devised and organized.

After fifteen years of existence and acknowledgment by most of the community (seen by the different resources we give access to and by the many different users who acknowledge their use), I believe to be fair to say that we have set up a large infrastructure for studying not only language, but culture as well, see Santos (2014) for its latest presentation.

Nowadays my intention is to go even further and not only work for all varieties of Portuguese to be correctly described and processed, but to propose an international Portuguese variety (a watered down *lingua franca* for people to communicate in, and for foreigners to write in), to allow the best communication across lusophone countries, in the wake of Portuguese wikipedia and the several digital international channels in Portuguese.

5.5 And Brazil?

Brazil has already been mentioned as the center of gravity of the Portuguese language, and in fact, Brazil has played for more than three centuries the role of the new world (Portuguese version): it was the Eldorado, the future, and the new. There is hardly a family in Portugal who has not one (or more) family members who “disappeared” into Brazil. Brazil was the way to get rich, the way to start a new life, the land of opportunity (and even the land of escape, as late as the 70s, for the rich oligarchy after the 1974 revolution). As already mentioned, a cursory examination of the Portuguese literature of the XIX century shows the importance of “Brazilians”, that is, Portuguese who emigrated to Brazil and came back, as well as (the description of) the architectural marks of those new rich in the landscape.

Brazilians proper, on the other hand, were busy appropriating themselves of Portuguese, that is, devising new ways of speaking the language that were not old and overseas, and redefining their history as sons of Indians (and later, in the XX century, recognizing and emphasizing the African influence). While most scholars today recognize this as a romantic exaggeration – in fact instigated by the Brazilian emperor Pedro II (1831-1889), who commissioned works of art on Brazilian roots – it is still to this date a hot (linguistic) debate in Brazil on whether the features of contemporary Brazilian Portuguese are mostly due to (1) the inherent variability of Portuguese as a global language, (2) a creole from African slaves, or (3) or the emergence of a new “language”/grammar due to the specific characteristics of the large Brazilian nation – see Castilho (2007) for this synthesis, and Naro & Scherre (2007) and Mello et al. (2011) for different positions. Mattos e Silva (s/d), a renowned Brazilian scholar, makes the interesting point that historical linguistics has much greater weight in Brazil than in Portugal.

While this is not the place to discuss the linguistic data and arguments, let me emphasize that there is a tremendous wealth of studies and arguments that shows in itself how important (again) the language is for Brazilians and for their definition as people and country. Brazil has been subject to a large number of language-political decrees ever since Marquês de Pombal, and the debate on what to teach and what is or should be the norm is dear to all Brazilians – see e.g. Possenti (2006) and Faraco (2008). Yet another proof that the Portuguese language is extremely relevant for Brazilian identity (as well).

These widely different cases, which explain the title of the paper, are meant to show how important the Portuguese language is for all lusophone “subjects”, and how constitutive of national identities and prides.

Concluding remarks

Identity is an important factor both for life (“not only ofbread lives man”, says the Bible) and for death, not only at the individual level but especially at the collective level, as illustrated pointedly by Diamond (2005).

Sobral (2003) warns us, however, that the ideas of national identity and national history are far from homogeneous even in the intellectual elites of a country, so by necessity this text cannot but ultimately reflect my own thoughts and experience, as a minor actor in Portuguese language politics.

While building up teaching around Portuguese-speaking language and culture due to my recent position at the University of Oslo, matters such as identity and the role of language became paramount. This forced me to think about these issues, despite coming from quite a different academic background. My own personal experience of emigration naturally directed my attention to what to be Portuguese – and lusophone – meant, and forced me to consider what essentially formed my view of the world, and how to transmit it to my (bilingual) children. In a way, this explains the obvious lack of scholarship undoubtedly displayed in the present text. Still, its purpose is modest: I want simply to offer some remarks and pointers that may help students and colleagues to research the subject, if only to correct my shortcomings or add relevant material.

My own concrete work in building up Linguateca, a network, platform and a forum to allow all Portuguese-speaking researchers in this modern computer-assisted world to investigate, work and create in Portuguese can, at this stage, be brought in in two different ways.

On the one hand, by analysing the corpus materials gathered, one could investigate the concepts and the discourses of different times and different places, not least in the lusophone literary works, a research program in which I intend to embark soon. On the other hand, doing all the basic infrastructural work showed a lot that unites lusophone world citizens, but uncovered as well other difficulties for our international language: regionally enforced bureaucratic requirements, for example from the European Union or other international bodies, force unnatural and unproductive publication in English about our language, and stigmatize production in Portuguese as second-level quality. Which is the last misadventure of Portuguese which I report here.

While this kind of article, meant for a foreign and non-lusophone-aware audience, is no doubt appropriately written in a foreign language, most of the discussion about national identities and about the language itself should clearly be conducted in Portuguese – and then translated if needed, for different targets. Because, as B.S. Santos claimed with his “epistemicide” concept, different cultures and different languages embody different know-hows and world views, which globalization, requiring one way only to write and think, is killing. While B.S. Santos (2011) is mainly arguing for southern epistemologies, which include many other cultures even less privileged, I am in favour of preserving the one(s) possible in Portuguese (see Bennett, 2007, 2010), and intend to work actively for this goal.

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Chapter Three

Weak Nation - Strong Language? Sociological and Linguistic Legacies   
of the Nation-State:  
The Cases of Italy  
and the United States

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Introduction

What explains the origin and persistence of monolingual practices and the perpetuation of attitudes supporting monolingualism? The commonplaces of our era hold that monolingual practice is a survival of an earlier era and supporting attitudes are examples of social prejudice. Underlying these judgments are the anti-racism movement of the 1950s and 1960s, which has resulted in identifying prejudice is perhaps the chief social ill has grown, while tolerance and diversity are seen as most important positive values. From this perspective linguistic pluralism of various kinds may be likened to ethnic and cultural multiplicity, while attitudes in favor of uniformity are prima facie repressive and intolerant. In this article I will leave these judgments aside, neither disputing nor affirming them, in order to examine this question from another angle. To do this I wish to broaden the discussion from attitudes and identities surrounding language and language acquisition to the sociological and political functions of language.

There are three supporting functions of language in the social sphere pertaining to economic exchange, and political exchange and identity. We are perhaps most familiar with linguistic and culturalist academic discourses that identify language as productive of cultural diversity, as in the link between emerging postnational identities and linguistic revivals, but language is also subject to the demands for functionality in response to contexts of economic and political exchange. Languages like most aspects of culture are intertwined with historical and sociological conditions. Thus economic, social and political formations play a key role in the development of languages.

Multilingualism

Multilingualism means the co-existence of different languages in a society; it is very “European” in that it resembles the cosmopolitan and aristocratic ideals of learning prevalent before the 19th century and because it reflects the geographical reality of central Europe in which several different language groups live within proximity of one another. Multilingualism may also be linked to developments in American anthropology and sociology, which asserted the compatibility of cultural and ethnic pluralism and modern society (Kallen 1915, Park & Burgess 1925, Glazer & Moynihan, 1964). In the American situation massive migration mostly from Europe between 1820 and the outbreak of World War I required coming to terms with the existence of multiple ethnic and racial groups; the main response of the authorities was to engage assimilation policies and later to severely restrict immigration, but this eventually led some intellectuals to question whether active assimilation to Anglo-American culture was actually necessary and desirable. The resulting theories of ethnic pluralism were eventually instrumental in weakening the official and semi-official policy of assimilation in both Canada and the United States and the institution of a regime favoring pluralism called “multiculturalism” (even though by no means has assimilation been dismantled as a social force). In Canada multiculturalism is more directly connected to language “rights,” whereas in the United States it is linked to various, symbolic senses of identity based on long standing ethnic communities, but usually *sans* language competencies or with very weak language skills. Nonetheless, the United States is officially a multicultural society in that the U.S. federal government classifies people by racial and ethnic group, though not all ethnic groups are so classified.

Plurilingualism is a theory of linguistic pedagogy which asserts the benefits of the simultaneous acquisition of two or more languages. The European Framework of Reference for Languages has made plurilingualism an official pedagogical doctrine as noted by the Council of Europe’s Language Policy Division: “Every society is multilingual; every language is plural; every school is a space open to the plurality of languages and cultures.” In addition to these assertions, while it is conceded that English functions as a kind of global language, this is described as an exorbitant “privilege” granted to English (Cavalli, et al 2009). Insofar as these are normative statements, the report is less problematic than if it is read as a descriptive or explanatory statement of the actual development of language over the last 200 years. Two implications of this theory are that (1) national languages were fictive since all languages are “plural”—i.e. dialectical in makeup, and (2) those who have suggested that they have existed are asserting national linguistic boundaries as a form of national cultural triumphalism. The further implication might be that a new global civil society can produce a consensus on plurilingualism because national cultures have broken down under the pressure of global culture and mass migration, resulting in a process of inter-culturalism that is reshaping the linguistic landscape.

Nonetheless, the promotion of a national language over competing languages whether initiated by the State or by civil society, was a common policy in many countries during the 19th and 20th centuries. Even though this practice has been superseded today by plurilingual pedagogical theory and multilingual practice in many contexts, the popular attachment to the national language has remained and particularly pronounced in some. As noted in the introduction to this volume, the felt value around the preservation and promotion of standard Italian remains a singular point of contrast to northern European countries. In the United States, with its enormous influx of immigrants, English remains the dominant language in usage and is a strong factor in the sense of national identity of many Americans (Schildkraut 2005). The link between language and identity has spawned the English as official language movement, which has over three decades spearheaded the adoption of official English language laws in 31 of the 50 states.[[45]](#footnote-45)

Historical Formations of the Nation-State

Neither Italy nor the United States fits the 19th Romantic model of ethnic nationalism and nation building, in which state formation is understood as an unproblematic evolution, starting in the Middle Ages, from groupings of affiliated tribes to nations, a course of development that mirrored and supported political development from fragmented kingdoms to unified states; thus we have the model nation-state unified by function as well as culture, tradition and language. Anthony D. Smith (1987) gives credence to the idea of nation-state as outgrowth of a people. He argues that all nations have ethnic cores that are neither imagined, nor particularly modern; they existed prior to the creation of the modern nation-states and even before the Middle Ages, when ethnic nations were the cores of the ancient empires. They have certain ingrained characteristics, including language, that stand often the test of time (with the caveat that over the *longue durée* of historical time some nations do dissolve while new ones emerge). At the same time, modern nation-states are also constructed out of ideological markers and political structures (institutions and traditions) adapted by founders and relied on to insure legitimacy, workability and stability of the state (Anderson 1991). Rather than a single model of historical formation, nation-states were variously formed while drawing on different combinations of extant ethnic identities combined with modern ideologies and institutional elements. One response to these complex circumstances of state formation is to assert the irreducible uniqueness of each nation-state, but I would argue that it is possible to compare nation-state development and develop a typology of formation and development processes; nation-state formation differs, beginning with the fact that state and nation “refer to convergent but distinct historical processes” and that early nation-states developed through existing territorial entities, while latter ones required the development of a national consciousness formed around a common language and culture (Habermas 1996: 127).

In the same time as modern nation-states were forming, national languages were standardizing. The relation between language and political forms is complicated, and it is common enough to argue that the sheer *minutiae* and variation of different language communities requires us to approach each in terms of its uniqueness; we then are left only with unique and incomparable cultures characterized by specific their histories and languages. I would argue, however, that if it makes sense to think categorically about nation-state formation, one could well classify languages by type as argued by Peter Auer (2005). Is it then too much of a leap to imagine that there must be a relation between social/political forms and linguistic patterns?

Although being “Italian” in a political sense could be located as far back to 90 BC when citizenship was extended by the Roman republic to all of the Italic peoples, the fall (variously dated, 4th - 5th century AD) of what had become the Western Roman Empire left Italy vulnerable to whole sale invasion and colonization by foreign peoples and rulers. Divided by ethnic memory, fragmented by different governance regimes and preyed on by foreign interlopers Italy became a welter of different cultures, traditions and dialects. The one institutional link to the past, the Roman Catholic Church, as a patron of the feudal system and thee largest landowner in Italy was vehemently opposed the development of an Italian national state. In addition, nationalism never sat well with the Church’s more universal and transnational understanding of society. A tradition of political independence on the part of the city-states could not free Italy from the political influences of the Church or stop the predation of Italian territory by foreign kingdoms. On the contrary the independence of the city states of central and northern Italy, although fading by this time, remained an important part of the problem of the lack of an Italian national identity. In 1847 Prince Clemens von Metternich of Austria mastermind of the successful suppression of the democratic revolutions that came a year later had the following to say about the prospect of Italian unification:

# “*The word 'Italy' is a geographical expression*, a description which is useful shorthand, but has none of the political significance the efforts of the revolutionary ideologues try to put on it, and which is full of dangers for the very existence of the states which make up the peninsula” (widely attributed, emphasis added).

To combat the possibility that the effort for Italian unification could fall apart at the behest of the very local states to which Metternich refers, the father of the Risorgimento, Giuseppe Mazzini, argued for a robust national state based on “unitarian” (*unitaria*) principles. Italy, he thought, could not afford federalism:

# “Because federalism, by reviving the local rivalries now extinct, would throw Italy back upon the middle ages. Because federalism would divide the great national arena into a number of smaller arenas; and, by thus opening a path for every paltry ambition, become a source of aristocracy. Because federalism, by destroying the unity of the great Italian family, would strike at the root of the great mission Italy is destined to accomplish towards humanity” (quoted in Kohn 2003).

The United States of America was nothing more at its origin than a segment of the British Empire that had managed to rebel successfully against British rule. The American population reflected not only the often bitter divisions among the various peoples of the British Isles (English, Scots and Irish) and the legacy of earlier and continuing migrations of other Europeans as well as the inclusion of Africans. The United States began as a confederation of allied republics (1776-1787) with a virtually nonexistent central government, a fact that reflected both republican political theory and the importance of regional identities. The dominant republican political theory of the time of the American War for Independence distrusted centralized power and administration in general and preferred for power to be vested in amateur statesmen elected for short terms by land owners, who constituted the majority of the population at the time. It was a Ciceronian vision of a virtuous republic of independent farmers. The British background had provided a common language and a common legal tradition, but it also stood in the way of the development of an American identity and left a legacy of strong emphasis on local and regional governance. The American “states” which were initially independent republics—not unlike city-states—were an outgrowth of the decentralized system of governance of the various British colonies. Furthermore, an extremely differentiated pattern of economic development that from the beginnings of the British settlement of North America established a pattern that saw urbanization and industrialization limited to the northern half of new United States, while the southern USA replete with involuntary labor—another inheritance of imperial period—developed, not along the lines of industrial capitalism but rather as a system of “agrarian capitalism”; interestingly precisely the same pattern of stark regional differentiation, characterized Italian economic development again along a north/south dividing line (Dal Lago 2005).

Like the Italians, the Americans struggled to create a national identity capable of overcoming what the great American historian Frederick Jackson Turner disparagingly called “sectionalism” (Turner 1893). But while the Italians attempted to overcome this problem by building a unitary state, the Americans relied on their British tradition of constitutionalism—rooting the relation of the state republics to the federal government in a fundamental law (The Constitution of 1789) to be interpreted by an independent judiciary. But it didn’t work—at least not at first. Indeed as Italian unification was being finalized in the 1860s, the United States was falling apart, descending into a bitter and protracted Civil War. In the end American national unity had to be re-imposed at the end of a bayonet at an enormous cost of life—and still the strongly regional character of the American system reasserted itself after the war and has reasserted itself periodically since then. From the 1870s to the early 1900s on, national feeling increased as the United States became the world’s largest economy, drawing millions of immigrants and pushing modern progressive social agenda; nonetheless the regional character of the southern and some of the western states remained and left them a world apart from the American mainstream. During this time period, the United States also began to take on the role of a world power, which if not immersed in actual wars, contributed to the building of a national feeling. Italy had no such advantage, but found its sense of nation in the idea of rebirth and in the redress of the grievances caused by the long occupations of Italy by foreign powers. However, for the Italians Mazzinini’s unitary state became an arrangement among political parties representing various regions; it was clientilist system in which a titular liberal regime was dependent on support from reactionary land owners from the south (Hopkin & Mastopaolo 2001: 153). Not until the interwar period (1918-1939) when the old parties were for a time overturned did a modern politics emerge and this lead to the development of fascism—and the first thoroughly nationalist agenda.

What Italy and the United States had in common, then, was a rather late turn toward a national politics—and a turn hampered by the persistence of local and regional identities, regional economic differentiation and much older idea of the political. One clear sign and symbol of the similarity was the lack of a clear political and cultural capital to rival London or Paris. The Italian State sat uncomfortably in a Rome haunted by its imperial past and occupied by the Vatican which in its splendor refused even to recognize Italy (until the treaty of 1929). The United States capital, Washington, was at first glance the opposite of Rome: a new town in which the federal government held center stage. But it was relatively far from the sea and rapid communication, and while possessed of a grand design around to which to build a European city, that design remained unrealized for most of its history; in the 19th century it was effectively a small town of unpaved muddy streets, which the new Congressmen and Senators shared with livestock; in the meantime the real potential capitals—Philadelphia or New York—were avoided like the plague on the ground that they were dangerous to the agrarian virtues of the republic and too far removed from all the state republics to the south. In sum, then, both Italy and the United States—among the oldest and youngest of nations—gestured to the agrarian past (and present) and shared a condition of fragmentation of power based on republican models; this was partly related to the fragmented character of their economic elites, and the lack of a strong state tradition in the period from the Middle Ages to the 18th century, but it was also rooted in the republican political philosophy which originated in the Italian Renaissance was widely popular in the United States at the time of the founding (Pocock 1975). In this restricted sense they were “weak” nation-states in comparison to those nation-states which had been able to secure a clear correspondence among nation, state and economy.

National projects and language standards

As literary languages Italian and American English shared a common condition but took very different paths. The commonality was that they both had to come to terms with standard written languages that had been inherited: Latin in the case of Italian, Elizabethan English in the case of American. The time frames were different and Americans of English descent had also inherited Elizabethan English as a spoken form, but there was a growing gap between the written language and the spoken regional dialects developed in response to American experience. In Italy, *la questione della lingua*—the question of “what kind of vernacular was best suited for literary expression”—wrestled with the humanists’ disdain for the “uncouth, undignified and corrupt” varieties of Italian as compared to purity and perfection of Latin (Lepschy 1988: 22); modernists who favored the vernacular and, from Dante on, wrote in it were confronted with thirteen different dialectical forms of which (the developing standard) Tuscan was but one. The language question was perennial lasting over four centuries.

The Americans had the advantage and disadvantage of inheriting Elizabethan English, which emerged as a spoken and then written standard in the 15th and 16th centuries and continued to be spoken and written well into the 19th century by a number of speakers in the newly independent USA. The Elizabethan-influenced King James version of the Bible (1611) was by far the most widely read book in 19th century America and the country’s greatest novelists of that time period, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville, as well as the greatest rhetorician and statesman of the same period, Abraham Lincoln, wrote (but also spoke) in Elizabethan English. The call for a new language that spoke to American conditions was ideologically driven. Emerson remarked that American political independence was incomplete. In his famous “American Scholar” address at Harvard in 1837, he noted that the intelligentsia huddled along America’s eastern shoreline looked back to Europe for its literary inclinations rather than to American experience in the development of a literary culture appropriate to a democratic society. Walt Whitman’s *Song of Myself* was in both theme and style an answer to Emerson’s call, but it would be another century before Whitman’s importance was generally recognized. Indeed the battle between the upstart voice of indigenous America and accumulated wisdom of the British tradition continued well into the 20th century. Mark Twain wrote his great novel, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), in the “low down” vernacular speech of white and Negro dialects of the American South, but the more educated classes continued to pay homage to British literature and language; the vernacular received very little attention. The breakthroughs came much later with the development of the popular cultural forms in the form of frontier narratives and American English too was slow to form and that reflected the social and cultural divisions, as well as the weakness of the intelligentsia in the United States: the predominant position was Anglo-Saxon elite who preferred British English; there were the radicals who sought to draw from the vernacular. Consequently literary language did not play the seminal role in creating an American identity; its importance came later in the first half of the 20th century. Indeed the success of American English as the basis for national identity owes to pedagogues and journalists who took interest in a specifically “American English”: Noah Webster produced the first American dictionary in 1828. But as late as 1920, there still was no treatise on American English until the journalist, cultural critic and humorist, H.L. Mencken, produced his seminal work, *The American Language* in order to identify the “national idiosyncrasies and ways of mind” -- an enterprise Mencken describes as “entertaining” as it is enlightening (1921: i-ii). American literary English developed as a project from the bottom up, with emphasis on the distinctiveness of American English in expressing the social conditions of American life. But it was not until mid the 20th century that a distinctly American literary style was identified and codified in *The Elements of Style*, a little writing guide written by Cornell University professor William Strunk and revised by his collaborator, the writer E.B. White (1959). The Spartan-like, direct, brief and functionalist style prescribed by Strunk and White was rooted in journalism and it helped define American literary efforts at mid-century—a style that had characterized many of the best authors of that period including Hemingway who had been a journalist. Finally an American literary language was established.

The question of literary language, addressing as it does the larger issue of the relation between written and spoken forms, is only part of a much larger process of linguistic evolution. As modern societies have progressed, language must function at a macro-level: that is to say across large geographic areas. The function must be both economic and political. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, the main context was the development of national economies in which manufacturing and urbanization played the largest part. In this process language standardization was both a cause and effect of the creating of industrial societies. In the USA school English became the single most potent influence on the assimilations of non-English speaking immigrants into Anglo-American culture (Schlesinger 1992, 28). Given the variegated political structures, the lack of national cultural capitals, the linguistically diverse populations on account of dialectical variation (Italy) and multi-national origin (USA), language standardization presented an opportunity to compensate for the lack of social integration and cohesion necessary to the development of industrial societies, democratic or otherwise. The leveling effect of a spoken standard in the USA was a project of middle class liberal reform – expressed as an alternative to both socialist multilingualism and nativist reaction that sought to reverse open immigration and expel immigrants; linguistic assimilation was also linked to the development of liberal consumer capitalism in the early decades of the 20th century. As the period of massive European emigration began, the teaching of American English became the most practical means of assimilating new populations to the project of national identification, at the expense of the populations’ original linguistic traditions. Indeed while retaining certain limited “heritage” aspects of culture became acceptable, the maintenance of different languages was not. The entry of the United States into WW1 in 1917 greatly accelerated the emphasis on national cultural formation. When the electronically mediated culture began with radio in the 1920s, the way had been paved for language standardization. The voice of American English arose based on a flat, clearly delivered and very bland form of pronunciation from the Middle West. To American ears this became the national language—a language without an “accent.” American English, therefore, functioned as a unifying factor, but it was also an expression and consequence of national market unification driven by the dynamism of American capitalism. At the same time, “progressives” or reformers who sought to combat and reign in the excesses of capitalism, promoted the national language and national identity as a means of social inclusion.

In Italy the endoglassic standard was promoted directly by the State after the ascent of Mussolini and was linked to the development State capitalism and a national society. While “the fights against dialects was considered central to the educational process” (Lepschy 28, 32), this was limited by the inability of the Italian State to introduce roughly similar terms of participation in the society. With a large rural sector and uneven regional development many children were denied even primary education into the 1950s (Historical Dictionary). The first systematic attempt to impose the national language came under fascism, but continued under the postwar Christian Democratic governments, achieving some success by the 1960s at which point, however, opposition to the national language in favor of dialectical plurilingualism surfaced, in part in virtue of an earlier period when the attempt to spread the national language was associated with fascism. The divergence of historical experience of the two countries because of WW2 helps explain divergent social and linguistic developments of recent decades.

Globalization: contemporary sociological  
 and institutional contexts

As we have seen, national languages arose in multiple contexts including the socio-economic circumstance marked by the establishment of national market for goods. As national markets have declined in importance under the financial and economic regime we call “globalization,” one can rightly ask whether the course of historical developments—both political and linguistic-cultural—really matter in an “age of globalization”? After all, we can now speak of a supranational language, global English that is perhaps more than a lingua franca. It is possible to argue that without a common language today’s realms of Internet commerce, global trade and specialized forms of communication among academic specialists would be impossible. Global English underlies the growth of the transnational sphere and is as fundamental a part of the global infrastructure as are the new media and transport technologies. Linguistically as national standards decline in functional importance and global English emerges, multilingualism and plurilingualism have flourished as theories and practices.

However, the wide spread notion of a “global era” bears careful consideration. For one thing, we should ask whether English has really penetrated the globe to the depth that national standard languages leveled their own nation spheres. And that question points to a related and perhaps more central sociological and socio-cultural issue. Has globalization seen as a social regime replaced the earlier national ones that saw the establishment of national standards, or, should globalization be thought of a as contributing a new “layer” of social relations that sits, often uncomfortably, on top of existing national societies?In regard to the influence of the social and cultural forces often united under the rubric of “globalization,”I am going to argue that while it is true that globalization has many aspects of a regime to be considered as a replacement of the preexisting national regimes---i.e. it has a single language (global English) and a means of communication and exchange—it is more descriptively accurate and analytically incisive to understand globalization as a layer that sits atop national societies.The implication then is that the world has not developed a fully integrated global society, and while global institutions and culture are everywhere present, the responses to globality vary enormously from society to society; I would argue that one of the chief predictors of social response are established national orders and has much to do with the conditions of the various national economies within the global financial order. Thus the second point is that the influence of globalization varies enormously with its effect. Like other countries of the “southern periphery” Italy it is caught between loss of markets to cheaper Asian goods and displacement by more expensive German ones, and consequently has seen its share of world trade fall by half in recent decades (Anderson 2009).[[46]](#footnote-46) These are the sorts of conditions that tend toward resistance of the socio-cultural regime of globalization, including cultural and linguistic pluralism.

Globalization and the death of the nation/national language hypothesis

The central theoretical question is whether we should understand globalization as a transformative sociological and cultural process ending in the creation of a global society, or whether it is better understood as epiphenomenon of existing social relations within a global capitalist system operated by and for the benefit of some national elites and nation-states? One must begin by pointing that there is no clear consensus on whether or not globalization has transformed earlier political and economic formations. Indeed, “disputes and confusions about globalization often begin around issues of definition” (Scholte 2005). Nonetheless a particularly optimistic take on globalization is apparent in most arguments concerning postnationalism. Early on two fundamentally different definitions of globalization surfaced. According to Held and McGrew globalization was a quantum leap in the establishing “worldwide interconnectedness” a broad condition of world interdependence, integration in a “shrinking world” (2003: 3). It has both material and cognitive dimensions. By contrast for Hirst and Thompson globalization is effectively a “myth that exaggerates our degree of helplessness in the face of contemporary economic forces” and functions as a mask for what amounts to a new phase of the international economy (1996: 6). Thus the larger fundamental argument about globalization was already well defined by the mid-1990s. At this point, I would simply point out that the different positions noted above have matured into two distinct globalization hypotheses characterized by Held and McGrew as an opposition between “Globalists” and “Skeptics” (2003: 38)—and that the assumptions of multilingualism often rest on a strong globalization hypothesis. The biggest impact of this divide has been on the disciplines of International Relations and Political Science, though recently the re-theorizing of Economics in terms of political economy has become important.

From its beginnings in business discourse, globalization theory held that the development of global networks reflected weakening of the nation-state; from the perspective of a single world sphere, or what Ulrich Beck calls the horizon of “globality”: “globalization” defines a world in which the national is disappearing and politics is being displaced by “globalism” (Beck 2000). In particular, globalists (such as Beck) have taken umbrage in network theory, arguing that a single networked society running across both human and natural geographic boundaries and characterized by “flows” of information, people and capital are in process of fundamentally re-shaping the social world. But social theory has for the most part performed as an under-laborer for global theory; the real thrust—and probably strongest argument—of the globalists works from the hypotheses of cultural hybridization and global cosmopolitanism. Clearly network theory is useful in explaining how the conditions of hybridization are established; arguably we are in the process of replacing national cultures, through the new forms of electronically mediated culture (the so-called “social media”), with a transglobal culture. Globalist arguments are very much related to the “cultural turn” in the sense that changes in culture are seen as fundamental to changes in material conditions (effectively turning Marx on his head). Consequently, from this perspective, by developing the moral and ethical framework necessary to establishing a global civil society and cosmopolitanism, global networked culture has laid/is laying the social foundations necessary to global governance, the transference of governing powers from states to multilateral institutions.

If cultural studies (in the Humanities, Anthropology and Sociology) define the sphere of the globalists’ strongest arguments, political economy and International Relations are their weakest. Economic integration consists of three necessarily interlocked elements, international trade, capital mobility, i.e., transference of real resources (through investments of various kinds), and labor mobility. During the late 1990s and early 2000s when the globalism hypothesis was at the height of its influence (Walzer 1995, Friedman 1999, Stiglitz 2002), some critics rejected it already, specifically on geo-political grounds. Central to that opposition was an analysis of the role played by existing institutions of global capitalism, and especially that of the nation-states, in developing the conditions necessary to the regime of economic integration on grounds favorable to the interests of the most important players. Claiming that the nation-state, or rather a set of powerful nation-states, remained central to these putatively “global” institutions, these scholars dubbed “skeptics” by the globalists, argue that powerful national states stand behind “globalization”—specifically by controlling what are still international (rather than global) institutions and structures that have developed and maintained the mechanisms, procedures, and legal structures that makes the flow of capital across international borders possible. Thus what lies behind globalization is less the organic result of the creation of a global society, or of the convergence of cultures than of the specific policies of states that have agreed for now to an international framework for running global capitalism and to the extent to which we can speak of a global era we must acknowledge many globalizations (Hirst & Thompson 1996, Smith 1990, Mann 1997, Berger 2002). Moving in part on a parallel to these critics, historians have begun to reveal the past histories of globalizations and their difficulties (Bayly 2004; Osterhammel and Petersen, 2009) ; this work has helped demystify globalization and reveal it a new manifestation of a type of inter-state system stretching back to antiquity. This is of critically important because it argues that state-formation has always been linked to global systems in one way or another. The implication is that we can’t and shouldn’t talk about globalization as an era, but rather an element in all historical eras; furthermore, globalization depends on structurally fundamental interstate systems, which originate in the interaction of various kinds of state formations from empires to nation-states. In sum, while globalists have made a good case regarding the erosion of the distinct national cultures that develop in the 19th century, they have not been successful in regard to the political legacy of that era—the state.

While the actions of emerging and resurgent states—Germany in Europe, China in Southeast Asia, and Russia in its “near abroad”—have lent credence to the thesis that actually existing globalization has certainly not ended what Mann calls “the rise and rise of the nation-state” (1997), prima facie evidence of this kind is far from a proof of the Skeptics’ position. I believe that the terms of disagreement among globalization theorists cannot be decided successfully within the realm of social science theory; our situation, in truth, resuscitates the need for history writing that addresses the large questions we face, beginning perhaps in re-examining the historical and cultural foundations of nations in world historical terms. Indeed, one would also need to examine issues of the philosophy of history to address these questions, a topic well beyond the parameters of this essay. I will rely instead on a position articulated by the German-American philosopher Hannah Arendt. She tells that as although history is generally understood as processual and therefore moving toward a determined end, history can be opened to reflection—specifically reflection on the meaning of events in those instances in which past events can serve as a means of reflecting on present dilemmas (Barder & McCourt 2010). I would suggest that using Arendt’s method permits us to pair past and present events. Therefore, we might well ask: what does the rise of extremist forms of politics in the interwar years tell us about our own age, marked as it is by rising nationalisms? I am not going to directly address this question, but it does underlie my concerns in this study. And the question is important because by implication it defeats the globalists’ idea that globalization marks a new phase of human culture as well as the skeptics’ notion that institutional stability means *status quo ante*. Following Arendt, we are confronted with one example of the mixed signs and meanings of our age: cultural cosmopolitanism and hybridization exists on a large scale, but at the same time the structures of economic and political power based on the organization of nation-states has been maintained. The question is difficult and complicated, but I suggest that one set of facts that can help us comes to terms with this massive contradiction as it plays out in the arena of cultural politics lies in the relative performance of national societies under conditions of globalization.

One can say that tendencies toward regressive or progressive values around questions of language and culture reflect how successfully nation-states have traversed the terrain of the global economy. Those states are “strong” that successfully navigate the global economy competing successfully for markets and redistributing the benefits of globalization for a majority of their citizens. “Strong” then is a measure of economic success and social integration. “Weak” states, by contrast, fail either to compete successfully or to distribute the benefits of successful participation in the global economy or both. In a condition of weakness, publics are fall more susceptible to nationalistic or chauvinistic feelings and discourses; national language and culture become stripped-down versions of their former glory, surfacing now largely as a means of compensation and displacement of deeper issues.

Strong versus weak states

Under certain conditions, language uniformity becomes a form of compensatory political power wielded by various actors in the body politic. Weak nations, where national unity is at question, have historically struggled to create a national language and such struggles have created a legacy, which can work against multilingualism today. In such circumstances—linguistic uniformity and reluctance to recognize multiplicity may be compensations for an historical lack of national identity. Strong states, by contrast, have had well-articulated senses of national identity in the past and *therefore do not need to continue to rely on language as a primary identity marker* leaving them freer to both develop pro-multilingualistic attitudes and to put those into practice. Figure 3.1 below graphs the intersection of these two factors in influencing attitudes. The graph illustrates the relation between two key factors, social integration and global economic integration, but it *does not consider* other important factors, such as size of the language community and historical attitudes towards foreign language acquisition. Nor does it rigorously apply quantitative evidence for these placements.

I have identified strong states today as those most integrated into the present global economy and those having managed to instrumentalize cultural discourse to their own ends. National languages have (less visible and more limited) value in the present social and economic regime while multilingualism built around English as the lingua franca appears more useful and in more in accord with postnational values common to the intellectual class (Berger 2002). Strong states rest on previous achievements as strong nations that having achieved social cohesion, or retained a good deal of social cohesion, can afford to encourage linguistic variation and tolerance. This would mean that weak states, by contrast, have more limited integration in the present global economy or suffer unsustainable levels of social discord created by global integration. Secondly weak states have a history of problematic social cohesion from a weaker sense of national identity, and historically have often relied on language to provide a unifying factor.

The figure 3-1 shows conditions in select European and North American states under the impact globalization; conditions under which multilingualism has the best chance of flourishing: H, M, L (High Medium Low with point values in parentheses). The vertical line measures the degree of social integration, where “social integration” means widespread access to goods, services and employment. The horizontal line measures the successful integration in the global economy in the least decade. The highest values are found in the upper left hand corner, while the lowest are found in the lower right hand corner.Countries highly and positively integrated in the world economy and possessing a high degree of social integration are the most likely to produce positive attitudes toward multilingualism, while countries with falling participation in the global economy and increasing levels of social conflict are the least likely to produce conditions supportive of multilingualism. *Nota bene*: the chart is for illustrative purposes only; the values assigned to the countries are not based on careful quantitate analysis, nor are other historic factors considered.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Social*  *Integration*  **H** (3) | Norway, Germany (6) |  |  |
| **↑**  **M**  (1.5)  **↓** | Canada, Sweden (4.5) | France, UK (3) | Italy (1.5) |
| **L** (0) | USA (3) | Russia (1.5) | Greece (0) |
|  | *Globalization Trend*  **H** (3) | **←M** (1.5)**→** | **L** (0) |

Figure 3-1.

Strength in my sense is not an absolute, but rather a limited measure, which may be understood in relation to how well the state has supported a conception of national citizenship. What I mean by “strong” might be best likened to the quality of cohesion: a cohesive nation is one that narrows the conflicts along lines of social class and geographical region is “strong.”

Today, strong states are simply those that first of all have succeeded in adjusting to the new phase of the global economy, i.e. best integrated into the global financial structure, and second have been able to instrumentalize the new cultural formation to advance a set of social changes necessary to secure its position in the new world order. Thus, multilingualism is both instrumental and ideological at the same time: the more integrated a country is in the global economy, the greater the need for tolerance of linguistic plurality because the new global order requires migration and because economic and social intercourse cannot take place in the local language (except in the case of where the local language and the global language are the same, i.e. the U.S. and the U.K.). Another dimension of “strength” is the capacity to marginalize dissent from various quarters—more generally from all of those elements in the society that have not benefited from the recent redevelopment of the global economy. Social policy helps in this regard: a strong state does not allow entire regions to fall into disrepair and abandonment, a result likely to exacerbate opposition: it would rather redistribute some of the material advantages that come from participation in the global sphere to those regions, classes and sectors disadvantaged by the new economic regime. This is exactly why the “welfare state” model has remained viable under the new regime (Navarro, et al 2004) when earlier predictions were that it could not survive globalization.

In sum, despite a tendency to orient our understanding issues of multilingualism in terms of cultural values in the context of the increasing importance assigned to multi-valence in the contemporary world, the relation of language and culture to sociological and political considerations is extremely important, both historically and at present. The underlying question is whether belonging and inclusion can be achieved largely on the basis of pluralism and how at the same time how more successful senses of the “we” can be achieved in our own time.

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Chapter Four

Macondo:  
A Literary Paradigm of a Peripheral Global Nation-State:  
A Decolonial Reading of Language, Identity, Coloniality and Modernity   
in García Márquez’s Narrative

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1. Introduction

Language is a central means of communication between individuals, society and culture. Given that language articulates both individual and group identity, its role is paramount in informing collective cultures which are generally composed by social values, common beliefs or received ideas, often formed and transmitted by tradition, religion and ideology. There are several factors involved in the formation of both individual and social identity, among others: *language* (linguistic identity), *ancestry* (family’s ancestors), *territory* (regional or national identity), *sexual gender* (biological gender and/or sexual role), *religion* (spiritual orientation or religious affiliation), *social class* (socioeconomic origin and belonging), *education* (school socialization and professional status), *race/ethnicity* (ethnic group or ethnic affiliation) and even *physical appearance* (skin color, especially in United States and in South Africa). As a topic of research, the construction of identity is complex and multifaceted, not only because of its large interdisciplinary scope (it is an object of study for history, philosophy, psychology, linguistics, sociology, literature and even political science), but also because it involves the definition of individual, linguistical and collective characteristics of people and societies in several geographies and at different points in time.[[47]](#footnote-47) Thus, individual and group identity as well as social, cultural and political factors, among them, religion, education and State policies – determine, to a great extent, a reader’s individual and collective identity and therefore shape his/her understanding either of the “real other” (his fellow country-men) or of “the fictional other” (literary texts’ characters), ultimately determining his/her interpretation of any human problem, story or cultural expression, whether it be a text, a picture, a piece of music, a movie, his/her own life story, etc. Within this context, I propose to explore in this paper the sociolinguistic and cultural identity perspectives and intergroup behavior in some of Gabriel García Márquez’s texts, where individual and multi-ethnic groups establish relationships at the personal, regional, (trans)national, social, religious or educational levels in order to associate or disassociate themselves from the official Nation State-building process.

In Colombia, the interrelationships between language, identity, history and literature[[48]](#footnote-48) have been very important in the formation of the official and popular concepts of State and nationhood. The works of Gabriel García Márquez, in particular *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, often question and oppose the official concepts of State and nationhood established by Colombian governments over a more than century-long rule, creating in the novels and short stories an alternative national identity model that tends today to be perceived as legitimate by a majority of Colombians. Within these cultural contexts, I will analyze the role that family background, sociolinguistic identity and State politics play in the cultural formation of the national identity of Colombians and in the formation of their State as represented in García Márquez's narrative discourse and imagery. Specifically, I will examine the narrative construction of the Colombian Nation-State as a family dynasty in García Márquez's short story “Big Mama’s Funeral” ([1962] 1968) and in the novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967),[[49]](#footnote-49) applying various conceptualizations supplied by Decolonial studies.

The origins, conceptual constructions and analytic patterns of Decolonial theory may be described as follows: Prominent researchers, mostly from Latin America (Dussel, Mignolo, Quijano et al., Restrepo & Rojas 2010) have (up)rooted conceptual constructions and in the process created a new critical paradigm called “decolonial inflection”; this designates a new set of concepts coined in social sciences in the last two decades to analyze the economic, political and socio-cultural relations between the North (i.e., the North-Atlantic hegemonic geopolitical discourses) and the South (i.e., the non-Western subaltern narratives) of the world; that is, new decolonized ways of reflecting on the asymmetrical power relations between “the West” and “the rest” from the perspectives of subaltern subjects (“los oprimidos”): The world’s poor, marginalized and oppressed majority of people. These social sciences researchers have progressively constructed, through the appropriation of former theories, epistemological objects and paradigms that they refused to call a theory, referring instead to “Decolonial studies.” Hence, the fundamental conceptual constructions of this theory is coloniality *versus* decoloniality. Coloniality can be briefly defined as “a historical phenomenon [...] that extends to our present and refers to a pattern of power that operates through the naturalization of territorial, racial, cultural and epistemic hierarchies which enables the reproduction of relations of domination” (Restrepo & Rojas 2010: 15).[[50]](#footnote-50) Concomitantly, decoloniality occurs when:

# “The figure of the oppressed appears illustrated in the peripheral villages, the working class women, the oppressed youth, the poor, the masses and the exploited classes.”

Thus, the oppressed subject can be liberated by a commitment within himself, a critical reflection of the oppressive reality that will eventually lead both to his own liberation as a subject and to the liberation of the oppressor himself (Restrepo & Rojas 2010: 54, 56). The concepts “modernity”, “modernization”, “coloniality”, “colonialism” and “decoloniality” are intertwined with other concepts in decolonial studies such as “coloniality of power”, “coloniality of knowledge” and “coloniality of being” as well as with “a modern/colonial world-system”, “capitalism”, “otherness”, “eurocentrism” “ethnocentrism” and “sociocentrism”.

These concepts, which will be defined later in this article when discussing García Márquez’s literary representation of Nation-State building, are employed by decolonial critics to explore, among others, two salient issues. First, the epistemological issue that Westerners (beginning with the founders of German Romanticism, led by Hegel) have imposed on the rest of the world a Eurocentric view of world history which claims that history and therewith civilization begins and ends in Europe, intentionally ignoring the great importance of ancient civilizations and peoples from Asia, Africa and America (i.e., Sumerians, Chinese, Hindus, Arabs, Bantus and the natives of the so called “New World”). Second, that the United States and Northern Europe are currently attempting to impose on the rest of the world North Atlantic hegemonic socio-political and military practices as well as capitalist-oriented paradigms of modernity that are increasing social disparities worldwide. These global power relations – which are also represented in García Márquez’s narrative – will be analyzed here applying the above-named key concepts from decolonial studies.[[51]](#footnote-51)

I propose to study the function of language/identity and modernity/coloniality in nation-building and State construction in García Márquez’s narratives in the light of these central concepts of Decolonial theory. These concepts will enable me to identify the narrative processes by which, on the one hand, language helps create an intergroup identity and, on the other hand, the way in which the arrival of modernity at Macondo first creates a colonial set of mind, manifested by an avid consumption of foreign products by the Macondians, before arousing within them a will towards decolonization wherein they view foreign modern merchandise as a nuisance and as an obstacle to obtaining real socioeconomic development. Hence, my use of the slash in the word-pairs, “language/identity” and “modernity/coloniality” is intended, firstly, to express the ambiguous relationships of continuity-discontinuity that, historically and epistemologically, has existed between the terms of these two conceptual pairs and, secondly, to closely examine the interface between modernity-coloniality-decolonization (cf. sections 1 and 4).

I will proceed by tracing, first, the origin of the Buendía family and its exodus that culminates with Macondo’s foundation, through an analysis of the interface between national language and its regional variants and the role sociolinguistic identity plays, alongside official education and State religion, in the nation-building process and in the construction of the State, as it is allegorised in García Márquez’s “Big Mama’s funeral” ([1962] 1968) and *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967)*.* Afterwards, I will examine the transformation of Macondo into a “modern” “city of mirrors and mirages”, depicted as a place where people from different parts of the world come to benefit from the “progress” (inventions and commodities) and “modernity” (infrastructure and know-how) brought by the Europeans and Americans who establish multinational enterprises in this marginal global village. The study will conclude with a reflection on the different kinds of colonization (i.e., economic, political, socio-cultural) that the novelistic characters have been subjected to ever since the discovery of Macondo and, by analogy, the asymmetric relations of imperial colonization versus socio-economic coloniality that most Colombians and Latin Americans have endured ever since Columbus arrived in the Western hemisphere.

2. The Buendía’s dynasty and Nation-building  
in Macondo: sociolinguistic and territorial identity

Since the action in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* corresponds to the period of more than a hundred years of the history of Colombia (from the Bolivar liberation of the colony from Spanish rule in 1819 to the middle of the 20th century), it is necessary to briefly refer here to this complicated warlike period of Colombian history. The Republic of Colombia is a country situated at the upper north-west of South America. Colombia, the capital city of which is Bogotá, shares its frontiers with Panama to the north-west; the Atlantic Ocean to the north, Venezuela to the east; Brasil, Peru and Ecuador to the south; and the Pacific Ocean to the west. Before Spain's colonization, the territory that today corresponds roughly to Colombia was inhabited by more than a hundred different Amerindian nomadic ethnic groups who engaged mostly in agriculture, hunting and fishing. Colombia's Caribbean north coast was explored by a Spanish expedition led by Rodrigo de Bastidas in 1500 who founded the port city of Santa Marta in 1525, this Caribbean city becoming the first permanent Spanish settlement in Colombia. Colombia was a key part of the Viceroyalty of Nueva Granada, which also consisted of Venezuela and Ecuador. The Spanish domination drew to an end when the so called “American Liberator”, Simon Bolívar and others fought a liberation war (1811 - 1819) to become independent of Spain. Bolívar proclaimed the confederation of free Gran Colombia in 1819, but the provinces of Venezuela and Ecuador broke out of the alliance immediately after Bolivar's death in 1831. Colombia then became an independent republic plagued during the whole of the 19th century by numerous wars between prominent generals from the recent founded liberal and conservative parties. From its political independence from Spain in 1819 up to the present, Colombia has been a republic, and today has more than 45 million inhabitants. Buendía family is composed of members whose lineage can be traced back to Macondo’s (fictional) colonial times. By the middle of the nineteenth century,[[52]](#footnote-52) the patriarch, José Arcadio Buendía, the Matriarch Ursula Iguarán and a group of family friends, haunted by a crime of passion and incest guilt, leave Riohacha (a real Colombian town) for “the land that no one had promised them” (*OHYS*: 23), discovering in their migration a pristine territory which José Arcadio christens with the name Macondo (*OHYS*: 23, 24, 25).

This kind of collective migration may evoke in readers both the biblical Exodus of the Israelites and the voyages of exploration (“entradas”) Spanish conquistadors made to the inner land of the Western hemisphere during the sixteenth century in order to appropriate Amerindians lands, to found cities and to establish colonies: at the time of discovery, “Macondo was a village of twenty adobe houses” (*OHYS*: 1). The founders begin to build their village, following the patriarch's orders: “he had decided upon the layout of the streets and the location of the new houses so that no one would enjoy privileges that everyone did not have” (*OHYS*: 39). After the exploration of the Colombian Caribbean coast, culminating in the foundation of Macondo, José Arcadio “asked the assembled group to open a way that will put Macondo in contact with the great inventions” (*OHYS*: 10). So begins the century-long transformation of Macondo and its inhabitants from a pre-industrialized village to a “modern”, “noisy city with houses [and] mirror walls” where foreigners from every part of the world drop by.

*One Hundred Years of Solitude* is a century-long chronicle of a dysfunctional family intertwined with both a fictional representation of Colombian historical events and Eastern and Western cultural symbolism. Seven Buendia generations live in Macondo, their daily life filled with optimism, pessimism, nostalgia, superstition and chaos in an environment where reality, magic and the supernatural combine (by virtue of García Marquez’s literary technique of “Magical Realism”[[53]](#footnote-53)): from the original migrants, who are compelled to travel in search of a territory to live in peace and without sin, through to the discovery and settlement of the pre-industrialized village of Macondo; from the patriarch Jose Arcadio and the matriarch Ursula, through to their son, Colonel Aureliano Buendia, who commands numerous revolutions reminiscent of Colombia’s and Latin America’s nineteenth-century civil wars between liberal and conservatives; from the “ragged gypsies” who visited pre-industrialized Macondo, awakening in their inhabitants an avid need to consume foreign merchandise, through to the would-be citizens of Macondo, who become disenchanted with foreign consumerism and find themselves living side by side with the “gringos” – who, by setting up a banana plantation, introduce capitalism to Colombia, transforming Macondo into a peripheral “modern” city of entrepreneurs, prostitutes and foreigners, and where the locals start to speak English and embrace the American way of life.[[54]](#footnote-54)

Of paramount importance in the structure, theme, plot, characterization and focus of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* are oral and written indigenous and foreign languages, like Guagiro and Sanskrit, and their eventual translation into Spanish, as well as the use of national and foreign languages like Spanish, Turkish, Latin, Italian, French and English that convey sociolinguistical identity (*cf*. note 1) by way of assimilation or differentiation with others. In the newborn Macondo depicted at the beginning of García Márquez’s novel, language barely serves as a means of communication, but rather is used to capture reality by words: “The world was so recent that many things lacked names and, in order to indicate them it was necessary to point” (*OHYS*: 1). Likewise, when Macondians suffer the “insomnia plague”, “[T]hey went on living in a reality that was slipping away, momentarily captured by words, but which would escape irremediably when they forgot the values of the written letters” (*OHYS*: 48-49). As a result of lack of words to name the objects around them, the Macondians create a sociolinguistic identity through language use, in the form of legends, myths and chronicles codified in a manuscript written in Sanskrit on parchments by Melquiades, a foreign gypsy who, by translating Sanskrit into Spanish, narrates both the history and the story of the Buendía dynasty, whose hyperbolic actions lead to the creation of a dependent Nation-State.

García Marquez’s narrators and characters use language not only to express difference and similarity with others, but also to expand their fictional space, to represent regional groups with their respective linguistic identity and therewith to project a sense of national belonging. The literary representation of regional groups displaying diverse sociolinguistical identity (*cf*. note 1) is also a main feature in García Marquez’s short story “Big Mama's Funeral”. In this text, the narrator recounts the great “national uproar” caused by the death of the “absolute sovereign of the Kingdom of Macondo”, whose lavish funeral was attended by the Pope, the President of the Republic, “the inhabitants of Macondo” and “the crowds” which came from the country’s major regions:

# “bagpipers of San Jacinto, smugglers of Guajira, the rice-planters of Sinú, the prostitutes of Caucamajal, the wizards of Sierpe, and the banana workers of Aracataca, […] the inhabitants of the distant and somber capital, […] where the beggars wrapped in newspapers slept, […] the washerwomen of San Jorge, the pearl fishers from Cabo de la Vela, the fishermen from Ciénaga, the shrimp fishermen from Tasajera, the sorcerers from Mojana, the salt miners from Manaure, the accordionists from Valledupar, the fine horsemen from Ayapel, the ragtag musicians from San Pelayo […] the improvisers from Sabana de Bolívar, the dandies from Rebolo, the oarsmen from the Magadalena, and the shysters from Mompox, […] the veterans of Colonel Aureliano Buendía’s camp, […] archbishops, […] [and] the national [beauty] queens” (*BMF* 197, 206, 212, 213).

It is important to note that the migrants represented fictionally in “Big Mama's Funeral” correspond to real people, towns and regions existing in Colombia: they migrated from well-known towns and provinces/states (“departamentos”) of the Colombian Atlantic Coast like San Jacinto, La Sierpe and Mompox in the state of Bolivar; Cabo de la Vela and Manaure in the state of Guajira; Sinú and San Jorge in the state of Santander; Aracataca, Cienaga, Mojana and Tasajera in the state of Magdalena; Valledupar in the state of El César; Ayapel in Cordoba, San Pelayo and Rebolo in the state of Atlantico.

In this way the Caribbean juggler recreates in García Márquez’s “Big Mama's Funeral” the actual topography and social classes of Colombia, and by so doing, instills in the short story’s characters, as well as in the potential Colombian readers, a sense of national identity, due to the double fact that they are able to recognize, as their own, a common territory as well as their countrymen’s cultural idiosyncrasies. That is, in the act of gathering various local, regional and national “crowds” from distant regions of Colombia to attend the funeral and listen to the Big Mama’s popular and oral “chronic”, Garcia Márquez’s narrator succeeds in constructing and instilling in his Colombian readers an individual and collective sense of a national identity. This is precisely the role that critics of nationalism expect narratives, especially the novel, to play in a nation-building process (Anderson 1983: 9-46, 83-111; Brennan 1990: 44-70):

# “It was the *novel* that historically accompanied the rise of nations by objectifying 'the one, yet many’ of national life. And by mimicking the structure of the nation, a clearly bordered jumble of languages and styles, socially the novel joined the newspaper as a major vehicle of the national print media, helping to standardize language, encourage literacy, and remove mutual incomprehensibility” (Brennan 1990: 49; author’s emphasis).

It becomes evident that the congruent representation in written narratives of scattered ethnic groups, diverse local idiosyncrasy, and various regional languages styles are, among others, basic features that accompany the symbolic formation of modern nations.

This kind of narrative construction of nationality – based on internal migration as well as on ethnic, social and regional difference perceptions – that is depicted in “Big Mama's Funeral” is linguistically reinforced in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* through literary representations of cultural antagonism between two main regional groups in Colombia: the “cachacos” (highlanders who have Bogotá as a capital) and “corronchos” (coastal residents who have Barranquilla as their main cultural center). The ethnic and socio-cultural opposition that exist between these two groups – based on physical appearance and regional differences - is confirmed by the derogatory comment made by the narrator of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* on the physical and psychological nature of highlanders:

# “They were short, stocky and brute-like. They perspired with the sweat of a horse, and had a suntanned hide and the taciturn and impenetrable perseverance of men of the uplands” (*OHYS*: 308).

Likewise, the comment on the “cachaca”, Fernanda de Carpio, made by Garcia Márquez’s narrator is very dismissive: “a highland daughter of evil spit, of the same stripe as the highlanders the government sent to kill workers” (*OHYS*: 329). However, the ethnic and socio-cultural dislike between highlanders and the coastal residents is reciprocal. For instance, Fernanda, who claims in a monologue that she descends from the Spanish nobility, vehemently despises Macondo and its inhabitants, considering them rude and tacky:

# “[She] the godchild of the Duke of Alba, a lady of such lineage that she made the liver of president’s wives quiver, a noble dame of fine blood like her, who has the right to sign eleven peninsular names and who was the only mortal creature in that town of bastards who did not feel all confused at the sight of sixteen pieces of silverware” (*OHYS*: 328, 329).

Moreover, she curses the Colombian Caribbean region for being both: “a town of bastards” [and] “a frying pan of hell where a person could not breathe because of the heat” (*OHYS*: 329, 330).

Fernanda’s oppressive perspectives on ethnicity, social class and culture as well as the discriminatory remarks of difference expressed earlier by narrators, characters and the real author himself[[55]](#footnote-55) refer symbolically to issues about Otherness, Eurocentrism, Ethnocentrism, Sociocentrism, and coloniality of being (see definitions below) which have been in the last two decades (re)conceptualized by Decolonial theory (Dussel, Mignolo, Quijano et al., Restrepo & Rojas 2010). Otherness, as textualized in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Fernanda’s remarks, can be re-conceptualized here both as the act of defining oneself through the difference with the other and, in decolonial terms, as remaining a “colonized being”. In other words, Fernanda’s high perception of herself as a descendant from European nobility living among “non-cultured people” (the Colombian coastal residents) make her retain her europeanized conscience as being superior to the Caribbean other in regard to origin, nationality, ethnicity, social class, language and education – notwithstanding that she has, in turn, been mentally colonized by the hegemonic “high” European culture. In brief, Fernanda is represented in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* as a “colonized being”, that is:

# “The coloniality of being refers to the effects of colonialism reflected on the experience of colonial subalterns, but also [exist] in key hegemonic sectors. [...] the coloniality of being not only affects those who are belittled or dehumanized, but also those who imagine themselves as superior and embodying the paradigm of humanity” (Restrepo & Rojas 2010: 158).

The reflection that emerges is that language, ancestry, territory, social class and ethnicity play a central role in the nation-building process. Therefore, the concepts of Otherness, Eurocentrism, Ethnocentrism and Sociocentrism, among others, which stem from Decolonial theory become instrumental not only in examining the role played by State symbology, official religion and education in the official construction of the State, but also in analysing the processes involved in colonization and decolonization of the (pre-) industrialized society/nation of Macondo –a literary analogy of any third world village/nation – represented in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. The concepts under consideration can be briefly defined thus:

# “Otherness” - “In general terms the ‘other’ is anyone who is separate from one’s self. […] [I]t can refer to the colonized other who are marginalized by imperial discourse, identified with the difference with the centre […] The construction of the O/other is fundamental in the construction of the self. […] The process of othering can occur in all kind of colonialist narratives” (Ashcroft 1998: 169, 170, 172).

# “Eurocentrism, […] is not the cognitive perspective of Europeans exclusively […] it is the cognitive perspective produced during a long period of the assembled Euro-centred world of colonial/modern capitalism, that has naturalized the experience of the people within this pattern of power. That is, makes it appear as *natural*, consequently, as a given [perspective], not liable to be questioned. Since the eighteenth century [...] above all with the Enlightenment which Eurocentrism fostered, the mythological idea that Europe was pre-existant to that pattern of power was being asserted; Europe then was already a global center of capitalism that colonized the rest of the world and that had elaborated on their own and from within modernity and rationality. In this line of thinking, Europe and Europeans were far more advanced and novel in [taking] the linear, unidirectional path of continuity of the species. […] Later, from the mid-nineteenth century […] [t]he place of world capitalism was occupied by the State-nation and by relations between States-nations (Quijano 2007: 94-95, author’s emphasis, my translation).

# “Ethnocentrism is when you consider that the life styles and associated conceptions related to their own cultural background are intrinsically superior to other cultural formations” (Restrepo & Rojas 2010: 135).

Finally, “Sociocentrism”, in its turn, supposes a disqualification and rejection of the customs and ideologies of distinct social sectors to which one belongs, considering them unsound or distasteful (Restrepo & Rojas 2010: 135).

3. The State as commodity: Take the Colombian State where you want but not to Macondo

When migration comes to a temporary halt through both the foundation of Macondo and the successive settling down of migrants, the official construction of the State in Macondo begins, through the establishment of State agencies and official institutions such as the police and armed forces, the State Catholic church and the official school system.

The unexpected appearance in Macondo of the Magistrate, Don Apolinar Moscote, who has been commissioned by the Colombian government to “pick up” a shield of the republic and “take it” to Macondo, in order to demonstrate to the people of that remote village the arrival of the State and its institutions, makes the patriarch José Arcadio Buendía mad with rage:

# Don Apolinar Moscote, the magistrate, had arrived in Macondo very quietly […] he put up at the hotel Jacob […] and on the following day he rented a small room with a door on the street. two blocks away from the Buendía house. He set up a table and a chair that he had bought from Jacob, nailed up on the wall the shield of the Republic [of Colombia] that he had brought with him, and on the door he painted the sign: *Magistrate*. His first order was for all the houses to be painted blue in celebration of the anniversary of national independence. […] Don Apolinar Moscote [said] “I have been named magistrate of this town.” José Arcadio Buendía did not even look at the appointment. “In this town […] we don’t need judges because there is nothing that needs judging.” […] José Arcadio Buendía […] grabbed Don Apolinar Moscote by the lapels and lifted him up to the level of his eyes. […] In that way he carried him through the middle of the street, suspended by the lapels, until he put him down on his two feet on the swamp road. A week later he was back with six barefoot and ragged soldiers, armed with shotguns (*OHYS*: 57-58).

Catholicism as State institution closely associated with the Colombian government was also brought to Macondo by:

# “Father Nicanor Reyna –whom Don Apolinar Moscote had brought from the swamp to officiate at the wedding – [of Aureliano Buendía and Remedios Moscote]. […] [The Father, who] was appalled at the hardness of the inhabitants of Macondo, who were prospering in the midst of scandal, subject to natural law, without baptizing their children or sanctifying their festival […] decided to stay […] to Christianize both circumcised and gentile, legalize concubinage, and give the sacraments to the dying. But no one paid any attention to him. They would answer him that they have been many years without a priest, arranging the business of their soul directly with God (*OHYS*: 84-85).

State-directed education, in the form of a primary school system that is to implement an official education program using texts authorized by the Colombian State is also brought to Macondo by the Magistrate:

# The link with the Buendías consolidated Don Apolinar Moscote’s authority in the town. On frequent trips to the capital of the province he succeeded in getting the government to build a school so that Arcadio, who had inherited the educational enthusiasm of his grandfather, could take charge of it (*OHYS*: 90).

According to the Colombian political code, the “blue color” is the symbol for the Conservative Party and therefore articulates the official national ideology promoted in Colombia in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries’ republican discourse. This political symbol presents Macondo as a paradigm of a pre-national community to which the *Magistrate* “brings” the national emblem that embodies the “State apparatus”; with it, the Colombian official history arrives as the act of “reifying” the abstract concept of “State”, using the concrete verb of action “to bring” makes it possible for the narrator to parody the official concepts of Republic and State and to treat them as merchandise subject to exchange and transportation according to political will and circumstance. Likewise, García Márquez’s narrator succeeds in representing the abstract idea of the State as a commodity, “a political apparatus” that like national culture can be moved, removed or imported as official politicians wish. In brief, being able to move and arbitrarily change the State apparatus and the emblems of nationality is a metaphor used by the author and his narrator to question the almost unlimited power held by regional caudillos, politicians and Colombian presidents during the republican era (1886-1930).

This and all previous episodes cited to explain the introduction of the Colombian State in Macondo makes the reader of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* aware of the close and intricate power links existing not only between State institutions (political, ecclesiastical and educational) and the officials who run them, but also between those officials and prominent members of the Buendia family, descendants from the ancient founders of Macondo.

From the analysis made in this section on the construction of the State in Garcia Marquez’s narrative it follows that, on the metaphorical level as well as in reality, the marriage of four State institutions and their representatives (the magistrate, the military, the priest and the school teacher) are the very embodiment in the 19th century Macondo and therewith in Colombia and in Latin America of a non-functional and corrupt State that has prevented the emergence of a fair and equitable society.

Since authorities appointed by and associated with central government (the magistrate and the priest) “bring” to peripheral Macondo and its inhabitants the State (conservative ruling party’s representatives and army/police forces), the Catholic church (the priest and its Christian liturgy) and official education (the elementary school system), the asymmetric relations between State institutions, and peasants in the process of becoming citizens that may come into play here can be described, according to decolonial theory, as “coloniality of power[[56]](#footnote-56) (powerful State officials like the magistrate *versus* powerless village’s caporals like José Arcadio Buendía) and “coloniality of knowledge”[[57]](#footnote-57) (Catholicism as faith, ideology and practice embodied by Father Reyna *versus* indifference to Catholicism and faith in common sense as practiced by Macondians).

4. Paradigms of modernity and patterns of coloniality

The “world’s great inventions” are introduced into Macondo, and as the village “progresses” it increasingly becomes dependent on foreign merchandise, cultural models and transnational enterprises, especially those originating in Europe and the United States. Such socio-economic and cultural relations of dependency on the Western metropolises make possible the establishment of capitalism in a double form: mercantilist, at first, in pre-industrialized Macondo, and multinational, at the end, when the decadent city is wiped out by a wind storm. In order to study these asymmetrical power relations between *the center* (Western European countries) and *the periphery* (Macondo, a non-Western village), I will start by examining the interface between modernity and coloniality in *One* *Hundred Years Solitude.*

First, Ursula “found the route” of “the great inventions” (*OHYS*: 37) that connected pre-industrial Macondo with the semi-industrialized city of Riohacha. Many years later, the first railway line was built between this city and Macondo: The “train that was to bring so many […] changes, calamities and feelings of nostalgia to Macondo” (*OHYS*: 228). The railroad and the train, the quintessential symbols of industrial progress for Westerners, represent the introduction of modernity to Macondo. Indeed the modern world is brought to that pre-industrialized village by “foreigners who arrived on the train from halfway around the world” (*OHYS*: 233) bringing with them the great inventions of the Western world: the magnet from Macedonia, photography in the form of the daguerreotype, the pianola, the telegraph, “electric bulbs”, and “the invention of electric light, the cinema, the phonograph, the telephone, the whistling kettle, the automobile and the velocipede” (*OHYS*: 1, 2, 50-51, 61, 163, 229, 230, 231, 243, 252, 383).

Just like the State, marginal modernization (i.e., goods and chattels), not self-created modernity (i.e., infrastructural changes which may benefit all citizens), was also brought to Macondo by outsiders. In fact, García Márquez’s narrator informs the reader that this kind of peripheral modernization, in the form of buying and consuming commodities and entertainment associated with Western capitalist societies, was brought to Macondo by “ambulatory acrobats of commerce” (*OHYS*: 231). In order to have a better understanding of the parodic construction of (transplanted) “capitalism” and (mimicked) “progress” in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the reader must be politically aware of the difference between Modernization and Modernity, as a reality (in the West?) or as an illusion (in Latin America?), these being precisely the two political terms García Márquez’s narrator presents in the novel to elaborate a powerful parody of the asymmetric power relations between the West and Latin America:

# “The concept of modernization is associated primarily with quantitative changes in the levels of economic, technological and cultural development. The concept of modernity, meanwhile, features a whole historical epoch, marked by the gradual process of universal capitalization of the planet. […] It is an era that corresponds to the explosive development of the productive forces in which development itself is the main sign of progress, which, in its turn, is converted to a central [and universal] category and assumed to be the unfailing directionality of all historical course: thus, to be the entire movement from past to present and from present to future. […] The image of modernity that the West has permanently projected to us [to Latin America] […] is also based on developmental quantitative models: It is assumed that Modernity represents a certain level of economic, social, political and spiritual development that Europe has already reached and to which Latin America should aim through a process of modernization. That has been the strategy pursued by the West to maintain Latin America and its periphery within their own economic and political rules: that is, to sell to Latin America the ideal of Western Modernity like merchandise displayed in store cabinets. Let say, to sell an aspiration to societies that have not yet reached those ‘high quotas of civilization’”(Fabelo Corzo 2013: 1, 2, 3, author’s quotation marks, my translation).

It is well known that Gabriel García Márquez writes his books to express his political thoughts and sentiments on Colombia and Latin America. This is especially true in *One Hundred Years of Solitude,* where the author has masterfully created one of the best caricatures of capitalism and (neo)colonialism ever written in Western literature.

Having shown, in humorous fashion, the way Western capitalism (“the great inventions”) in its primitive form of mercantilism, is introduced to Macondo as well as the illusion of progress (marginal modernization *versus* peripheral modernity) that awakens in Macondians, the politically well-informed narrator uses parody to construct the disillusion and disenchantment, the “truths and mirages” that progress produced in them (*OHYS*: 230-231).

There is no doubt that Macondians themselves become, at first: “Dazzled by so many and such marvelous inventions, [that they] did not know where their amazement began” (*OHYS*: 229). But after a short while they are disenchanted and disappointed, considering novelties like the cinema and the phonograph “outlandish fraud” for being “mechanical tricks” that even cause unemployment among them, as is the case with the arrival of the phonograph that “for a time had serious effects on the livelihood of the band of musicians” (*OHYS*: 230). Employing magical realism as a literary technique to parody the negative socio-economic effects of the arrival of marginal and peripheral modernization from European central metropolis to the so-called third world countries, the narrator concedes with a hint of humor that:

# “God […] was keeping the inhabitants of Macondo in a permanent alternation between excitement and disappointment, doubt and revelation, to such an extreme that no one knew for certain where the limits of reality lay” (*OHYS*: 230).

But if God’s designs are aimed to create an uncertain reality for the Macondians, the narrator’s designs are to construct a fictional reality from the very first pages of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. That is, to create the illusion of a movable world-system that can be at once colonial and modern; a loose world that both Macondians could travel to and foreigners could bring to Macondo. José Arcadio Buendía creates that kind of movable world when

# “he conceived a notion of space that allowed him to navigate across unknown seas, to visit uninhabited territories, and to establish relations with splendid beings without having to leave his study” (*OHYS*: 4).

This imagined world-system becomes more and more elaborated as the novel progresses. Pietro Crespi’s:

# “warehouse at that time occupied almost a whole block and it was a hothouse of fantasy, with reproductions of the bell tower of Florence […] and music boxes from Sorrento and compacts from China that sang five-note when they were opened. […] Thanks to him [Crespi] the Street of the Turks, with its dazzling display of knickknacks, become a melody oasis” (*OHYS*: 111).

Moreover, when “[i]t rained for four years, eleven months, and two days” in Macondo

# “Aureliano Segundo remembered then the English encyclopedia that no one had since touched in Meme’s old room. He began to show the children the pictures, especially those of animals, and later on the maps and photographs of remote countries and famous people.” (*OHYS*: 320, 323).

This imagined global “world-system” elaborated by García Márquez’s narrators – that is pre-industrial and colonial and simultaneously industrial and modern because it contains “magnets from Greece”, “music boxes from Italy” as well as “the automobile from USA and the velocipede from Belgium” (*OHYS*: 1-2, 111, 243, 383) – has been conceptualized by decolonial studies as a “modern/colonial world-system”, as follows:

# For Wallerstein, the global expansion of the modern world-system is linked in its origins to the ‘discovery’ of America and its colonization and the establishment of a set of institutions, power relations and ways of thinking, that legitimize Euro-centered dominion over the planet. The implementation of this system and its logic of power is expressed in the establishment of an interstate hierarchy that ‘defines’ unequal places for world’s societies, it being the European societies that become located in the top of the pyramid. […] The states are only a product of the constitution of the Modern world-system. Thus, by virtue of this process metropolises and dependent States are created: the colonies (hence the notion of colonialism), instituting a system of political organization in which European societies take the place of centers of the system and the colonies the place of peripheries. (Restrepo & Rojas 2010: 70-71, 72, authors’ quotations and parenthesis).

According to decolonialist critics the concept of “Modern/colonial world-system” is closely related to both “Coloniality of knowledge” and “Coloniality of Power” (see notes 10, 11). Being able to both (de)codify the entire world-system and to use a world map to get to know “remote countries and peoples” through “the English encyclopedia”, as Aureliano Segundo did, may allude to “coloniality of knowledge” instituted by yesterday’s Victorian England as well as “coloniality of Power” established today by the United States’ government when it exercises the geopolitical practice of “mapping the world” to search for peripheral countries’ national resources. In sum, a decolonial reading of *One hundred years of Solitude* criticizes, by means of parody, the decolonial (de)construction (formation and destruction) of the kind of asymmetrical globalization of today’s world that generates power conflicts between the rich and “central” industrialized Northern nation-States and the poor and “peripheral” dependent Southern countries caught in the middle of a nation-building process.

Having (con)textualized the “modern/colonial world-system” that governs the fictional world of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the narrator proceeds to construct and destroy, by means of parody, certain neocolonial patterns to which Colombia and Latin America have been subject in the twentieth century. The historical fact that the American subsidiary United Fruit Company was established in Ciénaga, Colombia in 1928,[[58]](#footnote-58) is thereby also humorously rendered in García Márquez’s novel (*OHYS*: 231-234) to literarily represent the introduction of capitalism to Colombia and Latin America:

# [T]here arrived in Macondo on one of so many Wednesdays the chubby and smiling Mr. Herbert who ate at the house. No one had noticed him at the table until the first bunch of bananas had been eaten. […] He picked the first piece of fruit without great enthusiasm. But he kept eating as he spoke, tasting, chewing, more with the distraction of a wise man than with the delight of a good eater, and when he finish the first bunch he asked them to bring another. Then he took a small case with optical instruments out of the toolbox that he always carried with him. With the suspicious attention of a diamond merchant he examined the banana meticulously, dissecting it with a special scalpel, weighing the pieces on a pharmacist's scale, and calculating its breadth with a pair of gunsmith calipers. Then he took a series of instruments out of the chest with which he measured the temperature, the level of humidity in the atmosphere, and the intensity of the light. […]On the days that followed, he was seen with a nest and a small basket, hunting butterflies on the outskirts of town. On Wednesday a group of engineers, agronomists, hydrologists, topographers, and surveyors arrived who for several weeks explored the places where Mr. Herbert had hunted his butterflies. Later on Mr. Jack Brown arrived [with] [t]he gringos who […] [e]ndowed with means that had been reserved for Divine Providence in former times [...] changed the patterns of the rains, accelerated the cycles of harvests, and moved the river from where it had always been and put it with its white stones and icy currents on the other side of the town […] When the banana company arrived, however, the local functionaries were replaced by dictatorial foreigners whom Mr. Brown brought to live in the electrified chicken yard (*OHYS*: 231-233, 244).

Indeed, American capitalism as an economic model is brought to Macondo by Mr. Herbert and Mr. Brown, who are represented in the novel as the quintessential capitalists from the United States who want to collect, possess and sell whatever natural resource they can exploit or goods they can get hold of in third world countries. They live in “the electrified chicken yard” with

# “their languid wives in muslin dresses and large veil hats, [in] a separate town across the railroad tracks with streets lined with palm trees, houses with screened windows […] and extensive blue lawns with peacocks and quails” (*OHYS*: 233).

Magical Realism, as a literary technique and as a world view, is used in this episode both to endow the American engineers with exaggerated supernatural powers which enable them to move the river out of Macondo, and also to criticize the enormous ecological devastation that multinational companies often cause when they establish themselves in non-Western countries. Moreover, the arrival of American capitalism in Macondo, described in García Márquez’s novel as “the banana plague” tears up the village's socio-economic life, creating economic instability and social violence (labor strikes and juvenile delinquency - *OHYS*: 236, 252, 256, 317, 343). This social turmoil, first, causes Colonel Aureliano Buendía to lament: “Look at the mess we got ourselves into […] just because we invited a gringo to eat some bananas” (*OHYS*: 234), and, then, to utter this violent imprecation: “One of these days […] I’m going to arm my boys so we can get rid of these shitty gringos” (*OHYS*: 245). Such a furious reaction from the character highlights the attitude of decolonization conveyed by the narrator in the novel.

This situation of conflict eventually brings decadence and apocalyptic destruction to Macondo, relegating its inhabitants to the titular one hundred years of solitude and denying them “a second opportunity on earth” (*OHYS*: 432). Thus, (neo)colonialism and (de)colonization, as social, political and cultural problems as well as hegemonic economic practices imposed from the central Western countries to peripheral non-Western countries, are textualized in the fictional Macondo, and therewith metaphorically contextualized in Colombia and in Latin America.

5. Conclusions

This article examined how García Márquez fictionalizes Colombia’s political and social history from the nineteenth century up to the middle of the 20th century. In the first sections, it has been shown how language is instrumental in the formation of collective identities and therewith in the construction of nationhood in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. I have argued that language, ancestry, territory, social class, ethnicity, religion and education are important factors that intervene concomitantly in the nation-building process achieved by Macondians (and, implicitly, by Colombians). Macondians/Colombians have constructed their regional and national identity by defining themselves through their difference from the other. That is, an effective Colombian national identity did not appear until characters/people in the regions found themselves describing the other, and by so doing, describing themselves. Afterwards, I have shown how Colombian State symbology (the republic’s shield), State-religion (official catholicism), and State-education (the Colombian government’s school system with its authorized texts) were “brought” to the – until then – stateless Macondo, leading these three institutions to become instrumental in the construction and establishment of the Colombian State in that would-be peripheral global village. Finally, I have examined the various socio-economic effects that Modernization/Modernity and (Neo)Colonialism/Coloniality have on the Macondians/Colombians, demonstrating how both an imagined “modern/colonial world-system” and “great world inventions” were also brought to Macondo by newcomers from all over the world, colonizing, at first, Macondians’ imagination but, afterwards, making them reject the illusory progress of Modernity and (neo)colonialist models.

To summarize, the decolonial analysis elaborated in this study has led me to conclude that García Márquez’s narrators have effectively used, in “Big Mama’s Funeral” and in *One Hundred Years of Solitude,* the literary techniques of magical realism and parody to question and mimic both the historical process Colombia underwent in its own construction of its nation-State and the traditional models of Colonialism/neocolonialism and Modernization/Modernity that have been offered by the West to “help develop” Colombia and Latin America. The author and his narrators thereby dismiss these models, arguing in the novel that they have been only useful for having made the Western metropolis richer and the non-Western nations poorer, creating dependency and social inequality. Indeed, literarily and ideologically, García Márquez (1928-2014) has been a fundamental part of the national narrative of Colombia.

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**Part II:**

**Language = Identity?**

Chapter Five

Language and Identity in General Education in Zambia

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1. Language Situation

The language situation in Zambia, like that of many countries in the Southern African region, is generally characterized by multilingualism, code-switching and diglossia. The existence of poverty and underdevelopment has rendered the search for an appropriate language policy a daunting task for the country. Lack of a suitable language policy framework tailored to the communication needs of the nation has also created an unfavorable environment for economic prosperity and social progress. The result can be likened to a vicious circle of stagnation. This section discusses these phenomena in order to show how language and identity interface in the country generally, and more particularly in the education sector.

1.1 Multilingualism

1. Definition and Classification

The definition of “multilingualism” in an African context is problematic because the difference between “language” and “dialect” is considered “vague”. The usage of the term of “multilingualism” among Africans generally and Zambians in particular just refers to coexistence of different speech forms in a common territory. In this context, the concept of “speech form” refers to both language and dialect. A good example of a language is Swahili, the major language of East African countries, namely Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda with major implants in various other areas, including Burundi and Rwanda as well as Katanga Province of Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo and Northern Zambia. At least fifteen dialects of Swahili can be observed, the major dialects being Kiunguja, Kimvita and Kiamu (http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/576136/

Swahili-language, 5-12-2013; see also Whiteley 1969).

To have a clear understanding of the language situation in Zambia, it is necessary to place the country in the context of the languages of Africa (see figure 5-1). The continent is endowed with abundant language resources, including various linguistic families. The quasi-totality of Zambian languages belongs to the Bantu group of the Nigero-Congolese family (Greenberg 1963, Lewis 2009, Lewis et al 2013, Nurse 1997). The link with southern Bantu languages of Bantu Zone S is relatively weak in comparison with the rest of Bantu Zones, such as K, M, and N (Guthrie 1948, Guthrie 1967-1971, Heine 1973).



Fig. 5-1. Language Families in Africa (Dingemanse 5-12-2013)

1. Ethnic School

The coexistence of various speech forms in a given nation is not uncommon globally, especially in Africa, where existing national boundaries were forcibly established in the context of the Scramble for Africa in 1885 at the Berlin Conference. Even in the tiny Southern African kingdoms of Lesotho and Swaziland, where Sesotho and Siswati speech forms are generally regarded as exclusive and representative, in actuality different speech forms are in coexistence. The same multilingual picture emerges to a seasoned observer of Setswana-based monolingual Botswana. In the case of Zambia, existence of multilingualism is a generally recognized fact (http://www.albany.edu/~lb527/LOZ.html: Lee Bickmore 5-12-2013). A certain degree of consensus evolves around the recognition of the coexistence of 72 major speech forms overall (figure 5-2). However, various studies propose 30 speech forms (Hartman 1981 : 89) and 40 speech forms (Mwanakatwe 1974 : 210, 214). This figure 5-2 certainly contradicts standard definitions of regional dialects, languages and ethnic groupings. In actual fact, the figure ascribes a distinct speech form (language) to each ethnic group.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Ambo | Ila | Lala | Makoma | Namwanga | Sala | Tabwa |
| Aushi | Inamwanga | Lamba | Mambwe | Ndembu | Seba | Tambo |
| **Bemba** | Iwa | Lenje | Mashasha | Ng'umbo | Senga | Toka |
| Bisa | Kabende | Leya | Mashi | Nkoya | Shanjo | **Tonga** |
| Chikunda | **Kaonde** | Lima | Mbowe | Nsenga | Shila | Totela |
| Cishinga | Kosa | Liyuwa | Mbukushu | **Nyanja** | Simaa | Tumbuka |
| Chokwe | Kunda | **Lozi** | Mbumi | Nyengo | Soli | Twa |
| **English** | Kwandi | Luano | Mbunda | Nyiha | Subiya | Unga |
| Gova | Kwandu | Luchazi | Mbwela |  | Swaka | Wandya |
|  | Kwangwa | Lumbu | Mukulu |  |  | Yombe |
|  |  | **Lunda** | Mulonga |  |  |  |
|  |  | Lundwe |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | Lungu |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | Luunda |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | **Luvale** |  |  |  |  |

Fig. 5-2. Speech forms of Zambia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Languages\_of\_Zambia 5-12-2013)

In figure 5-2 the 72 predominantly unwritten speech forms have been grouped alphabetically into 7 columns in order to show multilingualism in Zambia from an inclusive perspective. As indicated earlier in the beginning of this chapter, a “speech form” is the generic term that covers both dialect and language, with written literature or oral literature. The 8 official national languages of Zambia with codified written speech forms have been underlined and highlighted. These are, in alphabetical order, Bemba, English, Kaonde, Lozi, Lunda, Luvale, Nyanja and Tonga. The ethnic school of thought painted above has been contested by various observers and analysts. One of the leading scholars of African languages representing the lingua franca school of thought in the country, Kashoki argues that isogloss, i.e., a linguistic boundary, applies where mutual intelligibility ends (Kashoki 1978). From that perspective, speech forms sharing common communicative competence ought to be considered as members of the same language community, albeit with geographical dialect variations. On that basis, Kashoki proposes a conservative figure of less than 10 languages for the entire country.

1. Lingua Franca School

Another prominent scholar of African languages in the country, Chanda, takes the lingua franca school further, suggesting that regional lingua franca ought to serve as the basis for accurate enumeration of the languages in the country (Chanda 1996). He argues that each of the regions that make up the country recognizes at least one lingua franca. According to this argument, the number of national languages shrinks further to a maximum of two or three national regional languages, with Bemba emerging as de facto national lingua franca. What this means is that Bemba is spoken and understood in the vast majority of regions. The present author thinks that, under certain conditions, including legislation and publicity campaigning, one national lingua franca would be preferable to a multiplicity of regional speech forms (Kasonde 2012, Kasonde & Miti 2013).

1.2 Code-switching

The skillful use of different speech forms coexisting within a given community obeys certain social rules. These rules can be codified, elaborate and necessary for the achievement of communicative competence. The various speech forms are then considered as “codes” and moving between different linguistic codes is what is referred to as “code-switching” (Fergusson 1959, Fishman 1967). In the context of code-switching, a code can be a distinct language, dialect or social register. Code-switching requires active involvement and mastery of all the speech forms at play. For instance, switching in and out of a professional register, also known as “jargon”, presupposes competence on both sides of the communication channel. This means that using technical terminology out of context is a reflection of lack of communicative competence by the user. Similarly, speaking English to illiterate people in a rural setting without an interpreter often results in serious misunderstanding. It is not uncommon for the national elite in Africa to transplant Western concepts without paying attention to the ability of the audience to understand them accurately and correctly. Such embarrassing situations could be avoided if speakers and listeners shared a common linguistic, cultural and educational background and experience. At the same time, the use of wrong codes may be deliberately employed to show off social status by way of snobbism.

1.3 Diglossia

A “diglossic” situation is a peculiar form of bilingualism that generally involves systematic and fairly stable utilization of a high speech variety for official functions and low speech variety for non-official functions in a given community (Fergusson 1959, Fishman 1967). For instance, Egyptian society reserves classical Arabic for all formal engagements, including schooling, public administration, the judiciary and the legislature. At the same time Egyptians apply colloquial Arabic for all informal situations. It has been suggested that Creole languages also tend to conform to the diglossic arrangement (Mufwene 2002). Hence, in countries such as Haiti and Seychelles, Creole usage is widespread without necessarily encroaching on formal administrative, educational, legislative and judicial domains where French is the speech variety normally utilized. For countries of Southern Africa such as Zambia the former colonial language (English) is viewed as a high variety and local languages are perceived as low varieties. To the extent that English enjoys a measure of social acceptance in Zambian society, it is quite possible that a diglossic situation will emerge over time, particularly in urban areas, due to the huge influx of foreign immigrants and rural-urban population drift. In any case, the possible existence of diglossia in former colonial countries of Southern Africa such as Zambia needs to be understood as descriptive rather than prescriptive.

2. General Education

The term “general education” refers to the initial schooling that ends where Higher and Tertiary Education starts. In Zambia, General Education covers three distinct stages, namely pre-school, primary school and secondary school. During the colonial era pre-school was also referred to as elementary school. General Education in the country starts from around the age of 5 years and ends at the age of approximately 18 years. This section describes the education system of Southern African countries generally and Zambia in particular. It provides a brief historical account of developments that have taken place in the educational sector. It also identifies various philosophical, psychological, political, social and economic forces that shaped the educational aspirations and achievements of the country with special reference to language and identity interplay.

2.1 Brief Historical Account

Three distinct periods can be identified in the history of general education in Southern Africa generally and Zambia in particular (see Dhliwayo 1977; Roberts 1973; Phiri 2006). These are education before, during and after British occupation. In Zambia the starting point of British occupation is 1885, a date that corresponds to the Berlin Conference and the Partition of Africa by various European colonial powers. British occupation of Zambian territory ended in 1964 when the African majority gained self-government and independence. British occupation in Zambia lasted 89 years. Three distinct phases of British occupation can be identified. These are: the British South Africa Company's administration of what was then North Eastern Rhodesia and North Western Rhodesia, amalgamated into Northern Rhodesia in 1911 (1885 to 1923); British Foreign Office administration of Northern Rhodesia as part of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, comprising Nyasaland, Northern Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia (1923 to 1963); and dominion status for Northern Rhodesia with an African Prime Minister under Her Majesty Queen Elisabeth II (1963 to 1964).

1. Education before British occupation (prior to 1885)

Education in Zambia before British occupation was largely based on the informal acquisition of various life skills. One would liken informal education during pre-colonial times to apprenticeships. The family played a critical role in the transmission of useful information, knowledge and skills. The graduate was expected to operate independently but cooperation with peers and other members of the community was emphasized. Emphasis was placed on good manners, obedience to elders, hospitality to friends, co-operation in common tasks, on practical skills in preparation for duties of adult life, on learning in close contact with nature, on self-restraint and endurance of hardship, on pride of membership in the group (Castle 1966: 44). Solidarity was strong among members of the local community. For instance, among the Bemba people, instead of harvesting crops individually, the entire village would team up and assist each member to complete harvesting more efficiently. Certain forms of ethnic education were elaborate and sophisticated. Examples of formal educational structures during that time include *Chisungu* female initiation ceremony among the Bemba, *Mukanda-Makishi* male initiation ceremony, and the Zulu's *Impi* military training (see; Colson 1958, Kasonde-Ng’andu 1988, Read 1959).

1. Education during British occupation (from 1885 to 1964)

It is possible to distinguish two phases in education development during British occupation in Zambia and other countries of Southern Africa. The first phase was the era of Portuguese penetration that also led to the establishment of Angola and Mozambique. This era is associated with Portuguese pioneers such as Manoel Pereira (1796) and Dr. De Lacerda (1798). Other European nationals were also active in opening the Southern African hinterland. These included Belgians, Dutch, French and Germans.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Period** | **Congregation** | **Mission** | **Missionary** |
| 1796 | ? | ? | Manoel Pereira |
| 1798 | ? | ? | Dr. De Lacerda |
| 1808 | Dutch Reformed Church | East Luangwa | ? |
| 1873 | ? | ? | Dr. David Livingstone |
| 1881 | Jesuits | Lealui | ? |
| 1883-84 | ? | Lealui | Fredreick Stanley Arnot |
| 1885 | Paris Mission Society | Sefula | François Coillard |
| 1887 | Paris Mission Society | Sesheke | François Coillard |
| 1890 | London Mission Society | Kawimbe | ? |
| 1891 | White Fathers | Mambwe | ? |
| 1894 | London Mission Society | Kambole | ? |
| 1897 | Christian Missions in Many Lands | Johnston Falls | ? |
| 1899 | White Fathers | Chilubula | ? |
| 1899 | White Fathers | Chilonga | ? |
| 1900 | London Mission Society | Mberesi | ? |
| 1903 | White Fathers | Chilubi Island | ? |
| 1904 | White Fathers | Kambwili | ? |
| 1905 | Jesuits | Chikuni | ? |
| 1905 | United Free Church of Scotland – | Lubwa | David Kaunda |
| 1909 | Primitive Methodists | Kasenga | ? |
| 1911 | Universities Mission | Msoro | ? |
| 1911 | Universities Mission | Mapanza | ? |
| 1912 | Wesleyan Methodists | Chipembi | ? |
| 1916 | Primitive Methodists | Kafue | ? |

**Table 5-1. Origin of Schools in Zambia**

In Table 5-1 above, the period of exploration started by Pereira in 1796 ended in 1885 with Coillard. The striking thing is that from 1885 to 1916 Christian missionaries played a leading role in provision of education for Africans. The question mark means that specific details are missing at press time and therefore need further historical research. From a linguistic point of view, the lingua franca of a given region (Bemba for North, Nyanja for East, Lozi for West and Tonga for South) was utilized as medium of instruction for Africans for lower primary school (4 year’s duration). In lower primary school English was introduced gradually and taught as a school subject but not the medium of instruction as such. English was medium of instruction for Africans from upper primary school up to secondary school and beyond the early stages of missionary education, one of the recurrent complaints was rivalry and lack of proper training facilities for teachers. It was not easy for missionaries at that time to source funds necessary for the smooth running of schools.

Had the missionaries from the different Churches achieved a reasonable measure of co-operation among themselves, it should have been possible perhaps to establish one or two central, properly staffed and equipped teacher training institutions, to work out a common syllabus and some pattern of uniform examinations for pupils, even without support from the [BSA] Company’s administration. (Mwanakatwe 1968: 13-14)

The next phase involved the transfer of government authority in Northern Rhodesia from the BSA to the British Foreign Office in 1923, thereby effectively setting the tone for rationalization of the provision of education for Africans. The separation of European schools was maintained through the Department of Education but the African Education Section was introduced in 1925 under the Department of Native Affairs. The section hosted the first conference of superintendents of African Education in 1938 and in 1963 the first Minister of African Education was appointed.

1. Education after British occupation (from 1964 to date)

The end of British occupation in Zambia ushered in the era of “independence”, a term intended to indicate that, while maintaining ties with Britain, the country had embarked on the road to self-discovery and renaissance. In reality, the concept of “independence” as such was inaccurate because in many respects the country became closer to Britain. The use of English as the sole official language and medium of educational instruction was one of the decisions that clearly perpetuated “dependence” more than it built a new society. English was and is still used at all levels of education, including pre-schools, primary and secondary schools as well as in all institutions of Higher Learning.

2.2 Implications for the education system

The advent of independence from British rule raised various implications for the education system in Zambia. These included the capacity of schools to provide training in basic survival skills, technical and professional skills, as well as managerial and leadership skills.

1. Basic Survival Skills

Training of new members of a human society in basic survival skills is a universally acknowledged necessity, without which extinction of the human race would become inevitable. The question therefore, is what is the most effective language for imparting survival skills into future generations? Various studies argue that the language of the community (L1) is a more dependable instrument for achieving this objective than foreign languages (L2, L3) (Diki-Kidiri 1977). In pre-colonial Southern Africa, human societies generally practiced informal education to meet their survival needs (Carmody 1999; Carmody 2004; Coombe 1967-68; Snelson 1974). The defining characteristic of informal education is lack of tangible and visible educational infrastructure and superstructure, such as buildings, sophisticated learning tools, books and a body of teaching staff. Under the informal education system that persisted, albeit to a lesser extent following colonization, useful and practical knowledge was passed on from one generation to the next generation through families. The older informal system is so elaborate and deep-rooted that it continues to contest, undermine or weaken the foundations of modern formal education in various ways, including lack of motivation, internalisation, discipline, etc.

In brief, the goal of survival skills training is to produce a well-adjusted individual capable of meeting the various necessities of life, including human reproduction, health and nutrition, shelter and clothing, and citizenship and community membership. In Zambia informal support networks are still active, making it a viable alternative for the acquisition of basic survival skills, including hunting, fishing, crop cultivation, animal husbandry and home economics. The unprecedented urbanization and industrialization that the country has experienced since colonization require sustainable formalised arrangements to improve and maximise chances of survival. Judging by significant deficits in key areas, such as sexuality, STDs, reproductive health, maternal and child health, HIV/AIDS and malaria prevention and treatment, it is not easy to claim that training in survival skills has been successful. For the purpose of this study, what is critical is the argument that the use of a medium of instruction that is alien to the local communities has exacerbated and aggravated the situation. Hence the need to put formal school education in its proper context by emphasizing traditional community networks, such family ties, associations, clubs, churches, etc.

1. Technical and Professional Skills

It is also assumed that technical and professional skills that lead to employment need to be imparted through formal education in technical schools, colleges, institutes and universities (Carmody 1999; Carmody 2004; Coombe 1967-68; Snelson 1974). This assumption represents a radical shift from traditional approaches to training in specialised areas, such as musicians, blacksmiths, bricklayers, herbalists, midwives, judges, etc. Before colonisation, all these specialized skills were generally acquired through informal job-on-training arrangements under family supervision. Consequently, arts, crafts and trades were generally transmitted from father to son. What is critical for the present discussion of the language-identity interplay is the fact that the language of the community happened to be the medium of instruction. In other words, the use of a medium of instruction that is alien to the community raises the obvious question of alienation and poor adjustment to community life after graduation. Although certain studies suggest that the use of local languages is more effective for enculturation generally and the acquisition of science and technology (Kashoki 1990), the prevailing view on this language issue is that the former colonial language is a practical solution that guarantees peace and stability in multilingual and multiethnic societies (Mwanakatwe 1968).

1. Managerial and Leadership Skills

Managerial and leadership skills acquired through formal education are also inculcated using former colonial languages in Southern Africa generally and Zambia in particular. The level of managerial and leadership skills in the region remains generally dismal, thereby raising the question of the appropriateness, relevance and suitability of certain fundamentals, one of them being the utilisation of an alien medium of instruction. The curriculum review efforts are generally directed towards syllabuses and content without necessarily challenging form in terms of medium of instruction. In the initial stages, the epitome of managerial and leadership skills training in Zambia included academic programs in English in Political Science and Public Administration at University of Zambia as well as Business Administration at Copper Belt University. The situation has changed significantly with liberalisation and introduction of private universities. Private universities currently representing approximately two thirds of all registered universities in Zambia have become the driving force in Higher Education in the country.

About 68% of all registered institutions in the country are not owned by government. This entails that of all higher learning institutions in the country, whether regulated by The Technical, Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Authority (TEVETA) or the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Early Childhood, only about 32% of the institutions are government run. (Munsanje 2013: 60; see also Simukungwe-Moono, 2010)

The development will influence the future of the acquisition and performance of managerial and leadership skills. Instead of ignoring the role of local languages in transforming the mindset of future managers and leaders, it is advisable to explore ways of making the transition to future societies in which local languages occupy centre stage. Alien managers and leaders can not reasonably be expected to perform well in delivery of quality services.

2.3 Psychological Attitudes

The issue of identifying psychological attitudes that block, hinder, lower, undermine, or weaken the capacity to achieve sustainable development in Southern African countries generally and Zambia in particular inevitably involves the language-identity interplay. When one critically examines the developmental path taken by the more successful 'Asian Tigers' (Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan), one finds that cultural values impinge on mindset and focus on prioritisation of national achievement, progress, development and modernisation. The rejection of the languages spoken by local communities in favor of foreign languages associated with colonisation then becomes one of the defining elements of nation-states in transition, also known as 'underdeveloped countries'.

In his study on the culture-behavior interplay, Serpell (1976) suggested that cultural practices had a negative or positive effect on performance, including the desire to achieve well-defined national goals. This argument falls in line with the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, whose relevance to the role of the media in nation-building the author discussed in similar studies (Kasonde 1999, Kasonde 2000, Kasonde 2008). The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is concerned with language and culture and their influence on human behavior. It argues that language mirrors the particular environment in which it functions as a means of communication. For instance, coastal speech communities are generally well-versed in maritime vocabulary. Similarly, forest communities are versatile in forestry vocabulary; snow-based speech communities also possess a wide snow vocabulary; desert speech communities are generally familiar with desert phenomena, including sand. Consequently, it is not easy to expect members of an arctic speech community to handle desert knowledge competently without adequate training. By extension, members of coastal speech communities face challenges in handling hinterland conceptual categories unless adequate training is provided.

The rejection of local languages in poor developing countries of Southern Africa is an example of an irrational disregard of established scientific principles generally and psychological teachings in particular. Issues of perception, motivation and personality need to be applied in order to explain the failure to achieve desirable outcomes, including the elaboration of national identity. It is not too dramatic to say that the rejection of local languages is a running away from responsibility. The rehabilitation of local languages is a colossal task to imagine, but one that has a direct bearing on future developments in the country and the entire region.

2.4 Social Constraints

The use of English as an official medium of instruction in Zambia and other countries of Southern Africa is justified by certain social constraints. These include high levels of illiteracy, poverty and exclusion. When the level of illiteracy is high in a given nation, then it becomes a mammoth task to map a common destiny and share a common vision. Illiterate societies tend to be more conservative and slow to espouse radical changes in their old way of life. Such societies may find it challenging to question the root causes of poverty and may also find it normal to regard English as the language of social mobility or national development. Paradoxically, the unemployed youth that roam the cities in search of employment are also generally fluent in English. The higher echelons of society may also be tempted to protect their newly acquired prosperity by collaborating with the former colonial masters at the expense of their countrymen and countrywomen. Due to historical circumstances, many key players in the affairs of African nations studied in Western countries. During their student days at glamorous universities in developed countries, they adopted modern lifestyles without hesitation in their search for social acceptance and academic success abroad. Very often, such graduates' attachment to and familiarity with Western language and culture means that they cannot reasonably be expected to vote in favor of African languages to the detriment of English.

2.5 Political Aspirations

The political aspirations of the vast majority of Zambians are generally oriented towards good governance and the rule of law. Paradoxically, the promotion of African languages has not been given top priority in national affairs. The organized resistance of the Zambian people against tyranny and autocratic rule explains two historical political achievements, namely attainment of political independence from British colonialism and the return to multiparty democratic government. These popular aspirations are expressed through various political parties with different political agendas and through a vibrant civil society. The major political parties include the ruling Patriotic Front (PF) and various opposition parties such as Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD), United Party for National Development (UPND) and United National Independence Party (UNIP). Various religious bodies, including Zambia Episcopal Conference (ZEC) and Christian Churches in Zambia (CCZ) are also engaged in advocacy. The Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) community is also actively involved in political mobilization and advocacy work. These include Women for Change (WfC), Foundation for Democratic Process (FODEP) and Transparency International Zambia (TIZ). The relationship between language and identity in Zambia and other countries of the Southern African region has been misunderstood in a way that still considers the use of African languages as backward and primitive. Based on the experience of other more developed countries of Europe and Asia, it is quite possible to foresee a reversal in the future language policy in the country.

2.6 Economic Challenges

The economic challenges of the people of Zambia can be summed up as underdevelopment. Paradoxically, the link between socio-cultural values and economic development has wrongly been considered to be non-existent. Attempts to raise language and identity issues, including local music, drama, and national language to top priority have been contested by the national elite. They, with tacit support from the lower echelons of society, have put their weight behind English in the belief that international trade and globalisation without English would be unthinkable. An underdeveloped country generally lacks adequate infrastructure and superstructure. Inadequate infrastructure manifests itself in poor transport and communication networks, lack of educational and health facilities such as hospitals and universities as well as poor housing. At the superstructure level, one observes that various aspects of governance and the rule of law that restrict economic development could be ameliorated. For instance, when economic development agencies provide information and key documents in a local language, then that could facilitate the process of inclusion for the vast majority of people from the lower echelons of society.

3. Identity Crisis

3.1 Illusion of Grandeur

The role of African languages in general education in Zambia mirrors the cultural and linguistic identity crisis of the vast majority of its countrymen and countrywomen (see Africa 1980; Alexandre 1971; Bokamba 1981; Chanda 1996; Chileshe 1996; Chishimba 1981a; 1981b; 1980; Heine and Reh 1982; Kamwangamalu 1998; Kashoki 1978; 1990; Kasonde 2000; Mkandawire 2006; Rakner 2003; Reh 1981; Serpell 1976; Serpell 1978). Cultural and linguistic identity crisis as an expression of African post-coloniality is generally well documented by sociolinguists and scholars from a variety of different disciplines, including anthropology, economics, ethnology, geography, history, literature, politics, psychology and sociology. Viewed through the lenses of classical Asian philosophers such as Confucius and Panini or European thinkers like Descartes and Humboldt or Plato, the idea that African languages are not appropriate media of instruction in general education in Africa itself, for school subjects as diverse as agricultural science, principles of accounts, book-keeping, commerce, geography, history, mathematics, biology, chemistry, physics, technical drawing, metalwork and woodwork, is undoubtedly absurd. To put it in a nutshell, the foundation of African cognitive systems is in the African languages themselves, without which the enculturation of well-adjusted country people might be compromised (Kasonde 2008).

3.2 Colonial Legacy

Zambia belongs to the group of nation states created in the nineteenth century by British expansionism, generally understood as colonialism or imperialism. The existing territorial boundaries of the country (formerly known as Northern Rhodesia) roughly correspond to the demarcations adopted at the Berlin Conference (1885). Thus, successive language policy initiatives pertaining to general education in Zambia started with the racial divide of the colonial era (1890-1963) between Europeans (English medium throughout) and Africans (immersion in their respective African languages, i.e. Bemba, Lozi, Tonga, Nyanja at elementary school and lower primary school levels, followed by gradual transition into the English medium from upper primary school level) and were followed by the universalised English-medium policy reversals of the post-colonial “rulership” of the First Republic (1964-1972).

The Education Reforms of the Second Republic (1973-1990), largely inspired by African nationalism coupled with the socialist-communist ideology of that era called Humanism, also failed to uproot English as medium of instruction in the country. Nevertheless, the One Party State of the Second Republic could be credited for attempting to raise the status of African languages in general education. The landmark introduction of the Language Clause in the Mwanakatwe Constitution (1991) and its retention with certain minor addenda like citing sign language in the Mung’omba Draft Constitution (2010) and the Silungwe Draft Constitution (2012) of the current Third Republic represented a great achievement for the national identity discourse in the country.

The moderate critics of the Language Clause generally espouse equal rights for English and African languages in general education as opposed to the elevation of English to the status of sole official language in country. In that respect, the critics look to the language policy obtaining in post-Apartheid South Africa. The more strident critics idealise the African Renaissance, in which African languages supplant English in all spheres of national life, including general education. To that extent, the second level of criticism would be considered as a different and unique expression of African nationalism.

3.3 Ethnic Conflict

The people of Zambia represent a mix of over 70 ethnic groups of Nigero-Congolese stock scattered over a territory of over 750000 square kilometers (see Dingemanse 2013, Greenberg 1963, Guthrie 1948, Lewis 2009, Lewis et al 2013). Against a background of cultural and linguistic identity crisis, the country is politically an inflammable and volatile nation state in which overt ethno-linguistic conflict is a potential threat to peace and security. The classical nationalist theories of linguistic unification, linguistic standardisation, and linguistic renaissance or linguistic restoration have given way to linguistic denial. As a result of linguistic denial, the neglect or disappearance of certain speech forms has been recorded. In extreme cases, language death or linguistic suicide has occurred, either in reality or symbolically, whereby a speech form only exists in name without any living speakers of the particular speech form (Crystal 2000).

The language situation in Zambia could also be described in terms of endangered languages. That is the reason why English as medium of instruction at general education level is the compromise that has made good political sense. It has made good political sense because it is a supra-national ethnic language free from any intra-national ethnic cleavage. At the same time, it is the gateway to international communication in various practical ways, including diplomacy and international relations, commerce and trade, science and technology and universal culture and civilisation. Who wants civil war? In actual fact, however, English as a medium of instruction in the country simply substitutes African languages in general education.

For education theory and practice the use of the mother tongue or failure to that then the use of a language that is familiar to learners is a reasonable proposition (Carroll, John B., Stephen C. Levinson and Penny Lee 2012). In this way, the acquisition of new concepts and problem solving are significantly facilitated. Consequently, schooling in Western societies is generally conducted in the first language (L1). Applying the same principle, the African learner needs to utilize an African language L1 at school in order to enhance the development of African cognitive systems. The use of L1 has worked well for the development of the Western mind and the Oriental mind has also benefited from it. The adoption of an African L1 in education is a challenge that African leaders need to face in order to capacitate the African mind. In the words of Prah “Every language is important. Icelandic is important. Italian is important. Greek is important. Could you ever ask someone from one of these countries whether the language they speak is important? In the same token, African languages should be allowed to flourish.” (Professor Kwesi Kwaa Prah was interviewed by Alicia Mitchell). http://www.elearning-africa.com/eLA\_Newsportal/no-country-can-make-progress-on-the-basis-of-a-borrowed-language/ Date of access: 23-05-2013.

3.4 Definitional Deficit

The next observation of the cultural and linguistic identity crisis in Zambia might relate to conceptualisation and definition of African languages. For the vast majority of Zambian people, each ethnic group ought to belong to a distinct linguistic entity. This does not necessarily mean that the other ethnic groups are inferior; rather, it represents a *laissez faire* attitude that interacts well with communalism, communism and related egalitarian ideologies. The sociolinguist would rather ask: What is race? What is language? What is dialect? What is sociolect? What is idiolect? Important as these distinctions must be for intellectuals, the country's people generally respond to them with one answer: these terms represent one and the same thing. That thing is, to be different. If you are not different, then you are non-existent. It is quite correct to state that individuals that ignore this general dictum would be doing so not only at their own peril but that of the respective ethnic groups that they belong to. In the context of a divided and fragmented national identity inherited from colonisers from overseas, the role of English in general education in the country is transformed into the acceptable medium of instruction by default or simply as an exercise in escapism. Who cares? In reality, the question should be: Who does not?

3.5 Power Struggle

The last point concerns the struggle for power in young multi-party Zambia. From the standpoint of a cultural and linguistic identity crisis, power could be perceived as legitimate to the extent that power would be held in the hands of members of acceptable ethno-linguistic identities. Linguistic battles often come to the fore during election campaigns. Inadvertently, the ethno-linguistic debate disguised as regionalist rhetoric obscures critical re-thinking and discourse in development planning and strategy implementation. In multi-party Zambia, a ruling party would possibly lose its grip on power if it challenged the status quo in the area of linguistic identity. The supra-national and -ethnic language that English, in Sub-Saharan Africa, is perceived to be represents the authority of the state. It is deemed an irresponsible act of radicalism to suggest that African languages ought to propel the African Renaissance to greater heights. And yet, that is the simple truth that ought to be expressed about post-colonial Africa.

4. Conclusion

The study has described the interplay between language and identity in Southern Africa generally and Zambia in particular by using general education as an illustration. A special form of identity crisis was identified in general education. The term “general education” refers to schooling that occurs in preschool, primary school and secondary school. In short, General Education level prepares learners for academic and professional training at Higher and Tertiary Education level.

The study has shown the existence of multilingualism, code-switching and diglossia in a Nigero-Congolese context generally and Bantu context in particular (Ferguson 1959; Fishman 1967). The vast majority of local speech forms in Zambia belong to the Bantu group. Multilingualism in Zambia involves 72 different speech forms in peaceful coexistence. Among these living speech forms, seven lingua franca are considered “national languages”. These are: Bemba (North), Tonga (South), Nyanja (East), Lozi (West) and Kaonde-Lunda-Luvale (North-West).

Existing legislation designates English the official language of the country. Apart from its use in parliament, courts of justice and other related government transactions, the official language is the medium of instruction in the entire education system. The English language penetrated the country during the British colonial government era. The relation between English and national languages is diglossic because English has assumed a High Variety status and national languages have assumed a Low variety status. To possess communicative competence in multilingual Zambia essentially means practicing code-switching between English and national languages but also switching between tiny ethnic speech forms (ethnolects) and large national speech forms (nationalects).

This paper has argued that definition of national identity in multilingual Zambia from a linguistic perspective can be problematic because each speech form also asserts its own linguistic identity. By placing a former colonial language at the centre of educational policy, the state could be accused by its critics of having failed to address the issue of national identity in the Southern African country. Consequently, viewed against the background of more developed nations of Asia and Europe, the country might be described as a heterogeneous nation in transition with potential for future major policy reversals in education and other spheres of public life, including the judiciary and legislature.

Postscript

Before this paper went to press, the author learned of new developments in language policy in general education in Zambia that addressed some of the author’s concerns:

The relationship between language and identity in Zambia and other countries of the Southern African region has been misunderstood in a way that still considers the use African languages as backward and primitive. Based on the experience of other more developed countries of Europe and Asia, it is quite possible to foresee a reversal in the future language policy in the country. (cf. paragraphe 2.5 in the text)

Government authorities in Zambia issued a new language policy directive in 2013 requiring preschool and lower primary school children to learn using the local lingua franca as medium of instruction. For children arriving from areas where a different lingua franca is functional, “linguistic zoning” (Kashoki 1978) can create initial adjustment challenges. The new language policy calls for the gradual introduction of English as medium of instruction in line with the recommendations of UNESCO. This means that English will be learnt as a school subject during elementary school and lower primary school rather than being the medium of instruction. The use of lingua franca in African elementary schools and lower primary schools was practiced during the British colonial government era. From the point of view of preserving African identity, the new directive for general education is the right policy. Certain distinguished members of the public, such as Zambia Episcopal Conference (highest assembly of Catholic Bishops) complained that before implementation, mutual dialogue between stakeholders, including parents and guardians should have been instituted. Considering that the introduction of English as sole medium of instruction was also unilateral, it is unlikely that the new policy will be reversed. What the new policy has achieved is decriminalization of the use of lingua franca in schools. As a result, government has ordered new teaching materials in local languages for learning and teaching purposes.

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Chapter Six

Italian English Bilingualism  
in Australia:  
The Interplay of Language  
and Cultural Identification

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Introduction

Following the post-war mass migration of Italians to different parts of the globe, a great amount of research has been done to understand the features of Italian communities abroad. In particular, their linguistic behaviour has been at the centre of attention of academics for years (Bettoni 1993; De Fina and Bizzoni 2003) and still continues to draw a lively interest (see Perrino 2013). Of all Italian expatriates, Italians in Australia have been among the most thoroughly analysed, and a number of studies have shed light on several important issues spanning from their general linguistic repertoire to the vast array of language contact phenomena that characterise the community (e.g. Kinder 1994).

Considering the importance that social judgement based on languages has in society, studies on Italo-Australians have specifically explored the area of language attitudes. In this context, language attitudes have been found to have very peculiar characteristics that render the area enticing for scholars. Nevertheless, research has focused almost exclusively on post-war migrants and has largely neglected other Italians in Australia that are different from the bulk of the community. This is the case of Italian English bilinguals, speakers who are characterised by a distinct linguistic behaviour that has only marginally been investigated (Santello 2014).

The present contribution seeks to explore Italian English bilinguals in Australia and, particularly, some of their language-related attitudes, which constitute a mostly uncharted area of inquiry. Specifically, building upon the work of Rubino (2009) and adopting methodological tools adapted from Baker (1992), this study, which is part of a larger project on Italian speakers in Australia[[59]](#footnote-59), focuses on attitudes towards bilingualism. The concept, considered adjacent but conceptually distinct from language attitudes, refers to the predisposition to being bilingual, studied through a holistic approach (Baker 1992: 76-80), that is, by considering two languages jointly within a non-fractional approach to bilingualism. The topic is deemed particularly significant considering its known implications in terms, for instance, of language maintenance or language shift in migration contexts (Baker and Prys Jones 1998: 28-35). In this chapter I verify 1) to what extent Italian English bilinguals hold positive (or negative) attitudes towards their own bilingualism, and 2) how attitudes towards bilingualism are linked to linguistic and identity features. A two-step research design is used to address the research questions. It involves a group interview, with eight informants, and a larger quantitative study, with approximately one hundred participants, that employs a direct approach to attitudes.

This research adds to the linguistic literature on Italians in Australia by focusing on Italian English bilinguals specifically. It also highlights the interplay cultural and linguistic elements in shaping the ways in which speakers of the Italian diasporas who identify themselves as Italian (cf. Gabaccia 2000) display their language-related attitudes.

The chapter begins with a brief profile of the Italo-Australian community and touches upon its linguistic repertoire and language attitudes. The discussion moves onto Italian English bilinguals, defined as individuals who use both Italian and English in their daily life (Grosjean 2010: 4). Their linguistic features are highlighted, together with what is known about their language attitudes. Afterwards, the study design is clarified and the two legs of the study are explained. A discussion on Italian English bilingualism, inclusive of possible theoretical implications, concludes the paper.

Historical and linguistic profile of the Italo-Australian community

The Italian population is one of the largest foreign-born populations in Australia, with 199,124 Australian citizens or permanent residents born in Italy. Moreover, beyond Italian-born residents, about 916,000 Australians self-report their ancestry as Italian, either entirely or in combination with other ancestry.

The majority of Italian emigrants to Australia left the motherland in the first three decades after the Second World War to take up residence permanently mainly in Melbourne and Sydney (Mascitelli and Battiston 2008: 56)[[60]](#footnote-60). Italians followed a precise pattern both in their migration and in their settlement in the host country. Their migration was typically chain migration (Castles 1992: 44-46), that is, first newcomers usually fostered the departure of other family members or friends from the same town. Their settlement in Australia was mainly clustered in small areas (Jupp 2001: 486-521) in order to reproduce conditions as similar as possible to those experienced in the pre-migration context and to seek mutual protection against various forms of discrimination perpetrated by the wider Australian society (Baldassar, Baldock and Wilding 2006: 36).

Nowadays Italo-Australians form a well-established community and Italian is regarded as one of the most used community languages, as shown repeatedly in the Australian census. According to the data of the 2011 census, it appears to be commonly employed in the home domain, as 299,836 Australian residents have indicated Italian as their main language of interaction at home. While looking at these data, however, should take into account the actual linguistic repertoire of Italo-Australians, that is, the fact that the Italian community is a multilingual community, characterised by the simultaneous presence of Italian, English and Italian regional languages[[61]](#footnote-61). Following this observation, it is likely that many of those who have declared to speak Italian at home may, instead, speak an Italian regional language (Santello 2011: 504-505).

In fact, most first generation Italians have an Italian regional language as their dominant language[[62]](#footnote-62). Besides, they often do speak Italian, in its popular and regional varieties (Bettoni and Gibbons 1988: 16; Bettoni 1991: 264), and English, which remains their weakest language. Second generation Italians usually acquire a regional language in the home domain since their birth, and begin to use English as soon as they start attending pre-school and school. At that point English becomes their dominant language, in all domains, often also at home in conversations with family members. Italian is by far their weakest language (see Ciliberti 2007: 49) as it is of little use in the home domain. In addition, the Australian society, in spite of the presence of overt multilingual policies (Ozolins 1988; 1993), does not value competence in languages other than English and thus Italians find little incentive to learn maintain or improve the language altogether (Totaro-Genevois 2005; Rubino 2010). The third generation usually shifts to English monolingualism (Rubino 1993; Cavallaro 2010), following a very well-known pattern of language loss.

The Italo-Australian community is a diglossic community[[63]](#footnote-63). However, as Bettoni and Rubino (1996) have shown, in this sociolinguistic environment, due to the presence of trilingualism, diglossia is definitely more complex and multifaceted than one would expect in a migration context. In particular, the functional division and differential prestige of the languages is rather intricate. While the position of Italian regional languages as low varieties is unquestionable, the collocation of Italian and English is less obvious. In fact, the sociolinguistic context is characterised by two patterns of attitudes corresponding to two diglossic situations: one for the first generation and the other for the subsequent generations. 1) For the former group of speakers. Italian regional languages are Low languages used in very informal domains. Italian, on the contrary, is more prestigious and its usage increases in public and formal domain, whereas English enters conversations mainly in contexts less ethnically marked, such as school or workplace. 2) For the generations born and raised in Australia, English prevails both in the family/friends domain and in very public situations. Italian, on the other hand, is employed mainly in interactions with strangers, in Italian shops, churches and other kinds of formal/public communication within the community – confirming its collocation as High language. Italian regional languages are relegated to the home domain or, more generally, family.

Attitudes towards bilingual and multilingual language practices have not been studied as much as attitudes to languages per se. Nevertheless some research has touched upon topics related to attitudes to tri/bilingualism among Italians. Rubino (2006), for instance, has highlighted that metalinguistic comments of second generation Italo-Australians indicate limited support of tri/bilingualism in the community and little interest in bilingual teaching. Moreover, general presence of monolingual ideologies is found in the Italian community in Australia, along with a consequent unavoidable language shift in the long run. Interestingly, however, individuals who do have a non-monolingual repertoire exhibit multilingual practices that appear to be strictly connected to the performance and the construction of multiple identities (ibid: 85-86).

Italian English bilinguals and their language-related attitudes

Although the bulk of the Italo-Australian community displays the linguistic profile outlined above, there are a number of Italians in Australia that do not fit into this speech community. Of particular relevance for this study is the case of Italians who have Italian and English as their dominant languages.

Research on these bilinguals has been extremely limited but we know that some of them correspond to the new migrants from Italy studied by Rubino (2009) – individuals who have distinct features that set them apart from trilingual Italo-Australians. They usually moved to large Australian cities much after the period of mass migration and consequently came from a country that was socially and linguistically different from that left by older vintages. Reasons for migrating span from family reunion to personal desire for a radical change in life, however unquestionably not linked to stringent necessity. Rather, their migration is the consequence of the increased incidence of general transnational mobility that characterises contemporary societies (Baldassar 2007: 387). These bilinguals have Italian as their dominant language and may or may not have knowledge of an Italian regional language. Their Italian is either regional or regional-popular (cf. Rubino 2009: 207-08), that is, marked at the phonological, prosodic and lexical levels and, at times, also at the grammatical level.

From the detailed description of the social behaviour of new migrants from Italy provided by Baldassar and colleagues (Baldassar, Baldock and Wilding 2006: 38-39) it is possible to infer that Italian is kept in use by Italian English bilinguals in various forms. On the one hand, the language is employed in the frequent connections with Italy, as these recent migrants are active transnational communicators who make regular phone calls, send photographs and news via a number of means of communication (*ibid*: 39). On the other, their Italian groups of friends are not regionally based and tend not to associate with the post war migrants. Therefore, in their interactions with friends, the Italian language is the code that is most widely spread.

Their first contact with English usually occurred prior to migration in an educational context. Although their pre-migration competence in English was often limited, especially as to oracy skills, their knowledge of the language often forms a sound basis for the development of their bilingualism. In other words, being taught English at school, even at a basic level, has accelerated the process of language learning in the host country. In addition, their general higher level of education, often attained both in Italy and in Australia, improves their chances of advancing and expanding their competence in both languages (Rubino 2009: 219-21).

Some second generation Italians in Australia also do not fall into the usual profile outlined in the literature. In particular, thanks to personal commitment to improving their competence in Italian, constant connections and trips to Italy (Baldassar 2001) as well as education pursued both in Australia and in Italy, their bilingualism displays different features if compared to the majority of the Italo-Australian community. For instance, their Italian shows only marginal signs of interference and they are able to keep a monolingual mode when necessary, reducing codeswitching to a minimum.

Some of these bilinguals may have emigrated in their teenage years and therefore have acquired Italian not only within the household but also in all the other domains. More extended exposure and wider use of Italian in their pre-migration years has strengthened their competence and contributed to a more balanced bilingualism.

Finally, some Italian English bilinguals in Australia are children of parents who originally came from two different regions or parts of Italy. Due to their different regional origin, husband and wife speak mutually unintelligible regional languages. For this reason, the language employed in the home domain has to be Italian, as lingua franca of communication. It is the case, for example, of married couples in which one of the spouses did not emigrate after the World War II and thus does not form part of “the village out migration chains” (Baldassar 2007: 388). In these situations, Italian can also, at times, be enhanced by being spoken in areas where people coming from different parts of Italy – and therefore speaking different regional languages – live side by side (Cavallaro 2006: 36), which is a pattern of “italianisation” already outlined by the pioneering work by De Mauro on other Italian expatriate communities around the world (De Mauro 1963: 53-62). As a result, this “lingua franca usage” in the home domain, together with non-regional residential settings has engendered an Italian English bilingualism deprived of strong influence from regional languages.

As mentioned earlier, where language-related attitudes are concerned, as opposed to the fairly extended amount of research on trilingual Italo-Australians, studies on Italian-English bilinguals are rather scarce. Rubino (2009) has started to investigate language-related attitudes of new migrants from Italy, group of Italians that, as mentioned earlier, partly overlaps that of Italian English bilinguals. In her study, she explored attitudes to bilingualism and found that new migrants from Italy, who indeed have more chances to become bilingual, hold firm motivation for maintaining and transmitting Italian to their children. In general, they are more strongly aware of their linguistic practices and tend to stigmatise mixed varieties[[64]](#footnote-64). Moreover, it seems that the importance of Italian culture in Australia plays a role in their maintenance strategies and language attitudes.

These early findings on new migrants therefore seem to indicate that bilingualism, especially at an individual level, is regarded as an asset by Italians in Australia. Moreover, it seems that Italian English bilingualism in particular tends to be valued and promoted by bilinguals themselves. This is in keeping with the shifting perception of Italian in the wider Australian society, as the Italian language has been gaining more and more prestige in the past thirty years in Australia, becoming one of the most taught second languages of the country (Totaro-Genevois 2005: 209) and achieving the status of cultivated and modern language, in addition to its connotations as community language (Rubino 2002: 10-11). It is also in line with the positive attitude towards both Italian and English – as opposed to Italian regional languages – widespread in earlier vintages of migration (Bettoni and Gibbons 1990).

Study Design

Considering the indicative nature of earlier findings, the main goal of the study is to provide an exploration of attitudes towards bilingualism among Italian English bilinguals in Australia. Firstly, I designed a group interview (Study A) to undertake a preliminary foray into attitudes towards bilingualism. The choice of group interview is due to its faculty of eliciting attitudes while verifying consensus around them, which in turn is beneficial for the identification of attitudes in a speech community (cf. Hoare 2001). Secondly, I created a survey questionnaire (Study B), building on the results of the group interview. The questionnaire was administered face-to-face, that is, within a direct approach (cf. Garrett 2010), which has been preferred over other approaches because it elicits explicit attitudes, that is, attitudes that the individual considers to be valid (Bohner and Dickel 2011: 395). These attitudes in several instances have been found highly correlated with propensity to act (Ladegaard 2000: 229-30).

Study A

This first study explores the attitudes of Italian English bilinguals towards their own bilingualism. I wanted to uncover what kind of attitudes bilinguals have towards bilingualism itself and I also wanted to elicit 1) attitudinal correlates associated with Italian English bilingualism, and 2) possible linguistic and cultural factors that impact on attitudes.

Sampling and methodology

Eight women, recruited through an invitation in local media, took part in the group interview. The gender was kept only female in order to heighten the group’s internal consistency (Morgan 1998: 59-63). All were permanent residents of Australia and were of Italian background, hence bilingual-bicultural. The average age was between forty and fifty, and the subjects were half first generation and half second generation. The key recruitment criterion employed to screen participants was bilingual use in everyday life, in accordance with the notion of bilingualism proposed by Grosjean (2010: 4).

The informants were gathered in a room outside of university buildings, and they were told that the discussion was going to be about Italian and English in relation to other themes, such as language use in various contexts. The moderator was an Italian English bilingual whose prosody shows bidirectional interference in both languages – a fact that induced group interview participants to negotiate their attitudes in interaction (Liebscher and Dailey-O'Cain 2009). The moderator initiated the discussion by asking informants to reflect on bilingualism in Australia and within the Italian community, although the word bilingualism was always avoided. In particular, the comments revolved around the perception of bilingualism in social interactions and touched upon the specific features of Italian English bilingualism.

The whole interview was recorded and both Italian and English were used freely by the moderator and the participants alike. Codeswitching therefore was maintained naturally throughout the conversation, establishing a bilingual mode (cf. Grosjean 2010) that was accepted by the whole group. An assistant moderator was also present and took notes of consensus and suprasegmental communication. The note taking was carried out following Krueger (1998: 75-83), by writing down for each question three main elements: key points, quotes and comments/observations. The analysis was conducted by using a discourse-based methodology (Liebscher and Dailey-O'Cain 2009: 196-98), following a content-based approach (Hoare 2001).

Results

In keeping with previous findings on strong support towards language maintenance among new migrants from Italy, the discussion reveals overall positive attitudes towards bilingualism among Italian English speakers. The moderator addressed the issue by referring to the perception of Italian English bilingualism in social interaction. Informants tended to express positive judgement as to being able to communicate both in Italian and in English in contemporary Australian society. In the first excerpt the moderator asks a question referring to the Italian community in Australia but informant 4 purposely shifts her focus towards the wider Australian society:

Excerpt I

Moderator: *E qui nella comunità italiana, per esempio? Let’s say it’s a dinner in which people speak both English and Italian. How do you think a person would look if they speak English and Italian?*

“And here in the Italian community, for example? Let’s say it’s a dinner in which people speak both English and Italian. How do you think a person would look if they speak English and Italian?”

Informant 4: *In the Australian context if you speak another language it kinda gives you an air of intrigue. You know, the average monolingual Australian would just think… wow they can just speak two languages! It can give you more power in a social sense, maybe people think you are extra intelligent.*

Scholars have demonstrated that bilingualism is often related with specific words and concepts that account for the image bilingualism has among respondents (Yamamoto 2001: 31-40). From the few spontaneous associations emerged here – a context that is far from those studied hitherto – associated to bilingualism are attitudinal correlates connected to power, intelligence and, more generally, social desirability. Another informant refers to positive attitudes, although does not venture as far as associating bilingualism with specific social attributes.

Excerpt II

Informant 1: *I think if you are bilingual people perceive you as quite fortunate. I am not sure if I would extend it to being more smart, powerful or better looking, but it’s definitely positive.*

These positive attitudes were then further explored by asking informants if they were referring specifically to Italian English bilingualism or more extensively to any form of bilingualism in Australia. Interestingly, subjects acknowledged that the status of the Italian language in Australia is a factor that has engendered positive attitudes particularly towards Italian English bilinguals. Consistently, the same positive status might not be associated with other languages.

Excerpt III

Informant 6: *[…] because we are so embedded, and Italianness in Australia has been embraced in food, culture, whereas it’s not the same for people of Islamic background for instance.*

Overall, then, there are recurrent observations that make precise reference to Italianness and the general favour it encounters in the Australian society, in line with the shifting perception of Italian previously discussed. The attractiveness of Italy as a country is also associated with Italian English bilingualism. In particular, in the following excerpt speaking in Italian, in addition to English, seems to be linked to positive connotations.

Excerpt IV

Informant 2: *Però penso che l’Italia abbia uno status un po’ più attraente come paese. Mi pare che quando si parla in italiano ci siano una serie di stereotipi positivi. È una paese che va di moda.*

“But I think that Italy has a more attractive status as a country. In my opinion when someone speaks Italian there a number of positive sterotypes. It’s a fashionable country.”

In spite of these positive attitudes, there remain instances in which bilingualism can carry negative connotations. Specifically, being Italian English bilingual is considered positive as long as no language interference is noticeable when communicating in English. In other words, perceptible presence of L2, i.e. English as L2, interference in late bilinguals may still be considered linked with negative attributes.

Excerpt V

Informant 8: *If you have an Italian accent it is a disadvantage in a workplace. You can be discriminated if you come across as a person with an Italian accent.*

There is general agreement around negative attributes connected with phonological interference when speaking English. However, direct reference to these attitudes are made only by informants who themselves display features of phonological interference, as in the case of informant 8.

In addition to these general trends, informants mentioned also additional elements that might have an impact on this pattern of attitudes. A point in case is the following excerpt, in which the context of communication seems to play a role in attitude formation towards Italian English bilingualism.

Excerpt VI

Informant 3: *If the workplace is multicultural, then that’s fine to have an accent. But if the workplace is not multicultural and you are the only one with the Italian accent you feel left out.*

Overall, positive attitudes towards Italian English bilingualism were manifested across informants and found broad agreement during the discussion. It seems that Italian English bilinguals evaluate positively their own bilingualism and its perception in the Australian society. However, negative associations can emerge in case of noticeable crosslinguistic interference when a bilingual speaks English. Bilinguals do not endorse such negative attributes, but nonetheless there seems to be acknowledgement of their existence and their possible effects on speakers. As will be discussed later, the results of Study B further particularise the indicative data that have surfaced in Study A, which is meant to bring to the surface some points that these bilinguals deem relevant. These data, rather than being conclusive, pave the way for Study B, which will confirm that late bilingualism and phonological interference have specific ties with how speakers perceive their own bilingualism.

Study B

The objective of Study B was to further investigate attitudes towards bilingualism among Italian English bilinguals and possible connections with features related to language background and cultural identity. Specifically, this part of the research sought to 1) confirm the existence of positive attitudes towards bilingualism; 2) identify correlations between age of acquisition of English and attitudes; 3) identify attitudinal differences between bilinguals who report having phonological interference and bilinguals who do not; and 4) find possible correlations between cultural identification and attitudes. This latter point seems of major bearing, seeing the results of the group interview and the general significance of sociocultural factors for linguistic minorities in Australia (Rubino 2010).

Sampling and methodology

Bilinguals were recruited through notices appeared on a number of Italian platforms, responded to a face-to-face survey in various locations around Sydney. To qualify participants needed to satisfy the same criteria set for Study A: 1) being users of both Italian and English; 2) being Italian-born or of Italian descent; and 3) self-reporting that Italian and English (and not an Italian regional language) are their two dominant languages. In table 6-1 number of participants, gender and generation of the sample are reported. In this second study, both male and female participants were recruited in order to enhance the diversity of the sample. The educational background of participants was medium-high, with 76% of subjects with at least three years of tertiary education either in Italy or in Australia, and all reportedly highly exposed to both Italian and English on a regular basis.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Generation** | **# Male** | **# Female** | **# Total** |
| First | 29 | 36 | 65 |
| Second | 13 | 25 | 38 |

**Table 6-1. Generation and Gender**

The pen-and-paper questionnaire comprised five items eliciting attitudes towards bilingualism and one eliciting self-reported cultural identification. The questionnaire was inserted in a larger survey on language attitudes among bilinguals and included also a number of language-related questions, among which there were age of acquisition and phonological interference, variables of particular relevance for this study.

The set of questions to elicit attitudes to bilingualism were seven-point statement-agreement scales adapted from a capital work that explored these types of attitudes among bilinguals (Baker 1992: 76-80). Three out of five statements were adapted from the five most central items found by Baker in his analysis on attitudes towards bilingualism. Namely, “in Australia for a person to be Italian he/she must know both Italian and English” elicited strong endorsement of bilingualism and “for a person of Italian background living in Australia it is important to speak and read both English and Italian” elicited mild endorsement of bilingualism. Also derived from Baker was “Australian children with Italian background should be taught both Italian and English” which refers to attitudes towards bilingual teaching. The items “there is need to support Italian in Australia” and “it is important that media in the Italian community in Australia have both English and Italian sections” were chosen for their relevance to this specific speech community and in consideration of the findings of previous studies (Rubino 2009).

Self-reported cultural identification was elicited by asking participants to indicate spontaneously any culture they identify with, and to express the degree of identification with a full or decimal number from 1 to 10. The question sought to establish the multidimensional construction of cultural identity among bilinguals and to measure it through an appropriate continuous scale.

The items were randomised before commencing the fieldwork to avoid a possible “boredom effect” (Field 2000: 273) that may have caused an unsystematic variation. In addition, some items were reversed, i.e. negatively-worded, with the purpose of minimising any acquiescence bias.

Results

All participants answered the questions comprised in the questionnaire. The analysis of the five items associated with attitudes towards bilingualism was carried out one by one, starting from the calculation of means and standard deviations considering the entire sample. Pearson correlation tests were performed between age of acquisition of the indicators of attitudes towards bilingualism, in order to verify the existence of a relationship between the variables, in light of what has emerged from the group interview. Afterwards, as will be outlined, *t*-tests were run to identify differences between two specific groups of bilinguals within the sample. The analysis was then complemented by the consideration of identity-related features.

The analysis of scores of the five items associated with attitudes towards bilingualism confirms that the bilinguals sampled in this study hold positive attitudes towards their bilingualism. The table below reports the means and the standard deviations.

Fig 6-1. Attitudes towards bilingualism

As apparent, bilingual teaching and support of bilingualism are the items that bring about stronger positive attitudes. Likewise, attitudes towards strong endorsement of bilingualism are positive, although less favourable than the previous two indicators. A similar mean is found in attitudes towards bilingualism in media, which scores 1.27 less than the highest of the five scales.

These data, while corroborating general favourable evaluative reactions with reference to bilingualism, underscore a noteworthy discrepancy between the two first indicators (linked with bilingualism as a personal undertaking) and other indicators (linked with societal bilingualism). This seems to suggest that, among Italian English bilinguals in Australia, bilingualism is viewed as a personal endeavour as opposed to an obligation Italians should conform to. In other words, Italian English bilingualism enjoys support from the speakers especially when it is seen as an individual effort, not necessarily linked to the speech community.

In order to complement the aforementioned results, and in consideration of the outcome of the group interview, the subsequent analyses were carried out to verify the existence of any correlation between age of acquisition of English and the indicators of attitudes towards bilingualism. Specifically, it was envisaged that a late bilingual would have been more likely to hold positive attitudes towards bilingualism. Pearson’s correlation corroborates the subsistence of a positive correlation between *age of acquisition* of English and one of the items related to attitudes towards bilingualism. In particular, attitudes towards bilingual teaching are found to be significantly correlated with age of acquisition of English, *r*(103)=.264, p<.05. In other words, the later a bilingual starts learning English the more likely s/he will be to display positive attitudes towards bilingual teaching. These results denote the existence of a distinct augmenting effect on attitudes towards bilingual teaching brought about by having started to learn English later in life, thus signifying the increased awareness among late bilinguals of the importance of bilingual education.

Subsequent tests aimed at further substantiating the trends emerged from the previous analysis. Independent t-tests were carried out between subjects who reported having *phonological interference* when speaking English and subjects who reported no interference.

The analysis yielded significant differences. Specifically, bilinguals who do not have phonological interference tend to have less positive attitudes towards bilingualism. These differences are significant t(101)=2.14, p<.05 for attitudes towards bilingualism in media, where bilinguals with no interference report lower scores (M=4.38, SD=1.82) than bilinguals who do have phonological interference when speaking English (M=5.17, SD=1.91). Similar differences are found when considering attitudes towards bilingual teaching, where individuals with no interference manifested less positive attitudes (M=5.69, SD=1.42) than those with interference (M=6.41, SD=1.23), t(101)=2.74, p<.05.

The figure clearly indicates the dissimilarities between the two groups of bilinguals. Both attitudes towards bilingual teaching and towards bilingualism in media are significantly higher among bilinguals who show phonological interference. This outcome seems consistent with the previous analysis, thus upholding the conclusion that attitudes towards bilingualism are higher among speakers who show signs of late bilingualism.

Fig 6-2. Difference in Attitudes towards bilingualism between individuals with phonological interference and individuals without.

The final analysis presented here concerns *identity-related features* and, specifically, the cultural identification self-reported by the informants. All participants spontaneously indicated both Italian and Australian as cultures they identify with, and a substantial number (N=54) indicated also their own local regional identity. These data, broadly speaking, confirm the multilayered construction of identity typical of multilingual-multicultural individuals (see for instance Hong, Morris, Chiu and Benet-Martinez 2000; Briley, Morris and Simonson 2005; Benet-Martinez, Lee and Leu 2006) and substantiate the maintenance of Italian cultural identification after migration.

Ulterior correlation analysis of the data indicates that, while identification with Italian culture and identification with local regional culture have not been found to have any relationship with these specific attitudes, p>.05, identification with Australian culture has correlations with some of the items. Moderate to strong negative relationships exist between identification with Australian culture and strong endorsement of bilingualism, mild endorsement and attitudes towards bilingual teaching. Table 6-2 below shows the values.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Identification with Australian culture** | **r** | **p** |
| Attitudes to bilingualism  (strong endorsement) | -.248 | .012 |
| Attitudes to bilingualism  (mild endorsement) | -.418 | <.001 |
| Attitudes to bilingual teaching | -.385 | <.001 |

**Table 6-2. Correlations between Attitudes towards bilingualism and identification with Australian culture**

It is apparent that identification with Australian culture and evaluative reactions towards bilingualism proceed in two opposite directions. In a nutshell, bilinguals that highly identify with Australian culture, regardless of other self-reported cultural identifications, are less likely to show positive attitudes towards bilingualism across three out of the five items employed in this study. As will be discussed in the concluding remarks, these results suggest implications related the monolingual norms widespread in the Australian society and their connections with the extent to which Italian English bilinguals appreciate and support their own bilingualism.

Conclusions

Both arms of the study have highlighted the existence of positive attitudes towards bilingualism among Italian English speakers of Italian descent in Australia. In addition, it has been noted that several factors linked to both linguistic and cultural identity elements are connected to enhanced or diminished appreciation of the importance of bilingualism in various forms.

In the group interview positive attitudes emerge distinctly. The favour accorded to bilingualism is explicitly indicated by informants in association with the image of Italy and of the Italian language in the wider Australian society, in reference to attributes such as power and intelligence. Regardless of this favour, bilinguals who themselves show phonological interference when speaking English raised the issue of the existence negative attributes connected with language interference. In other words, these bilinguals are aware of the possible negativity associated with bilingualism in certain instances.

In the first part of the study, therefore, bilinguals appear to reiterate a major discourse around low proficiency in migrant communities (Piller and Takahashi 2011) associated with negative correlates. Bilinguals here, on one side, replicate this discourse by speaking of negative views held by the Australian society towards individuals who appear to have a less than perfect command of English. On the other, they seem to position themselves not only in accordance to these “master narratives” but also in opposition to them (cf. Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008: 385). In particular, they refrain from identifying with discriminatory attitudes towards crosslinguistic influence, while acknowledging and taking into account their presence, thus creating a twofold endorsement/disidentification with major discourse on bilingualism.

These indications encounter support in the quantitative study. The larger sample of speakers who were asked to express their attitudes towards their own bilingualism through five scales has 1) confirmed general positive attitudes towards bilingualism, and 2) particularised our understanding on what may exert a negative impact on how bilingualism is evaluated.

Italian English bilinguals show supportive attitudes towards bilingualism, although more so when it involves individual actions than when it is seen as a societal endeavour. However, several factors are connected with diminished favour accorded to bilingualism. In particular, early bilingualism, absence of phonological interference and association with Australian culture are linked in various ways with less positive attitudes towards bilingualism. Conversely, acquiring English later in life, carrying the “sign” of language interference when speaking the language and identifying less with Australian culture are consistent with a more benign consideration of bilingualism.

The differences in attitudes according to age of acquisition and phonological interference are likely to be due to two separate processes. On one side, negative judgements experienced by late bilinguals on themselves in Australia might have favoured the formation of more positive attitudes towards bilingualism and, more precisely, towards bilingual education. On the other, it is possible that early bilinguals, who predominantly grew up in Australia, might conform more to the broader Australian society, which, as amply stated, may not necessarily endorse bilingual practices.

In line with this latter point, the study also points towards negative correlations between identification with the culture of the host country and bilingualism. Inferior disposition towards bilingualism might be more present in Italian English bilinguals that strongly identify with Australian culture. This outcome is consistent with the general assumptions of studies on language and identity (e.g. Williams and Burden 1997: 115), in that it underscores the importance of identity-related features in relation to the use of multiple languages. More specifically, it is in keeping with previous studies discussing the presence of a “monolingual mindset” (Clyne 2005) widespread in the Australian society and the broader role of socio-cultural factors among linguistic minorities (Rubino 2010).

Overall, these findings confirm the discrepancy between trilingual Italo-Australians, who, as previously discussed, manifest limited support to tri/bilingualism and little interest in bilingual teaching (Rubino 2006). Furthermore, the results are in line with what Rubino has found among new migrants from Italy, a group of speakers that partly overlaps that of Italian English bilinguals. In her study, she identified firm motivations to transmit Italian to subsequent generations and favourable disposition towards the maintenance of bilingualism (Rubino 2009), which arguably can be extended to this group of bilinguals.

This research, therefore, contributes to the current linguistic literature on Italians in Australia by adding novel results on Italian English bilinguals specifically. Moreover, at a theoretical level, it emphasises the relevance of considering the interplay of factors related to both culture and language when exploring language-related attitudes in an Italian migration setting. Future research will have to further examine the interaction of cultural and linguistic elements in shaping attitudes towards bilingualism and to verify the role played by attitudes towards Italian and attitudes towards English in the identity construction of bilingual-bicultural individuals. Moreover, it would be interesting to investigate the function of the additional elements emerged in the group interview, such as the context of communication or the values indexed by both Italian and English in this migration context.

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Chapter Seven

Shaping Cultural Identity  
through Language:  
Various Types of Cultural Content  
in Textbooks

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1. Introduction

In recent decades a new perspective has developed regarding cultural aspects of foreign language learning (see, e.g., Kramsch 2006a; De Caro 2008). In modern textbooks of foreign language (FL), features of “small culture” are discussed side by side with features of “big C culture” (both terms are introduced by Kramsch 2006a). This means that if, previously, it was mainly historical and artistic heritage (that belong to “big C culture”) that was described in textbooks, now also various aspects of everyday life (i.e. “small culture”) and human behavior (including pragmatic competence) are taken into consideration.

There can be two main explanations for this new perspective. On the one hand, new theories and new approaches in the field of foreign language acquisition have been developed by new disciplines such as cultural studies, anthropology, sociology, pragmatics, and discourse analysis (e.g., Kramsch 1998, 2006a). On the other hand, the development of new approaches became indispensable because of new tendencies in modern society. Migration and long- and short-term travel have changed approaches to language learning and the place of culture within it. As far as the opportunity to practice a foreign language (and to apply what is learned) in natural conditions (“in the field”) has become a reality, issues of multicultural communication and other aspects of “small culture” have come to the fore.

Communication itself has also expanded its goals from merely instrumental (problem-solving and exchange of information) to “a much more sophisticated competence in the manipulation of symbolic systems” (Kramsch 2006b: 251). This means that learners of a foreign language must acquire not only grammatical competence and vocabulary, but also “symbolic competence” (a term used by Kramsch 2006b) that “does not do away with the ability to express, interpret, and negotiate meanings in dialogue with others, but enriches it and embeds it into the ability to produce and exchange symbolic goods in the complex global context in which we live today” (Kramsch 2006b: 251).

The aim of this paper is twofold. First of all, based on the analysis of three Italian textbooks (for L2 learners) at the elementary level, I will describe how textbooks of FL (foreign language) for beginners contribute to the acquisition of cultural aspects, and which strategies they use in this first phase of the language acquisition. Second, I will outline the image of Italy created in textbooks through the language. Thereby, we will see that the information supplied can often be interpreted as contributing not only to learners’ linguistic competence, but also to their symbolic competence.

The cultural content in textbooks can be studied from two main perspectives:

1. a monolingual and, hence, monocultural perspective, in which the description examines the weight and cultural material in textbooks for a particular language. Examples of this approach are, first of all, descriptions of English textbooks, since English is the language of international communication and is often used among speakers of different native languages (e.g., Kilickaya 2004, Ke & Suzuki 2011). Another interesting example of a monolingual perspective can be a special program for foreigners studying Russian culture that has been developed by a group of specialists from Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia (see, e.g. the textbook of Sinjachkin et al. 2008).
2. a contrastive perspective, in which the culture of the learner (its similarities and differences compared to the target culture) is taken into consideration. An example of this approach are documents describing the European Language Portfolio – AA..VV1997, 2001 - created at the Council of Europe; for a detailed description and discussion see Byram & Fleming 1998, De Caro 2008.

My analysis takes a monolingual perspective: I will discuss strategies used in textbooks to introduce various aspects of Italian culture. However, my analysis will lead me to apply also a contrastive perspective: in section 4, I will show how the weight of the same words (in terms of priority, frequency, and importance) varies in textbooks of different languages. The present analysis is a first step in further studying the teaching of culture in different classrooms, on the one hand, and the role of language in defining our national belonging, on the other hand.

The structure of the paper is as follows: I will start with a definition of what culture is. I will then describe the textbooks that I analysed for this study and propose an analysis of the strategies used in these textbooks to introduce various types of cultural information. In the last part I will describe the image of Italy introduced in the textbooks and discuss the role of vocabulary (introduced in the first lessons of the textbooks) in shaping the vision of another culture.

2. What is culture: various definitions and approaches

The notion of culture is very broad. *Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary* proposes several definitions that cover its various aspects:

* 1. the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends upon the capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations
  2. the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group; also **:** the characteristic features of everyday existence (as diversions or a way of life) shared by people in a place or time <popular culture> <southern culture>
  3. the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterises an institution or organisation <a corporate culture focused on the bottom line>
  4. the set of values, conventions, or social practices associated with a particular field, activity, or societal characteristic

As we can see, there are two main features in all these definitions. First, culture is a unifying element that characterises various groups of people (e.g., national culture, popular culture, corporate culture). Second, culture includes different aspects of human life: from knowledge, beliefs and behavior to attitudes, values and goals.

Textbooks can be considered as a quintessence of cultural information: they contain, as we will see, various cultural aspects that can be considered as elements characterising the country of the target language and unifying the speakers of this language. In Italian textbooks only one country – Italy – is described (with occasional exceptions of the Vatican and San-Marino) and only one culture – Italian.[[65]](#footnote-65)

Depending on the approach to the study of culture, various aspects of the definition of culture can be focused on. For example, Geert Hofstede in his study *Culture’s Consequences* (2001), which is based on the social and anthropological approach to culture, proposes defining culture as “collective programming of the mind: it manifests itself not only in values, but in more superficial ways: in symbols, heroes, and rituals” (2001: 1). Claire Kramsch, whose approach is more sociolinguistic, in *Language and Culture* (1998), proposes defining culture as membership of a discourse community that shares a common social space and history.

The present paper is focused on the didactic approach to cultural aspects. My main question will be: what aspects of Italian culture are introduced in the textbooks at the elementary level? The answer to this will lead to a further discussion about which cultural aspects are universal and which are language-specific (or country-specific?), which aspects depends on the national belonging and which are individual. To answer these questions I will assume a cognitive approach to language acquisition in general, and to the notion of culture in particular.

In the frame of this approach, I will consider culture as not only various series of acquired knowledge and beliefs (the aspect belonging to the “big C culture”), but also as a series of attitudes and associations (similar ideas are expressed, e.g., in Karaulov 1998; the discussion on symbolic competence in Kramsch 2006b is also close to this approach). Hence, people’s vision of the world, their behavior, and their reactions in various situations make up part of their culture. There is no doubt that language is an important part of culture. First of all, people see the world in different ways because different languages give them different means to speak about the world. Second, many concepts (that belong both to material and non-material culture) can become accessible only through language. These ideas, expressed by W.von Humboldt in the 19th century and then by E. Sapir and B.L. Whorf in the 20th century, have been widely discussed in recent studies on bilingualism (e.g., Pavlenko 2011). It has been shown, for example, that memories can change according to language (e.g., Shrauf & Durazo-Arvizu 2006), that bilinguals talk about their emotions in a different way depending on the language they are using (e.g., Koven 2006; Stepanova Sachs and Coley 2006; Altarriba 2006), and that people see differences between objects or colours when talking in one or in another language (e.g., Athanasopoulos et al. 2009). Since there are differences in the grammatical, lexical, and syntactic systems between languages, it has been pointed out that descriptions of the same picture, for instance, will change according to the language used in the description (e.g. Bylund 2011, Schmiedtová et al. 2011, Skytte et al. 1999).

However, not only does a language give us instruments to talk about the world, but the world that surrounds us (including people’s behavior, knowledge, and attitudes) is reflected in the language, especially in the vocabulary. This means that a particular language can often be inappropriate for talking about a different culture.[[66]](#footnote-66) Various aspects of these differences are discussed in linguistic, in particular in translational, studies but a detailed and systematic study of these phenomena is still missing. For example, how to translate words describing realia (e.g., Vlakhov & Florin 1980) or abstract notions and concepts that do not have any equivalent in another language (see, e.g., Wierzbicka 1999, who describes Russian culture using concepts such as *toska*, which does not exactly correspond to *nostalgia*).

In my analysis I will take into account the vocabulary which is introduced in the first lessons of textbooks and which contains some kind of cultural information. As Kramsch notes, “attention to form, genre, style, register, and a focus on social semiotics are back, as well as an interest in how linguistic form shapes mental representation, that is, what word choices reveal about the minds of speakers” (2006b: 251). I will distinguish three types of cultural aspects: 1) aspects of “big C culture” (i.e. of the historico-artistic heritage); 2) aspects of “small culture” (or aspects of everyday life); and 3) linguistic aspects, or information on the world that we receive from the words introduced in the textbooks. Further I will describe more deeply these three types of cultural information.

3. Data description

For this paper I chose three elementary-level Italian textbooks for foreigners that are or have been used at the University of Oslo in the course for beginners (A1-A2, in some years also B1). This course has 56 teaching hours and is modeled as a basic course for Italian grammar and vocabulary.

3.1 Textbooks of elementary level: similarities and differences

From the formal point of view, these three books seem very different: one book (*UniversItalia*, henceforth, book UI) is defined by the authors as an “Italian language course for foreigners”, the second one (*Progetto italiano* - book PI) is subtitled a “multimedia course in Italian language and civilisation”, and the third one (*Buongiorno!* - book BG) does not have any introduction or subtitle specifying its material, but is addressed to Norwegian learners (Norwegian is used in the first lessons and in the content). The first two books are quite recent: the first edition of Book UI appeared in 2007, and the fourth edition of Book PI in 2009. Book BG, in contrast, was first published in 1997 and republished several times after that. In spite of their formal differences, the three books have similar goals and a similar structure because they are for elementary-level adult learners. The main goal of the textbooks at this level is to teach the basic grammatical topics and vocabulary (if possible in a very intensive manner).

All three books introduce the same grammatical topics (e.g., the verbs *essere* “to be” and *avere* “to have”, conjugation of verbs in *-are, -ere,* and *-ire*, articles, nouns, and numbers), and the vocabulary is quite similar (see table 7-1) because it is designed to discuss the same lexical topics (or scenarios) always used in the first lessons.

Initially, the cultural topics have a secondary (or a supplementary) function[[67]](#footnote-67), especially in the first lessons, when various grammatical items should be introduced and the learner’s vocabulary is very limited for reading complicated texts with cultural content, as well as for discussing cultural topics. It is interesting to see how various types of cultural information are introduced in a book that – *a priori –* has other main goals, and what kind of information is introduced from the very beginning.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Textbook** | **Lesson 1** | **Lesson 2** | **Lesson 3** |
| UI | Presentations | In the bar  Telling time | Hobbies  Your day |
| PI | Presentations | Hobbies  Where to go together  Telling time | Timetable  Calling someone or writing an e-mail |
| BG[[68]](#footnote-68) | Presentations | Presentations  Calling on the phone or meeting someone on the street | In the bar |

**Table 7-1. Lexical topics.**

For this analysis, I will use the first three lessons of each textbook, in which the first encounter with the language takes place: the first words are introduced, and also concepts along with them. The goal of the first lessons is twofold. On the one hand, they must introduce a lot of grammatical information and new lexical items. On the other hand, they need to maintain the positive image of the country that the learner had before starting. It is well-known that most learners of Italian choose this language because they are fascinated by Italian culture, including Italian material culture (such as Italian kitchens, Italian design, and Italian fashion).[[69]](#footnote-69) Maintaining and developing this attractive image of Italy during the first lessons, when a great amount of grammar information can demotivate learners, is therefore seen as desirable. Thus, especially at the beginning, textbooks create an image of the country that is mainly based on widespread information: stereotypes or well-known details are broadly used in this case. For example, in the first three lessons in all analysed textbooks, pictures of typical Italian drinks and food are introduced (e.g., *pizza, spaghetti, coffee, cappuccino*) and the names of the most important cities appear. Moreover, other well-known symbols are introduced and discussed in the subsequent lessons: i.e. *la vespa* (a text in BG), a Fiat 500 car (on a picture in PI).

3.2 Textbook as a communicative act

Any text can be considered a communicative act in which the figures of the speaker and of the interlocutor, as well as the place of the communication, play an important role in determining the content and form. In considering the textbook as a communicative act, I will describe the features of the author of a textbook (the speaker) and of the reader, or the learner (the interlocutor):

1. The author

The speaker, or the author of a textbook, may be a native speaker, a native teacher of Italian, or a non-native teacher of Italian that works abroad and has rich experience in teaching Italian as a foreign language. In some textbooks, a team of authors includes both native speakers and non-native speakers. There is no doubt that different authors see the country and language they are teaching in different ways. Native speakers see the culture from the inside and present it usually from a monolingual perspective. Their approach is more descriptive and more stereotyped at the elementary level. They offer images that are always associated with the country (e.g., Italian coffee, Italian soccer teams, and pizza in Book PI) but also try to introduce something new (e.g., pictures of modern actors or singers, modern songs, and modern movies in Book UI).

The approach of non-native speakers, in addition to the stereotypes of the first approach, can assume a contrastive perspective from the very beginning. They offer a view of the country from the outside and highlight some differences, introducing some topics, words and expressions that may be interesting or useful for foreign learners. For example, in Book BG many possibilities are discussed in the dialogue “At the bar”: not only “typical drinks” (such as coffee and cappuccino), but also drinks and foods that may be “useful” for Norwegian speakers (e.g., tea, beer, cold coffee, martinis, cognac, coca-cola, and ice-cream). Moreover, the participants in the dialogues are often Norwegians that talk about their country (answering the question *Where are you from?*).

1. The reader, or the learner

The characteristics of the interlocutor, the reader of the textbook, and the learner of the target language are often discussed in the introduction. Books written by native speakers are usually addressed to a very large audience, whereas books by non-native speakers are often written for learners that have the same native language as the author. In these books, another language (a native language of the learner) may be used in the explanations.

Moreover, textbooks create an image of the interlocutor: they assign learners a role to play, offering them various behavior models, conversation topics, and words to use in different situations. For example: all three books have a unit dedicated to the hobbies, leisure time and/or weekends. Several similar activities are proposed to the learners in all three textbooks, among these: *fare spese* – to shop; *andare al cinema / a ballare* – to go to the cinema / to danse; *uscire (con gli amici, a mangiare fuori, a prendere il caffé)* – to go out (with friends, to eat in a restaurant - lit. to eat outside, to drink a cup of coffee); *guardare la TV* – to watch TV; *leggere* – to read.

Some of these activities are further discussed in separate thematical units, others are never developed. For example, in all three analysed books, there are topics dedicated to music, cinema, TV, and shopping (for clothes, not only for food). At the same time, topics on books, literature and theater are never introduced.[[70]](#footnote-70)

It is worth mentioning that the age of the learner is another important feature. It is obvious that textbooks for adult learners of FL and for children learners of FL offer different topics for discussion and even similar topics are introduced differently (Khachaturyan 2013). For the present analysis only the books for adult learners have been used.

Moreover, the place of teaching is an important component of the learner’s characteristics. Learners that live in the same country of the language that they are studying receive more cultural information outside the classroom. At the same time, this information should be explained in class and complemented by other means. None of the three books that I analysed specified in the introduction that they were meant to be used by learners living in Italy.

In table 7-2 the three textbooks analysed are characterised according to the parameters discussed above.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Authors** | | **Adult learners** | | |
| Textbook | Native Italian teachers | Non-native Italian teachers | Living Abroad | | |
| Any-where | Specific country Norway | Italy |
| UI | + | − | + | − | − |
| PI | + | − | + | − | − |
| BG | + | + | − | + | − |

**Table 7-2. Characteristics of the authors and learners.**

4. Analysis of cultural content

To describe the cultural content introduced in the first chapters of the analysed textbooks I will use two parameters: 1) the form, or the manner of introducing cultural material (explicit and implicit), and 2) the content, or what kind of information is introduced. Moreover, we will see that any cultural information can be introduced in two different ways: a) verbally (i.e., through the words), but also b) visually (i.e., through the pictures).[[71]](#footnote-71)

4.1 Different forms of introducing cultural material

From the formal point of view, it is important to distinguish two different ways of introducing cultural material: an explicit way and an implicit way. In the case of explicit presentation, the main purpose is to discuss a cultural topic. Many textbooks even on the elementary level often offer short texts or other kinds of information dedicated to various cultural aspects. For example, Book PI presents a map of Italy at the end of the first lesson. A set of questions ask how many regions Italy has, their sizes, and the names of the most important and famous cities. Book UI offers students a short text at the end of the second lesson about different types of places to eat in Italy.

In the case of implicit introduction of cultural material, the cultural information is used as background for introducing lexical or grammatical topics. For example, in *Ho due biglietti per il concerto di Bocelli* “I have two tickets for the Bocelli concert” (Book UI)the name of the famous Italian singer Andrea Bocelli is used in a lexical exercise where the interlocutors have to discuss their plans for the weekend. In *Abito in via Cavour* “I live on Cavour Street” (Book PI) *via Cavour* is a toponym, a name of a street that one can find in almost every Italian city[[72]](#footnote-72). The entire sentence illustrates the conjugation of the verb *abitare* “to live”.

It is worth noting that toponyms are often present in the very first dialogues and can be considered as implicit presentations of cultural information. One can even reconstruct a map of a small Italian town. The textbooks often describe a university city like Perugia or Siena (where there are two important universities for foreigners). Streets and places in Italy often have the names of famous Italian people (e.g., *via Verdi* “Verdi Street”, *piazza Cavour* “Cavour Square”, *via Alberti* “Alberti Street”). There are also some places and streets that are unique and are immediately associated with a particular city (e.g., *piazza Navona* “Navona Square” in Rome, *piazza del Duomo* “Cathedral Square” in Florence, *piazza dei Miracoli* “Miracle Square” in Pisa).

The implicit presentation allows the introduction of various information that may not necessarily be discussed in the classroom. In the following paragraphs we will see how the words introduced from the first lesson shape the image of Italian culture.

4.2 Different types of cultural material

As mentioned before, the cultural material introduced in the textbooks for beginners can be divided into three types: 1) aspects of “big C culture”, 2) aspects of “small culture”, and 3) the linguistic aspect, or the words that give us a particular access to the world. Below I will illustrate these three types by some examples taken from the first three lessons of the analysed textbooks.

1. Aspects of “big C culture”

To represent “big C culture”, proper nouns are often used that refer to a unique entity; for example, historical people and events that belong to the country’s cultural heritage and make up part of the knowledge acquired by teaching. These words are not included or are very rare in bilingual or monolingual dictionaries. Examples already presented above can illustrate this type: *Bocelli*, *Cavour*, and toponyms, such as *piazza Navona* “Navona Square”, *fontana di Trevi* “Trevi Fountain”, *La Scala* “La Scala opera house”.

The main aspects of “big C culture” introduced in the first three lessons (both in implicit and in explicit way) of each analysed textbook are present in table 7-3.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Textbooks** | **Geography** | **Toponyms (streets and places)** | **Music** | **Famous persons** |
| **UI** | + | + | - | + (historical ) |
| **PI** | + | + | + | + (historical, musicians) |
| **BG** | + | - | - | - |

**Table 7-3. Aspects of “big C culture”.**

1. Aspects of “small culture”

This type is represented by common nouns that usually refer to a class of entities that do not belong to the historico-cultural heritage of a country, but to its material culture. These words can usually be acquired by experience, often through visual images. Learners living in the country of the target language will be more successful in this case. These words also have dictionary definitions that can help in understanding the meaning (even if a picture seems to be more effective); for example:

*Cappuccino: Bevanda a base di caffè espresso e latte: far colazione con un c. e una brioche* “a drink made from espresso and milk: to have a breakfast of *cappuccino* and a brioche” (Dizionario di Sabatini & Colletti)

*Mortadella: salume realizzato con carne di maiale o mista, finemente triturata, impastata con lardo, aromatizzata con spezie, insaccata e cotta* “sausage made with pork or mixed meat, finely ground, mixed with lard, flavored with spices, stuffed and baked” (ib.)

*Gondola: Caratteristica imbarcazione veneziana di colore nero, con prua e poppa incurvate e rialzate, condotta in genere da un solo vogatore che si serve di un unico remo* “a typical black Venetian boat, with the bow and stern curved and raised, usually propelled by a single rower that uses a single oar” (ib.)

Words describing different aspects of “small culture” usually belong to “realia”. The phenomenon of “realia” does not have one general definition that is accepted and used by everybody (for the discussion see Vlakhov & Florin 1980). It seems to be very broad and to cover many cultural aspects (including “big C culture” and “small culture”). Here I will call “realia” words (mostly nouns) that describe the material culture of a country – the world around us (i.e., make up part of “the characteristic features of everyday existence,” according to Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary definition) and are often difficult to translate because there is no corresponding referent (and therefore no word) in another language. Often these words become loanwords in other languages (like the examples above: *cappuccino, mortadella, gondola*).

In table 7-4 the main aspects of “small culture” introduced in the first three lessons of the three analysed textbooks are represented.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Textbook** | **Food, drinks** | **Hobbies** | **The world around us** |
| **UI** | + | + | + |
| **PI** | + | + | + |
| **BG** | + | - | + |

**Table 7-4. Aspects of “small culture”.**

1. Linguistic aspect

To this type of cultural aspect belong common words used in everyday life that do not describe something specific in the target culture and usually have a correspondence in another language. However, several properties of these (seemingly) common words vary from language to language: they have different frequency, different visual images and different word combinations. All these properties (when analysed deeply) can give us more information on the attitudes and associations unifying speakers[[73]](#footnote-73) of the same language. They can explain why, as several studies on narrative development have demonstrated (see, e.g., Skytten et al. 1999), the same picture will be described differently (according to the language) or will lead to different associations. The studies on narrative development in a multilingual context are mostly based on the analysis of grammatical differences between languages (e.g., Verhoeven & Strömqvist 2001), but the lexis and word choice are also important in this case.

One of the well-studied examples concerns the lexico-semantic differences between Romance and Germanic verbs. It is well-known that verbs in Romance languages are lexically less specific than verbs in Germanic languages. This means that Italian propositions (in contrast to Norwegian propositions, for instance) contain less information inside the verb: “the Romance verbs *entrer, entrare, entrar*, do not contain any information on how or by which means the motion is carried out, therefore they may combine with any subject that can perform a movement” (Korzen 2005: 23). Korzen proposes to compare the following Italian and Danish phrases: *il cane entrò – hunden gik ind* “the dog walked in”, *il pesce entrò – fisken svømmede ind* “the fish swam in”, *l’uccello entrò – fuglen fløj ind* “the bird flew in”, and *la nave entrò – skibet sejelde ind* “the ship sailed in”*.* In Italian the same verb *entrò* “entered” is used, whereas in Danish it changes with respect to the subject: “walked in”, “swam in”, “flew in”, and “sailed in”.

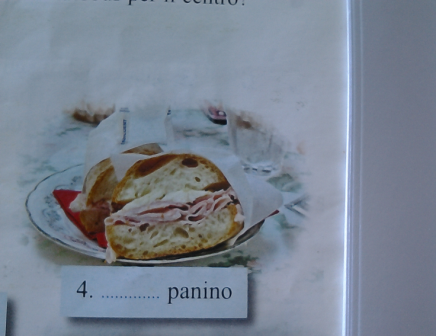
Another example that (as to my knowledge) has not been deeply studied concerns the use of some groups of nouns. For instance, an Italian speaker describing a picture with flowers will usually use a hyperonyme: *fiori* (“flowers”) while a Russian speaker will prefer a hyponyme – the name of the flower, i.e. *oduvanchik* (“dandelion”)[[74]](#footnote-74). The same tendency has been observed for the names of birds: hyperonyme in Italian vs. hyponyme in Russian (for a more detailed description of this phenomenon, see Khachaturyan 2012). Let us consider some examples illustrating the important properties of this type of common words.

1. Word frequency

Words that are more frequently used by native speakers in everyday life are introduced earlier in textbooks. The very fact of their frequency can be considered as a sign of their specific/important role in the culture. For example, in Italian textbooks the words *gelato* “ice cream”, *gelateria* “ice-cream shop”, *panino* “sandwich”, and *calcio* “soccer” are introduced at the very beginning (lessons 1, 2 – in all three textbooks). In Norwegian (as L2) textbooks, for instance, the word *matpakke* “packed lunch” appears in the first lessons.

1. Visual images

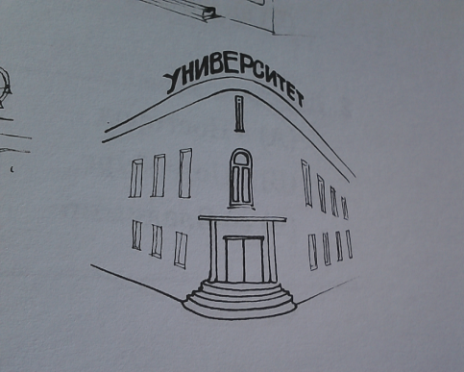
Moreover these words often have different visual images in different languages. Below are pictures from Book PI illustrating the following words: *gelato* “ice-cream”, *panino* “sandwich”and *università* “university.”

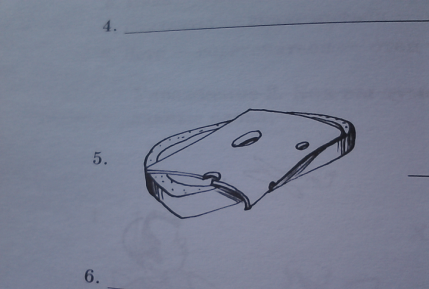
 



Picture 7-1. Illustrations in an Italian textbook.

The illustrations of the words that refer to the same objects from Russian textbooks (“Zhili-byli”) can be compared:



Picture 7-2. Illustrations in a Russian textbook.

1. Word combinations

Word combinations can be analysed from two different points of view. On the one hand, from the semantic and lexicological point of view, they show syntagmatic relations in the lexicon and the semantics of words (e.g. Ježek 2005). For example, the Italian verb *fare* “to do, make” combined with various nouns is translated using different verbs in another language: *fare la domanda* “to ask a question”; *fare gli esercizi* “to do exercises”; *una ragazza che fa matematica* “a girl who studies math”; and *Mario* *fa l’architetto* “Mario works as an architect”.[[75]](#footnote-75) Another example, with the verb *prendere* “to take”: *prendo un panino* “I’ll have a sandwich”; *prendere l’autobus* “to take the bus”; *cosa prendi da bere?* “what do you want to drink?”.

Another aspect that is more important when talking about the acquisition of culture is that word combinations often underlie the associative grammar that is responsible for speaker’s world vision (see, e.g., Karaulov 1998). Fixed word combinations are often used in the descriptions. For example, in Italian fairytales talking about a wolf, the adjective *cattivo* “bad” is always used (*il lupo cattivo* “the bad wolf”), whereas in Russian fairytales the adjective *seryj* “gray” (*seryj volk* “the gray wolf”) always characterizes the wolf. In Italian the combination *pulito e profumato* “clean and scented” is a fixed expression, and a nice smell is often presented as a property of something clean (as emerged from analysis of textbooks for children, discussed in Khachaturyan 2013).

From the textbooks that I analysed for this paper, a combination *andare a mangiare fuori* (“to go out to eat”) introduced in the first lessons (in all three books) can be considered as a fixed word combination of this kind. It can not be translated word by word and does not have any exact equivalent in other languages.

5. Conclusion

As shown in the present analysis, the cultural content in textbooks includes different types of information. On the one hand, these are elements that everyone knows and recognises as representing the culture of a country, or elements that the learners want to know (some additional information about the country that can be useful/interesting to learn). These two aspects are included in the “big C” and “small culture” information. On the other hand, these are elements that are often acquired unconsciously, through verbal and visual forms. Some of these elements can be considered as elements that are close to “symbolic competence” (as it is called in Kramsch 2006b).

I assume that this unconsciously acquired part of the culture, that includes words and their visual images, associations and reactions can be considered as a kind of knowledge unifying all native speakers of the same language and defining our national belonging. Hence, it is important for a foreign learner not only to use correct word-forms but also to know the associations or the reaction that these words can create. As Kramsch notes: “an interest in how linguistic form shapes mental representation, that is, what word choices reveal about the minds of speakers” (2006b: 251).

During teaching it is important to immediately introduce and pay more attention to the second (“unconscious”) type of cultural elements that are acquired through word combinations, word frequencies, cognate expressions, and associations.

The elements belonging to this part of the culture are not acquired only “in the field”; some of them can also be learned. For this reason the role of textbooks in the process of the acquisition of different types of culture should not be underestimated. A textbook could be called a visiting card of a country and of its culture.

The analysis presented here can be developed further in several directions. First of all, the “unconscious” cultural elements should be thoroughly described from a monolingual perspective. What are the pictures and the associations that actually underlie the same words and concepts in different cultures? What are the sources of this information for different languages? How does one acquire them?

From a contrastive perspective, it is interesting to analyse in what way the acquisition of cultural aspects is also affected by the learner’s “native culture.” Foreign learners will always have another “reference culture” that is their own culture, and will have several difficulties when acquiring the “unconscious” part of culture. In this context, the analysis and creation of textbooks for bi- and multilingual children should be handled separately. These children not only acquire two or more linguistic systems at the same time, but they must also acquire different cultural systems. It is easier to acquire the culture of the country where one lives and goes to school. This means that the other culture should be introduced through special textbooks or programs that offer a concentrated version of cultural material.

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Contributors

The contributors to this volume are very diverse, they analyse various languages and they use different approaches in their studies, but all of them share at least one important property: they deal permanently in their everyday life with different languages, identities and nations. That’s why I proposed to them that they answer the following questions:

Where were you born? Where did you go to school? What is your mother tongue(s)?

Where do you live now?

How do you answer the question: “Where are you from”?

What label do you identify with?

Which national team do you support?

In which language do you prefer to read (when you want to relax)? Who is your favourite author? Which book would you take with you on holiday, far from civilization?

Their answers can give us further insight into the problems that we tried to explore in this volume.

Nelson González-Ortega

Nelson Gonzalez Ortega, Ph. D. University of Wisconsin-Madisom, USA, teaches Hispanic Literatures at the University of Oslo, Norway. He is author of articles and books of fiction, Spanish didactics, literary criticism and historiography, which have been published in literary journals and editorial houses from Latin America, North America and Europe. His articles (only those from 2006 - up to the present) are: “Amerindian and European narratives in interaction” (Berlin / New York, 2006); “Literatura , Historia y nación: la función legal y subversiva que (ob)tuvo el discurso de Jiménez de Quesada en la instauración y abolición de la Nueva Granada y en la formació de la República de Colombia” (Los Angeles, USA, 2011); “Representing the Black ‘other’ in the Portuguese and Spanish poetry of Europe, Africa an Latin America from the 15th to the 20th centuries” (Cambidge, England, 2012). His books (only those from 2006 - up to the present) are: *Relatos magicos en cuestion* (Madrid / Frankfurt, 2006); *Colombia una nacion en formación* (Madrid / Frankfurt, 2013); and *Las subculturas del narcotráfico en América Latina* (Bogotá / Washington / New York, 2014).

I was born in Ibagué, Colombia, a city of around half a million inhabitants. I went to school in Ibagué where I completed my primary and upper high school. Afterwards, I moved to Bogotá, the capital of Colombia to study single courses in economy and social media and communication at different universities. At the beginning of the eighties, I move to Europe, and study English and French languages, respectively, at the universities of Cambridge and Sorbone as well as Spanish, English and French literatures at Stockholms University, Sweden where I got a Bachelor diploma in Comparative literature. I was awarded schoolarships to study at the University of Alberta, Canada where I studied a master in Spanish and English Literature (1985) and at the University of Madison-Wisconsin in the US, where I completed my Ph.D. in Spanish and Portuguese Literatures (1996). During my university studies and afterwards I have taught literature courses at university level in Canada, United States, Sweden, Norway and Colombia.

My mother tongue is Spanish. I am fluent in Swedish, English and French, and also have a reading knowledge of Scandinavian languages as well as German, Portuguese and Latin.

Presently I am living in Oslo, Norway where I work as a professor of Hispanic Literatures at the University of Oslo.

When people ask me “Where are you from”? I respond by characterizing myself as a “Hypheneted person”: That is: a Colombian-Swedish.

I do not support any national team, because I do not like either sport or national affiliations in flocks of any kind.

When I read to relax myself I prefer to read short stories and novels in English translation from all over the world, simply because I can read then as a foreign “ingenous reader”. I do not read in Spanish (my mother-tongue) because my role as a specialist in Spanish literature takes over and I start unconciously to analyse literary works, and that prevents me from relaxing in my free time.

Alex Kasonde

Born in Zambia; graduated from the University of Zambia (Zambia) before proceeding to do graduate studies at the University Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris III (France) and the University of Hamburg (Germany). Fluent in English, French and German as well as in Bemba and Nyanja. Currently living and working in Zimbabwe as Senior Lecturer, faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Africa University.

Books: Phonologie et morphologie de la langue bemba. Munich: LINCOM Europa Publishers, (Lincom Studies in African Linguistics Vol. 75), 2009; A Classified Vocabulary of Icibemba Language. Munich: LINCOM Europa Publishers, (Languages of the World/ Dictionaries Vol. 39), 2002; Language Law and Development in the Third World Countries. Hamburg, London and Munster: LIT Verlag Publishers, (Linguistics Monograph Vol. 7), 2002. Book chapter:

Civil society, interest groups and good governance in Zambia: A general overview. In: Edoh, Tony and Terhemba Wuam (eds) (2008) Leadership Accountability and Development in Post Independence Africa. Lapai, Niger Sate: Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Nigeria. More than 15 journal articles and conference proceedings with cultural and sociolinguistic analysis of the African case.

Considers Africa as one and the same home. Feels full member of the global community because of international travel and experience in Belgium, Botswana, Canada, China, Democratic Republic of Congo, France, Germany, Mozambique, Netherlands, Norway, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, United Kingdom, United States of America. Keen supporter of Chipolopolo (lit. bullets), the national team of Zambia. English reading generally comes first, followed by French and German.

Elizaveta Khachaturyan

Elizaveta Khachaturyan has been Associate Professor of Italian language at the University of Oslo since 2007. From her student days and PhD dissertation her main research interest concerned semantic analysis of discourse markers in Italian, French and Russian. Among her publications: “Sul segnale discorsivo *senti*.” In : *Studi di grammatica italiana*, vol. XX, Firenze, Le Lettere; “Les marqueurs de reformulation formés à partir du verbe *dire*.” In : *La reformulation. Marqueurs linguistiques et stratégies énonciatives.* Eds. Le Bot M.C. et al. Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2008 ; Les mots du discours de *dire*. *Analyse contrastive*. In : Estudos Linguísticos / *Linguistic Studies 2.* Lisboa: Colibri / CLUNL, N.2, 2008; she edited the volume of *Oslo Studies in Language (OSLa)* on Discourse markers in Romance languages,3(1), 2011.

After she moved to Norway in 2007 her research took a wider perspective; in recent years she has worked in two main domains. In the linguistic domain, she is studying different grammatical phenomena in the context of trilingual language acquisition (i.e., “Acquisition of Italian object clitics by a trilingual child”. In: *Challenging Clitics*, eds. H.P. Helland & C. Meklenbourg Salvesen. Linguistik Aktuell series, n. 206, John Benjamins, 2013). In the domain of cultural studies she works on problems of multilingual communication and intercultural pragmatics as well as on the discourses on the Nation and the National.

Born and raised in Moscow in the Soviet Union, graduated from and wrote my first PhD thesis in the Lomonossow Moscow State University, I then studied in Switzerland, in Italy (Florence and Padua) and in Paris where I wrote my second PhD dissertation at the University Paris -7 Denis Diderot. My husband is Italian and for many years I travelled a lot and lived in a triangle of three cities: Moscow, Paris and Florence. Since we wanted to avoid all kind of national discussions in our family we prefered to find a third country in which to live. In 2007 we finally moved to Oslo, where our two daughters were born. I speak in Italian to my husband and only in Russian to my trilingual children. I always say: “I am from Moscow”. For me this geographical and cultural link is much more important than the national one – to be from Russia. I have an Armenian surname (from my grandfather) and would like to support an Armenian national team (but they play very rarely). To relax I like to re-read Russian classics or to read French writers in French. I do not like to read in Italian when I am on holidays, because I continue to analyse the text from the grammatical and lexical point of view, looking for interesting constructions or expressions to discuss with my students. In this period I am very interested in children's literature from different countries. It is an enormous pleasure for me to read aloud for my daugthers.

Mark Luccarelli

Mark Luccarelliis Associate Professor in the Department of Literature, Area Studies and European Languages, University of Oslo. He has written on American foreign policy and international relations, but his major work is in environmental and culture studies. He is one of the founders and organizers of the Nordic Network for Interdiscipli­nary Environmental Studies (NIES), co-editor (with Sigurd Bergmann) of *In-between: Reconsidering Environment and the Public through Space* (forthcoming 2015), co-editor (with P. G. Roe) of *Green Oslo: Visions, Planning and Discourse* (2012) and author of *Lewis Mumford and the Ecological Region* (1995) as well as several articles on space, landscape, and representations of nature particularly in America.

Born 1952 in Princeton, New Jersey, USA and attended local schools there. Raised in a monolingual household (American English). The family background is Italian and older relatives spoke Italian, or I should say rather that they spoke Neapolitan dialect. I learned a few choice dialect words, but never learned to speak. I can understand simple phrases and sentences. Italian was not available as a course of study in school and both my parents had strong misgivings about the dialect, though both understood it; relatives addressed me in English. Encouraging assimilation seemed to be understood. My father also spoke decent Italian, but I never really wished to be instructed in it by him and he never offered. “Italian” for us was not a language, but a rather a set of cultural traditions and a commitment to family life. When I grew up I was surrounded by grandparents, aunts, uncles and many cousins. Nonetheless, when I had the chance I moved around the U.S. from Florida to the Middle West (Iowa) and back to the east coast in a period of two decades. I got along in all environments; I had very close friendships with Cuban-Americans in Miami (however, not in politics) and I did equally well with the most “American” of the Americans in the Middle West. Eventually I ended up back home in New Jersey and I was teaching there at Rutgers, the state university when I moved to Oslo to take a permanent position. I had never been to Scandinavia and had not been to Europe since I was a young boy. Americans are often under the false impression that they represent all the cultures of the world and perhaps I thought that moving to Norway would be a bit like moving from one state to another in the USA. I was quickly divested of that illusion. Today I live outside of Oslo. I speak Norwegian as my second language; I often speak Norwegian at home and use it extensively at work—though I teach and research in English. Normally I take the question “where are you from” to imply place of origin; so I am from the USA, sometimes I might say from North America. I tend to read British newspapers as much as American ones. Spectator sports in Europe are very different from the USA. Actually the idea of national teams makes very little sense to me. Perhaps that is because in America the emphasis is on teams organized at the level of states and cities, not at the national level. Is that lack of interest in world competition changing now after the U.S. national team’s relative success at the recent soccer (“football”) world cup? Some say yes, but I doubt Americans will ever become as enthusiastic as Europeans about their national teams. Federalism has always muted American nationalism. If I did support a national team, I would be more likely to support Italy than Norway, and I am not sure I can fully explain why.

Patrick Seán McCrea

I am currently a PhD Candidate in Sociolinguistics at Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana, USA. My dissertation is entitled “Grand Illusions; Illusive Facts: The Survival of Regional Languages of France Despite ‘Their Programmed Demise’: Picard in Picardy and Provençal in Provence”. My interest in language and identity, as well as the French case in particular, stems from the year I studied abroad in Aix-en-Provence at the University of Provence (France). Up until this point in time, I never truly knew of the other indigenous languages, similar to French, or the diverse identities that existed in France. Based upon my experiences from this year abroad, I became interested in the link between language, identity and nationhood on both a national, as well as a regional or local scale. Often, the manner in which language and identity interact at a national level also occurs at a regional or local level.

Marco Santello

I was educated in Italy, the US and Australia and I am now a research fellow at the University of Warwick, UK. My research revolves around language contact, multilingualism and communication, with a particular focus on the intersections between societal and individual multilingualism. I have published on bilingualism and advertising, multilingual repertoires and language attitudes in journals such as Applied Linguistics (Oxford University Press) and the International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism (Routledge). My research has been strongly influenced by my life path. I grew up in a bilingual environment in Venice, where I experienced everyday multilingual practices, and I became interested in Italian-English bilingualism for the first time when I worked within the Italian community of Toronto, Canada. I believe that my transcontinental life trajectories are an integral part of my commitment to this field of research and I am glad I am able to bring my own experiences of transnationality into my work.

Diana Santos

Diana Santos is Professor of Portuguese Language at the University of Oslo, where she has taught since 2011, after twenty-five years of research in the computational processing of Portuguese in research institutions like INESC, IBM and SINTEF. She also teaches statistics for the Humanities. She has produced ca. 350 articles and/or presentations in her academic life.

I was raised in Portuguese, in Portugal, and got all my education, from the first letters to PhD from my country of origin, as an electronics and computer engineer. I have lived in Norway for the last twenty years, raising my two children in a bilingual Portuguese-Norwegian family with the help of my Norwegian husband. The more I live in Norway, the more I feel Portuguese; it definitely helped to form my identity. My favourite author is Charlotte Brontë, but my favourite (male) author is Júlio Dinis. Both have introvert heroes with whom I easily identify. I would not bring their books to a deserted island, because I know them (almost) by heart. I would bring a heavy book on a subject I want to learn more about, possibly statistics.

## Abstracts

**Nelson González-Ortega** (University of Oslo, Norway)

*Macondo: a Literary Paradigm of a Peripherical Global Nation-State. A Decolonial Reading of Language, Identity, Coloniality and Modernity in García Márquez’s Narrative*

*One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel García Márquez chronicles, through the course of a century, the life of the Buendia’s dynasty and its seven generations living in Macondo, a literary paradigm of a peripherical global nation-state. Like any real “third World” village, Macondo and Macondians have gone through an inadequate peripheral Westernization process: from mercantile capitalism (a pre-industrial village) to multinational capitalism (the arrival of the American United Fruits Company) and on to global capitalism (a city-state of mirrors and mirages of Modernity), established in Macondo by Italian, French and Belgian entrepreneurs and merchants in business and pleasure. However, unlike the inhabitants of a third world village (real or fictional), Macondians question throughout the novel whether the consumption of foreign modern merchandise is an obstacle to obtaining a real socio-economic development. Hence, to closely examine the interface between coloniality-modernity-decolonization I propose here the use of methods and postulates derived from Decolonial Theory to analyse the economic, political and socio-cultural relations between the North (the North Atlantic hegemonic geopolitical discourses) and the South (the non-Western subaltern narratives) of the world; that is, new decolonized ways of reflecting on the asymmetrical power relations between “the West” and “the rest” from the perspectives of subaltern subjects (“los oprimidos”) – the world’s poor, marginalized and oppressed majority of people.

**Alex Kasonde** (Africa University, Zimbabwe)

*Language and identity in general education in Zambia*

The paper examines language and identity in general education in Zambia from the colonial period to the present (Achola 1990; Africa 1980; Carmody 1999; 2004; Coombe 1967-1968; Mwanakatwe 1968). It describes general education language policy, starting with the colonial racial divide between Europeans (using the English medium exclusively) and Africans (immersion in their respective African languages, i.e. Bemba, Lozi, Tonga, Nyanja at elementary school and lower primary school levels, followed by gradual transition into English from upper primary school level) (1890-1963) through to the universalized English-medium policy reversals of the postcolonial leadership of the First Republic (1964-1972). Specific mention is made of certain basic contradictions of the stillborn, socialist-communist inspired Education Reforms of the Second Republic (1973-1990). The Language Clause of the Mwanakatwe Constitution (1991), Mung’omba Constitution Draft (2010) and Silungwe Constitution Draft (2012) are also discussed.

**Elizaveta Khachaturyan** (University of Oslo, Norway)

*Shaping cultural identity through language: various types of cultural content in textbooks*

By now all agree that language and culture are the two main components of everybody’s national identity. But what elements are especially important in this dyad? We cannot learn a language without also studying the culture linked to this language. Even textbooks dedicated only to the language (grammar books) introduce cultural items and a certain vision of the country through the texts, vocabulary and topics that are proposed to a student. This information shapes our national identity when we are studying our mother tongue and creates our vision of another nation when we are learning a foreign language. In this study, I discuss the image of Italy created in textbooks. I analyze three books for foreigners learning Italian as L2 (elementary level), and show how the cultural content is introduced and what kind of cultural topics are discussed from the very beginning.

**Mark Luccarelli** (University of Oslo, Norway)

*Weak nation - strong language? Sociological and linguistic legacies of the Nation-State (the cases of Italy and the United States)*

The question of national language and identity and its relation to governance is rarely commented on in today’s world, except in the negative. Most of the time, feelings of national identity are seen as a hindrance and a danger to the achievement of European and global identities. But despite the attainment of post-national identities based partly on the spread of bi- and multilingualism, for most ordinary people a language still inscribes its community, a community fully admissible only to those who have linguistic competency. Furthermore, languages, like institutions, reflect historical concerns and practices. The political role of national languages in promoting a unified identity and completing the project of nation-state building may seem remote, but its legacy remains – not the least in those countries, such as Scandinavian ones, in which national unity and effective state governance were long ago achieved. The long-standing promotion of a national language, whether by the state or by civil society, is a commonality of both Italy and the United States. Despite their differences in culture and relative power in the world, Italy and the United States make for an interesting comparison. This article will examine the social and political commonalities that have expressed themselves in the search for respective common languages in both Italy and the United States.

**Patrick Seán McCrea** (Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana, USA)

*Standard republican French and French nationalism: “Une et indivisible”*

One cannot speak of the relationship between language and nation without reference to the French Republic. After all, in the modern world, since the French Revolution of 1789, the French Republic has been credited with exemplifying this relationship. The goal of the French revolutionaries was to create a politically and culturally united nation through the use of the French language under the motto “One nation, one people, one language”. In contemporary France, with increased pressure on the French nation-state to officially recognize regional languages and to accommodate immigrant languages, French republicans attempt to disallow their recognition or accommodation by continuing to underscore the principal role held by the French language in the “Une et indivisible” philosophy of the French Republic.. This paper thus explores the vital role ascribed to the French language within the domain of French nationalism and argues that, within the French Republic, standard republican French embodies French nationalism, wherein the two have become “Une et indivisible”. To this end, various theories are explored in order to shed light upon the varied concepts of “nation” and “nationalism”.

**Marco Santello** (University of Warwick, UK)

*Italian English bilingualism in Australia: the interplay of language and cultural identification*

Much research has been carried out on Italians in migration contexts all around the world, but scholars have rarely focused on highly proficient bilinguals and we know little about the relationship between bilingualism and cultural identification amongst Italian speakers outside of Italy. Drawing upon recent findings on new migrants from Italy (Rubino 2009), this contribution explores attitudes towards bilingualism among Italian-English bilinguals in Australia. A group interview was conducted in Sydney with both first and second generation bilinguals, where explicit attitudes towards bilingualism were elicited. The results are complemented with the quantitative analysis of survey questionnaires, adapted from Baker (1992), that involved a larger sample. Overall Italian-English bilinguals hold positive attitudes towards bilingualism, although they acknowledge the partial persistence of negative attitudes against certain forms of language contact phenomena. More interestingly, statistical analyses reveal differences across several indicators between bilinguals who self-report phonological interference when speaking English and those bilinguals who do not. Some correlations between age of acquisition of English, self-reported cultural identification and attitudes towards bilingualism are also noted. It is suggested therefore that both linguistic and identity factors are involved in the way in which Italian-English bilinguals relate to their own bilingualism.

**Diana Santos** (University of Oslo, Norway)

*Portuguese language identity in the world: adventures and misadventures of an international language*

This paper offers several cases where language plays an undeniable role in identity and world citizenship, concerning Portuguese-speaking countries. First, I provide some quantitative data on Portuguese as a global language, and highlight some of the challenges it faces now, being the official language in a dozen different countries with different governments and policies. Second, I offer my view of the importance of the language to the Portuguese identity, using two children's books written 100 years ago, to explain how identity is represented and conveyed to the young generations. After briefly mentioning three schools in Portugal concerned with national identity (the mythical, the sociological, and the historical), I propose a “linguistic” school, and go on to attempt to substantiate my claims on the importance of the language for lusophone identity in widely different cases: the linguistic situation in Mozambique; the East Timor crisis and its impact in Portugal; the (international) orthographic agreement; and Brazilian linguistic activity and language policy in the digital world. I end the paper suggesting that, since language both unites and divides us, corpus linguistic studies could and should provide interesting empirical data for the quest (and recreation) of our international identity, and make a plea for the active involvement of the linguistic community in the development of PI (International Portuguese).

1. Galileo Galilei was one of the first scientists who used the Italian languge (instead of Latin) for his scientific essais. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Italics appear in Neville. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Italics appear in Gellner. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Italics appear in Hobsbawm. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Domain of the Oïl language(s) located in northern France. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Term used by Renée Balibar in her book entitled L'Institution du français: Essai sur le Co-linguisme des Carolingiens à la République (1985). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Liberty, Fraternity and Equality. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Translation made by this paper’s author. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Italics appear in Neville. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Old Regime. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Countries. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Report on the Necessity and the Means to Exterminate the Patois and to Universalize the Use of the French Language. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Approximately parishes or counties. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. “Rustic, rude language as is that of a peasant or the lower class” as defined by the 4th edition of the *Dictionnaire de l;Académie française* (1762 (2): 324). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Homeland. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Constitutional Council. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Italics appear in Judge. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. National Assembly. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. French [Language] Academy. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Translation made by this paper’s author. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. National Center for Scientific Research. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Civilizing mission. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Translation made by this paper’s author. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Transfer of knowledge or learning. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Italics added by the author of this paper. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. I use the unusual term “movers” instead of migrants or travellers inspired by Russell-Wood (1992), because all sorts of movement have been involved. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. It is said that, the oldest a country, the more concern and respect they have for history, probably because they have more of it, while youngest countries are more concerned with the now and the future. I don't know if there is any sociological data to corroborate this impression, though. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Based on UN data of August 2010, <http://observatorio-lp.sapo.pt/pt/dados-estatisticos/falantes-de-portugues-literacia> (accessed 20 October 2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. From http://observatorio-lp.sapo.pt/pt/dados-estatisticos/projecao-e-uso/ portugues-a-lingua-mais-falada-no-hemisferio-sul/lingua-mais-falada-no-HS (accessed 20 October 2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Portuguese is the 8th language on Wikipedia, and the 15th language in terms of translation into other languages, see http://observatorio-lp.sapo.pt/pt/geopolitica/o-valor-economico-da-lingua-portuguesa/o-valor-economico-da-LP (accessed 20 October 2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Obviously, companies do not make public their economic data, but indirecty one can take their refraining of investing in a particular language on economic prospects. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. <http://storage.googleapis.com/books/ngrams/books/datasetsv2.html> (accessed 17 May 2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. This, for the new ones. Jews that fled to England or the Low Countries continued to be called Portuguese there – because they spoke Portuguese – and were obviously not Christians, they just had to flee from Portugal to escape slaughter or forced conversion. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. It is probably fitting to acknowledge that one of the most ingrained self-conceptions of Portuguese is that they/we are unique, different, something which has also been critically commented by identity scholars, see e.g. Lourenço’s (1996) statement that É difícil encontrar um povo mais frenético de singularidade que o nosso (“It is hard to find a more frenetically singular people than ours”). [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Céu Aberto means literally “open sky/heaven”, but metaphorically “high happiness”. Em pleno azul means “In full blue”, which, contrary to English blue, means happy plenitude. Another shade of blue, probably. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. In this section (only), I will only speak about Portugal, partly because of space constraints and because it is the country I know best. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. For an enjoyable introduction to Portugal's history aimed at the lay foreigner, see Page (2007). [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. *Saudade* describes missing someone or something, and is linguistically similar to hunger or fear: it is something you feel and can be full of. It is central to Portuguese identity, literature and philosophy, see e.g. Botelho & Teixeira (1986). [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. *Fado* is a Portuguese popular musical genre that is at least known since the XIXth century in two different main schools, Coimbra and Lisbon, associated to the Portuguese guitar. *Fado* means “fate” (the two words are obviously related). [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Contrary to Portuguese Africa, a source and a target very present in Portugal, for centuries. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. See <http://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acordo_Ortogr%C3%A1fico_de_1990> [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. On the history of Brazilian legal spelling reforms, see Faulstich (1999). [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. See <http://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acordo_Ortogr>á[fico\_de\_1990#Angola](http://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acordo_OrtogrC3%A1fico_de_1990#Angola)

    [last access 21 May 2014] [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Linguateca does not to earn money by distributing the resources as ELDA, the European Language Distribution Agency, does, nor is/was it possible to have a consortium of paying language resource companies as in LDC, whose activities are supported by membership of industry and users alike. To have an impact, we needed to make all resources free. (People who want to support us do it with resources or work.) [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Lobbying organizations like US English have had a good deal of success in convincing states to make English the official language. Effectively this does not end bilingualism but it is a strong symbolic statement and it has consequences for the legal system. See http://www.us-english.org/ [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. “Peripheral Europe . . .[including Italy] will not enjoy a quick or easy economic recovery. These countries cannot abandon the Euro, nor do they have strong global growth to aid their economies. The only real option for regaining competitiveness is through a collapse in employment and wages. This process is slow and difficult” (McDougall 2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. “Individual identity” can be defined generally as an individual's unique characteristic stemming from personality. Whereas, “social identity”, in general, or “sociolinguistic identity”, in particular, identifies the sense of belonging to a community (be it a local, regional, national, or global one) through a real or symbolic resource of language and communication as a means of understanding oneself within a group or a society (*cf*. note 9). Useful sources to obtain more detailed information about the concepts “linguistic identity”, “personal identity” and “social identity” are: Joseph 2004; Olson 2010; and Turner & Reynolds 2001. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Indeed, over nearly one hundred and fifty years, well-known novels – like *María* (1867) by Jorge Isaacs; *La Vorágine* (1924) by José Eustacio Rivera; *Cien años de* *soledad* (1967) by Gabriel García Márquez and *Delirio* (2004) by Laura Restrepo – have been instrumental both in the construction and internalization of nationhood and State institutions among Colombians. The characters, themes, and plots of these novels have contributed largely to instill, first in 19th century’s peasants, and later in 20th and 21st century’s citizens, a common sense of nationalbelonging. The configuration of the Nation-State in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is studied in Nelson González Ortega, *Colombia. Una* *nación en formación en su historia y literature (siglos XVI-XXI)* (2013). See, specially, Chapter 8: “Macondo: la invención de la nación como alegoría de la versión oficial de la historia de la Republica de Colombia”. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Henceforth, both the abbreviation *BMF* followed by the quoted page numbers will be given to refer to the short story “Big Mama’s Funeral” ([1962] 1968), and the abbreviation *OHYS* to refer to Gregory Rabassas’ 1970 English translation of *Cien años de Soledad* (1967 - see Bibliography). Although quotations in original languages are usually given followed by the translation of them, I have preferred here to quote only from Rabassa’s translation because it has been considered by critics and even by the author himself to be both accurate and innovative. The Real Academia de la Lengua Española’s edition of *Cien años de Soledad* (2007) is currently the best critical text in circulation for studying García Márquez’s novel. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Henceforth, all quotations of the book *Inflexión decolonial*. *Conceptos y cuestionamientos* by Eduardo Restrepo and Axel Rojas (see bibliography) will be translated into English by me. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. The origin, spread, validity and shortcomings of Decolonial studies and its difference from other critical theories such as Postcolonialism are explained in Restrepo& Rojas 2010: 185-223. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. For more information on Colombia’s historiography and of the Nation-State narrative construction in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, see González Ortega (2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Magical Realism was a term originally coined by the German art critic Franz Roh to refer to the German and international post-expressionist painting by Max Beckman, George Grosz, Otto Dix and Marc Chagall. In Latin American literature the term magical realism was used for the first time, by the Venezuelan critic Arturo Uslar Pietri in 1948, when he noticed that certain Venezuelan authors succumbed to the “contagion of Avant Garde literary forms” to create in their short stories “man as mystery surrounded by realistic data. Thus, a poetic divination or a poetic denial of reality. What, for lack of a word to define it, could be called Magical Realism” (Uslar Pietri [1948] 1974: 287, my translation). Magical Realism became a literary procedure used in different ways in well-known novels written by, among others, Miguel Angel Asturias, Juan Rulfo, and Gabriel García Márquez. Useful sources on Magical Realism are: Chiampi: 1983; Faris/Parkinson Zamora: 1995; Varela Bran: 1966; and González Ortega 2006. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. The episode of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* in which Meme Buendía, a descendant of Macondo’s founders, starts to learn English in the English encyclopedia given to her as a gift by the daughter of Mr. Brown, the banana plantation owner, may symbolise both that American capitalism is taking over Macondo and that García Marquez’s narrator is using literary parody to critize the American geopolitical action of “mapping the world” to extract the natural resources of third world countries, as will be commented on below in the light of Decolonial theory. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. The dismissive comment of the narrator leaves no doubt about the conflicting regional and sociocultural perspectives of people belonging to different ethnic and socio-cultural backgrounds. For additional illustrations of ethnic differences represented in García Márquez’s works, see González Ortega 2013: 223-229. The conflicting regional perspective often adopted by García Márquez is confirmed by Jacques Gilard, undoubtedly the most informed critic on García Márquez’s journalistic work, who has declared that: “His hostility [García Márquez 's] towards the cachaco's mentality was directed against some form of seriousness and stiffness which reflects mostly a lack of curiosity, flexibility and information” (Gilard 1981-1983: I, 43, my translation). [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Coloniality of power: “is a power relationship of domination/ exploitation/confrontation around work, nature, sex, subjectivity and authority within the framework of emergence and reproduction of the capitalist system” (Restrepo & Rojas 2010: 131). [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. “The coloniality of knowledge would supposed a kind of epistemic arrogance by those who imagine themselves to be modern and consider themselves as holders of the most appropriate (or even the only) means of access to the truth (whether it be a secular or a theological) and therefore they may assume they can manipulate the natural or social world towards their own interests” (Restrepo & Rojas 2010: 137). [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. *The United Fruit Company*’s banana-workers strike that occured in Cienaga, Colombia in December 1928 and the disputed number of workers (9 or 3000) killed by the Colombian army commissioned by the American multinational’s directors is analysed both as an established historical fact and as a fictional event that has generated many literary versions in González-Ortega 2013: 308-331. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. The project, funded by USydIS of the University of Sydney, focused on Italian English bilinguals in Australia and investigated a number of topics related to language attitudes and language in the media. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. In the period between 1947 and 1976, some of the 360,000 Italians who left Italy also ventured to Western Australia, South Australia and Queensland. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. I prefer to use the term language as opposed to dialect employed elsewhere (cf. for example Bettoni and Rubino 1996: 12-16; Caruso 2010: 25-29; Cavallaro 2010: 111-15) since those spoken in Italy are separate languages spoken in the Italian peninsula that, due to several typological reasons, must not be considered dialects of Italian (Tosi 2004). I fully concur with Tamburelli (2014) who demonstrated conclusively that labelling languages like Lombard as dialects is inaccurate on a taxonomical basis; and that arbitrary socio-political distinctions between languages and dialects in the Italian context are ultimately detrimental to the maintenance of multilingualism (cf. also Coluzzi 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Language dominance is defined as the degree to which a bilingual “leans towards one language as opposed to the other” (Flege, Mackay and Piske 2002: 567). [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. See Tamburelli (2012) for a discussion around the notion of diglossia. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. This stigmatisation is similar to the one found among other Italo-Australians (Bettoni and Gibbons 1988) and other Italian communities outside of Italy (Turchetta 2005). [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. It would be interesting to compare how the approach changes when the language is spoken in more than one country (as is the case with Spanish or Portuguese). [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. This situation can often lead to code-mixing or to code-switching in a multilingual speaker (e.g., studies on plurilingual children in Wang 2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. At the University of Oslo, for example, almost all grammatical topics must be learned in one semester (ca. 56 teaching hours). [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. It is worth mentioning that Book BG has the shortest lessons among the three books, and Book PI the longest. This means that Book PI introduces more vocabulary and more exercises, and discusses more scenarios, but the main topics remain the same. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. According to the Italiano 2000 sociological survey, 32.8% of learners study Italian as a “hobby.” According to a survey conducted at the University of Oslo at the beginning of the 2013/14 academic year, 18 out of 20 elementary-level students answered that they chose Italian because they like “Italian language and culture”. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. As a comparison I can give an example from Russian textbooks (see References). Of three Russian textbooks (L2, elementary level) that I have checked, topics about the theatre and literature were explicitly introduced in all three books, while TV programs were never discussed. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. I will not discuss here the strategies used to teach pragmatic competence to the learner. It is a broad topic that must be analysed separately. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. The count Camillo Benso di Cavour was a leading figure in the Italian unification process. Leon Battista Alberti was an [Italian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italy) [humanist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Renaissance_humanist) author, [architect](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Architect), [linguist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linguistics) and [philosopher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosopher). Giuseppe Verdi was an Italian composer. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. I suppose that it concerns not only native speakers, but also near-native speakers (according to Sorace’s definition – see e.g., Sorace & Filiaci 2006). However, this phenomenon should be studied more deeply. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. In the study of V. Gak (1966) dedicated to French–Russian correspondences the same tendency has been observed. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. These examples and the examples below (with the verb *prendere*) are taken from the first lesson of Book UI. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)