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38 Language and the building of nations in Southeast Asia

38.1 Introduction

The major states of Southeast Asia, with the single exception of Thailand, all achieved independence during the 20th century following extended periods of foreign colonial domination and were faced with the significant challenge of how to develop successful new nations from populations that were typically very complex in their ethno-linguistic makeup. Language issues have played an important role in the process of nation-building in Southeast Asia, as elsewhere in the world, and the different decisions made by political leaderships with regard to post-colonial language planning have resulted in a broad range of outcomes and different measures of success, promoting both national and official languages by means of either heavily monolingual or alternatively multilingual policies. This chapter describes the linguistic situations that have evolved in countries in Southeast Asia as governments have confronted the needs and demands of their largely heterogeneous populations and the pressures which arise when multiple languages compete with each other inside a single political territory. The chapter first provides an overview of the general relation of language to the construction of national identity and the governance of modern, multilingual states, and then presents language profiles of individual countries in Southeast Asia, focusing on the relation between majority and minority languages and ethnic groups, and how state language policies have attempted to address political, cultural and economic problems specifically linked to language issues. These studies also highlight broader, general lessons that can be learned for language planning from the particular experiences of Southeast Asian states, as different approaches have been experimented with and implemented with either beneficial or negative results.

38.2 The role of language planning in the construction of new nations

The ability of new, multi-ethnic states to prosper and avoid inter-ethnic conflict is significantly enhanced when equal socio-economic and political opportunities are offered to all groups present in a mixed population. The long-term success of nation states around the world is also typically increased if the citizens of a state come to feel connected with each other at the national level, developing feelings of loyalty both to their country and other members of its population with a sense of collective, national

identity. Language and language planning may often play an important role in such a process, in three general ways. First, economic progress is greatly assisted when a shared means of communication is made available in multilingual populations – knowledge of a language (or languages) that can be used by all in trade, education, and government administration. Second, the socio-political stability of ethnically mixed states requires the development and practice of language policies which are perceived as fair toward all groups and not offering unequal advantages to a particular sub-section of the population. Third, the regular use of a common language by all members of a population, at least some of the time, has the potential to serve as a strong psychological symbol of belonging to a single unified nation with shared interests and goals, stimulating positive feelings of a special connection with other co-members of the state.

Identifying what kind of language and language policies can best facilitate the development of newly independent multi-ethnic states is often very challenging, due to the complex mixture of peoples, cultures and languages that may be present in territories which were previously established as colonies by Western powers, or which alternatively arose from patterns of migration occurring over longer periods of time. In Southeast Asia, there are states with extremely heterogeneous populations, such as Indonesia and the Philippines, where very many different ethno-linguistic groups co-habit a singular national territory and hundreds of languages are claimed to be spoken. There are also states where one ethnic group constitutes a very sizeable majority, such as Thailand, Vietnam and Burma, but many other minorities are also present. How to shape effective national language policies in such states has not always been straightforward and easy, and in various cases has been further complicated by the "hangover" presence of an ex-colonial language in use in many formal domains of life – for example, English in the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore and Burma/Myanmar, retained and periodically advanced for its pragmatic and international value.

The types of language policy that have been implemented in Southeast Asian countries can be characterized in terms of a distinction between single language/unilingual and multilingual models of language planning, and the promotion of languages with different roles, as national and/or official languages. A strong influence on Asian countries in their development of language policy has been the perceived wisdom from Western countries that successful nations elevate a single language into a dominant, fully national role, pursuing a "one nation, one language" ideal in which the inhabitants of a nation are bonded together by being speakers of a single common language. Such thinking has led many countries in Southeast Asia to attempt to promote the learning and speaking of a single, heavily privileged language, as for example in Thailand and Vietnam, where national unity and strength has regularly been linked to citizens' civic duty to become speakers of Thai and Vietnamese. The unilingual/single language approach to language planning at the national level found in much of Southeast Asia (and the world in general) contrasts with attempts to foster

high-level multilingualism and the simultaneous promotion of multiple languages in important roles, as in Singapore, where four languages are given equal status and rights in all government-regulated activities of daily life. An additional important twist on the single language versus multilingual approaches to language planning concerns governments' designation of languages as having either national language or official language status, or sometimes both such statuses. An official state language is a language that is proscribed for official use in various areas of life such as education, government administration, courts of law, public transportation etc. The citizens of a state have the legal right and are also required to use an official language in such domains, and official languages consequently have an essentially *pragmatic* function, to help speakers negotiate their daily lives at the national level with a form of speech that is known and understood by others in a state. Economic efficiency and the smooth running of government business all benefit from the nationwide utilization of official languages, which facilitate formal communication between people who may be native speakers of quite different languages. A national language, by way of contrast, is a language that has a primarily *symbolic* function, like a national flag or anthem, used to unify the citizens of a nation and instill feelings of group identity. A national language need not be sanctioned for use in formal domains of life or be required in formal interactions. Rather, its intended purpose is to encourage feelings of nationhood through being distinctive and setting its speakers off from other neighboring populations. In some instances, a single language may be able to serve both official and national language roles, as for example in Japan and Korea, where Japanese and Korean can be referred to as "national-official languages". However, in other cases, countries establish separate official and national languages, for a variety of reasons, as we will see in the chapter's discussion of the linguistic situation in the Philippines, Malaysia and Singapore.

In order to bring into practice whatever language policy is felt to be best suited to a country, governments regularly engage in hands-on language planning, a process which has several different stages and objectives. *Status planning* involves the decision to give certain special roles to one or more languages – the *selection* of languages for national or official language status. This decision-making process is critically important, especially in multilingual populations, where the promotion of one language over others can have major consequences for inter-ethnic relations. Following the selection step come various activities of *corpus planning*. In many cases, the decision to upgrade a language to national or official language status will require *standardization* of the language – agreement on which words are to be recognized as comprising the standard language, compiled into dictionaries, and the creation of grammatical descriptions of the language, indicating which grammatical rules are considered standard forms, to be taught to new speakers and also encouraged among existing speakers. In the case of new official languages, it will also often be necessary for linguists to help expand the vocabulary of the language so that it can be effectively used in all formal domains of life, such as higher education, government administra-

tion, scientific discussion, and legal documentation. Once sufficient standardization and vocabulary development has been achieved, knowledge of new national and official languages needs to be spread among the population of a state, typically by means of mass education and heavy use in public media – television, radio and literature. Finally, governments may also need to work on convincing their citizens of the benefits of adopting use of new national and official languages, so that they will actually speak these languages with enthusiasm and commitment – winning psychological acceptance for the promoted language forms.

When states attempt to manipulate the language habits of their populations and impose language policies of different types, the success of such initiatives can potentially be measured in two broad ways. A major goal of many countries is to cultivate a strong national identity among its people, which will help nurture feelings of loyalty to the nation and stimulate cooperation in national endeavors. A second important aim of language planning in multi-ethnic states in particular, is to craft a policy that will help maintain peace and stability among the different groups and not cause linguistic grievances which could become catalysts for general rejection of the state or lead to conflict between different language groups. In the set of case studies of Southeast Asian countries which make up the rest of the chapter, we will see how these goals have been approached in different ways and with varying degrees of success, partly as a result of decisions made by the political leaderships of countries in the region, and partly due to the nature of the populations present in individual states at the time when national language planning needed to be effected. We will begin with two cases which are widely recognized as having achieved the two goals noted above of stimulating the growth of a strong national identity while minimizing ethnic discord due to language-related reasons: Thailand and Vietnam. These two countries are similar in their population make-up, with large majorities from one ethnic group living alongside many smaller minority groups. However, their routes to the spread of highly effective national-official languages have been quite different, in one instance being a well-planned defense of the nation faced with the threat of Western encroachment, in the other being linked to the struggle against colonial domination and civil war.

38.3 Thailand – nationalism and modernization as a mechanism of self-defense

In the 19th century, the area that would become modern Thailand lay at the center of a much larger Siamese empire which incorporated much ethno-linguistic diversity and no commonly shared identity. Politically, the empire was constructed upon a network of local allegiances to regionally powerful rulers and little connection was felt between peoples who lived in different parts of the empire. As Western powers increasingly

penetrated Southeast Asia during this time, the integrity of the Siamese empire came under threat, with Britain and France taking control of more and more territory to the west, south and east of the empire. The Siamese monarchy realized that steps needed to be taken to ensure that Siam itself would not be overrun by either Britain or France and made into a colonial possession as had occurred in Burma, the Malay peninsula and Indo-China (Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia). King Chulalongkorn set about effecting the rapid modernization of Siam in a way that would present the image to the outside world of a stable modern country that Britain and France could successfully conduct business with without the need to subjugate it militarily. During the course of this modernization process, Siam actually lost half of the territory that had comprised the Siamese empire and was transformed from a vast, sprawling empire constructed on regional power relations to a smaller nation-state with a centralized bureaucracy. As the country managed to survive any foreign encroachment of its newly reconfigured borders and retained its independence, unlike all other countries and kingdoms of Southeast Asia, the idea of a Thai nation was promoted, vigorously, for the first time, with policies that were intended to coalesce the mixed population as a united, (largely) uniform nation with a common national culture.

A major component of the drive to develop a strong, new national identity in the first half of the 20th century was the promotion of a standardized form of Thai, modeled on the speech of the center of the country, as the national language. In 1905 a grammatical description of standard Thai was completed, "Principles of the Thai Language", and used as a model for all language textbooks teaching Thai in compulsory mass education introduced throughout the state, and in many new publications made available in Thai. Presented as the national language, standard central Thai also quickly came to be used as the dominant medium of instruction in schools, which now emphasized the teaching of a common Thai history and culture. In the 1930s in particular, heavy nationalist propaganda orchestrated by the political leadership of the country disseminated the myth of a single Thai people with a long, shared history. The name of the country was changed, in a very symbolic gesture, from "Siam" to "Thailand", and its population were referred to as "Thais" rather than "Siamese", in an attempt to reinforce the notion of an ethnically uniform race and nation speaking a single language, Thai. Terms used to refer to parts of the population in ways that diverged from this homogenous ideal were discontinued, with the result that those living in the northeast of Thailand were no longer permitted to be referred to as "Lao" (as had previously been the custom) and had to be called "Thai", one member of the monarchy, Prince Damrong, insisting that "we know they are Thai, not Lao" (Keyes 2003). Other non-linguistic symbols reinforced the widespread pressure to adopt and revere Thai national identity, such as a new national flag and national anthem, very regularly seen and heard in daily life in Thailand through until the present.

The second half of the 20th century saw the continued strengthening of Thai national identity, bolstered by further modernization and a significant economic boom in the 1960s. Leaders of the state highlighted the fact that Thailand had been

able to maintain its independence through the 20th century while other countries in southeast Asia had all been overrun and colonized by Western powers. This helped embed the feeling of truly belonging to a successful modern nation among the population of the country, as Thailand seemed to be making progress like other modern states in Europe and northeast Asia. During this time, standard Thai firmly established its position as one of the strongest symbols of the shared national identity, with more than 90 % of the population being able to speak the language and communicate effectively with each other.

Currently, there is a stable co-existence of standard Thai with a broad range of other languages and distinctive, regional forms of Thai, in a relation of complementary distribution. Standard Thai is used in all formal domains, including education, government administration, legal matters, much business, and in interactions in banks, on public transport and in higher end stores throughout the country, while regional forms of Thai and other minority languages are heard outside the center of the country in informal interactions. It has widely been observed that the rise of standard Thai and its total dominance in national and official language roles (stimulating feelings of national identity and fulfilling all language needs in formal areas of life) never encountered obvious resistance from the public and was brought about very effectively by those leading the country during the 20th century. Five primary reasons for this striking success of the state's national language planning policy are identified in Simpson and Thammasathien (2007a). First, the promotion of standard Thai as the national language was not accompanied by any attempt to fully suppress other languages. Speakers of other varieties were permitted to continue to make use of these forms of language in informal domains of life, although required, as a national duty, to learn standard Thai for national- and formal-level interactions. Second, the first, home language of 90 % of the population is some form of Thai, hence speakers of regional forms of Thai perceive that their home varieties are related to the national language – standard Thai is therefore not a foreign imposition. Third, the general promotion of Thai national identity has been considerably successful and brought about a very perceptible sense of national pride and loyalty among the population of the country, and standard Thai is part of this accepted national identity. Fourth, through its own efforts at self-defense, Thailand was spared the complications which frequently arise when a foreign language comes to be used during extended periods of foreign colonial domination (as with English in the Philippines, Singapore and Malaysia). Fifth, the ethnically non-Thai 10 % of the population have seen that there are pragmatic incentives for accepting the nationwide dominance of standard Thai. It enables access to educational, economic and advancement opportunities that might otherwise not be available in the absence of a nationally shared language.

One residual challenge to the very broad acceptance of standard Thai and Thai national identity still remains, however, in the deep south of the country, where a Malay-speaking Muslim population lives in four provinces adjacent to the border with Malaysia. This area previously belonged to independent Malay states and was only

incorporated into Siam in the 19th century. As its population is ethnically Malay, has traditionally spoken Malay rather than any form of Thai, and is Muslim rather than Buddhist, the people in the southern borderlands area feel they have more in common with the inhabitants of Malaysia than the rest of Thailand and would like to preserve Malay language and culture and transmit this further to rising generations. Despite such wishes, the use of Malay in schools in the area has been heavily controlled by the Thai government and education through standard Thai has been largely imposed as elsewhere in the country. This has created certain resentment among much of the local population, who indicate that they feel discriminated against on the basis of their language and religion.

Notwithstanding the case of the provinces bordering Malaysia, the general picture is one of striking conformity to the national language planning initiative which has been vigorously promoted by the state since the early 20th century as part of its continued efforts at nation-building. Modern Thailand stands out in southeast Asia as a country which has achieved its goal of constructing a strong national identity, and has done this in considerable measure through the successful development and dispersion of an indigenous national-official language which is perceived to be prestigious and a positive linguistic symbol of the nation, and also serves as a practical resource offering clear advantages to its speakers in everyday life.

38.4 Vietnam – national language and the role of writing systems in identity formation

The language situation in present-day Vietnam resembles that in Thailand in a very clear way. As in Thailand, there is a successful, widespread national-official language, Vietnamese, which is used in all formal domains of life – higher education, government administration, scientific research, legal matters, the creation of literature, as well as dominating print and visual media – and the same language functions well as a strong marker of national identity, distinguishing its speakers in a positive way from populations in other countries. Vietnam also has a population distribution which is similar to that of Thailand, with approximately 90 % of its citizens sharing the same ethnic background (Kinh Vietnamese) and 10 % being made up of many smaller minority groups. What distinguishes Vietnam from Thailand in an interesting way is how its national-official language has achieved its current highly developed position, the political and military struggles which have constantly interacted with language and the development of Vietnamese, and the role that forms of writing/orthography have played in the evolution of the national language.

From 111 BCE until 939 BCE, the area of modern day north and north central Vietnam was ruled over by Chinese forces, following an initial invasion during the Han Dynasty, and this foreign control embedded classical Chinese as the language of

administration and the only form of written communication. "Sino-Vietnamese" then emerged as a localized written form of classical Chinese, differing from the latter predominantly in the way it was pronounced. Following the expulsion of Chinese rulers in the 10th century, Sino-Vietnamese continued on as the common form of writing, being the only way that official acts of administration were recorded, and dominating the creation of literature. An adaption of Chinese characters to transcribe actual spoken Vietnamese was initiated in the 11th century, but "*chữ nôm*" never achieved prestige and all high-level writing remained in Sino-Vietnamese, which even served as a vehicle to express ideas of Vietnamese national identity until the late 19th century (Lê and O'Harrow 2007). A third system of writing known as *quốc ngữ* was developed in the 17th century by Jesuit missionaries, as a means to represent spoken Vietnamese using the Roman alphabet supplemented with certain diacritics. The creation of *quốc ngữ* added to the complexity of written forms available in Vietnam, and was an orthography that was very easy to learn and use, in comparison with Sino-Vietnamese and *chữ nôm,* which both utilized large numbers of Chinese characters. However, despite its much greater simplicity, use of *quốc ngữ* did not spread beyond the Catholic population in Vietnam for two more centuries, when the country came under new foreign domination, subjugated gradually by France.

As the French established their rule over north, central and southern Vietnam, they saw that opposition to French rule was led by members of the Vietnamese intellectual elite who commanded knowledge of Sino-Vietnamese, and this Sinitic written form of language was used as a center-piece of national identity representing Vietnamese traditions and new anti-colonial sentiments. Because of this connection between Sino-Vietnamese and resistance to French rule, the French decided to promote the use of *quốc ngữ* in local government in place of Sino-Vietnamese, as a way to undermine the influence of the traditional Vietnamese elite. With the same goal in mind, publications in *quốc ngữ* were also significantly increased under French rule in the late 19th century, in a sustained attempt to weaken the symbolic power of Sino-Vietnamese and replace it with a Western-sourced Romanized form of writing.

While *quốc ngữ* was initially perceived to be the orthography of the enemy and associated with colonial domination, in the early 20th century attitudes held by those opposed to French colonial rule changed in an interesting way. It was realized that because *quốc ngữ* was a system that was easy to master and represented spoken Vietnamese not classical Chinese, it actually offered an excellent means to spread messages of resistance to French rule among the masses who had no knowledge of Sino-Vietnamese. Intellectuals hoping to reach a wide audience with nationalist messages thus all switched from the use of Sino-Vietnamese to the use of *quốc ngữ* during the 1920s and 1930s, and a large new body of work written in *quốc ngữ* came into creation. This included not only political tracts, but also works of literature and translations of classical texts originally written in Sino-Vietnamese, dramatically increasing the prestige which *quốc ngữ* was felt to have. Lê and O'Harrow (2007) discuss the remarkable "conflict of the scripts" which played out in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in

Vietnam, noting that at one point there were four different writing systems available for use: Sino-Vietnamese, *chữ nôm*, *quốc ngữ*, and Romanized French. To begin with, Sino-Vietnamese and *chữ nôm* were linked with opposition to the French and use of *quốc ngữ* represented collaboration. However, later on, the pragmatic value of *quốc ngữ* was appreciated by the nationalists, who realized that it represented the most practical means to disseminate anti-colonial propaganda and help modernization. With the adoption and extended use of *quốc ngữ* by the independence movement, its initial negative symbolic value was first replaced with appreciation of its pragmatic value for the spread of nationalist ideas, and then *quốc ngữ* ironically came to acquire a strong new positive symbolic value, associated with resistance to the French and a commitment to modernize the country. Lê and O'Harrow (2007) note that:

> If there is any general lesson to be derived from the French period, it is perhaps that symbolic values associated with language can undergo considerable change even in relatively short periods of time such as the span of one generation. A "foreign" language system such as the French-developed (and promoted) Romanization of vernacular Vietnamese in *quoc ngu* came to be "nativized" in the minds of speakers over time through increased association with domestic, national use, to the point of becoming an important new icon of national identity and losing earlier negative associations of foreign origin. (Lê and O'Harrow 2007: 429)

When independence from the French came about in the second half of the 20th century, after much internal conflict, extensive corpus planning activities were carried out to further develop Vietnamese, written in *quốc ngữ*, as the national language. Literacy campaigns were initiated to spread knowledge of written Vietnamese to all the population, and every ethnic group in the country was told it had a social responsibility to learn Vietnamese (Vasavakul 2003). The standardization of Vietnamese was assisted by the founding of a new Institute of Linguistics, and intensive work was carried out on expanding the vocabulary of Vietnamese so that it could be effectively used in all domains of life, including high-level academic, political and scientific discussion. As part of this development of the vocabulary of modern Vietnamese, attempts were made to restore the "purity" of the national language by eliminating words which had been borrowed from foreign sources in earlier times (principally Chinese), and avoiding the adoption of words from other languages in the expansion of new technical vocabulary for Vietnamese.

As a result of the post-independence promotion of standardized spoken and written forms of the language, Vietnamese has become a highly successful national-official language, just like standard Thai in Thailand. It is now the principal medium of instruction in all schools and institutes of higher education and is used throughout the country in all formal and informal domains of life and all modes of interaction. Symbolically, it binds the Vietnamese population together very effectively and has become a major component of national identity. Finally, no foreign language competes with Vietnamese as a lingering colonial legacy, French having all but disappeared from Vietnam, and Vietnamese is spoken confidently and with pride by all

levels of society, felt to be a prestigious language able to convey complex information and create fine literature as well as any other language.

38.5 Indonesia: a successful official language paired with stable multilingualism

While Thailand and Vietnam have populations in which a single ethnic group comprises a very large majority of the total in the state and this has greatly assisted the selection and development of a national-official language, Indonesia is a country with a much more mixed population, with hundreds of languages being spoken by a large number of ethnic groups, none of which constitutes a clear majority of the population. In such an ethno-linguistically mixed state, language has the potential to be very divisive and lead to inter-ethnic competition and possible conflict. However, Indonesia has been remarkably successful in its post-independence management of language issues and the use of language to develop a modernized, largely unified state, and presents a good lesson to other countries of how official language planning in a very heterogeneous population can in fact succeed very well if treated with sufficient care and attention. Two aspects of Indonesia's engagement in language planning have been particularly important for its sustained success. First, the nationalist leadership of Indonesia made an excellent choice in the *selection* of a language to be developed as the country's new official language. Second, *implementation* of the spread of "Indonesian" throughout the nation was wisely handled with much concern for the population's continued attachment to other local languages.

Concerning the selection issue, pre-independence nationalist groups agreed that it would be very useful for a future, independent Indonesia to have a single, widely known official language. The critical question was how to choose a language that could be promoted in this way without causing any major dissatisfaction among the population. Dutch, the language of the colonial rulers of Indonesia, was never considered as a possible official language choice, due to negative associations with Dutch rule. The language of the largest ethnic group in Indonesia, Javanese, was also rejected, because the promotion of Javanese as Indonesia's common official language would have given unfair advantages to the Javanese group and most probably caused much discontent among other sections of the population. Javanese is also linguistically a complex language to learn, requiring the mastery of multiple, different speech levels for use in different social contexts, and might not have been easy to spread as a language among other groups in the country. The decision was instead taken to select and promote (following the achievement of independence) a form of Malay that had come to be used in trading interactions by speakers of different languages in much of the country, renaming this variety "Indonesian" (Bahasa Indonesia). The choice of this variety for promotion as the nation's future official language made good sense for

many reasons. First, because it was primarily used as a trading lingua franca, it was perceived to be an ethnically neutral language, not giving special advantages to any already powerful group, and this helped people readily accept Indonesian as a useful link language when it was developed as the official language of the state. At the time of its selection as future official language, Malay/Indonesian was only spoken as a first language by a relatively small and economically insignificant group on Sumatra, not by any dominant majority.

Second, some basic Malay/Indonesian had already been taught in schools in different parts of the country before independence, and it had come to be used in various newspapers and popular works of fiction. Third, Malay/Indonesian is an Austronesian language and there are similarities in its vocabulary and grammatical structure to Indonesia's many other Austronesian languages. It could therefore be learned without great difficulty by the general population and was felt to be broadly representative of the linguistic identity of the country. Finally, Indonesian was frequently used by the nationalists from the 1930s onward, and so it acquired positive prestige from its close association with the independence movement.

Independence was ultimately not achieved until 1949. However, between 1942 and 1945, the development of Indonesian as an official-like language was assisted by the replacement of Dutch with Indonesian during the Japanese occupation of the country, requiring Indonesian to be used in a range of situations it had not previously been used in and a sudden, necessary growth in its vocabulary. Following independence, there was a continued, massive development of technical vocabulary and the creation of a grammatical description of Indonesian, establishing a standard model of the language that could be used in teaching Indonesian throughout the country. Mass education then spread knowledge of Indonesian very widely. Importantly, this implementation of Indonesian as new official language of the state was effected in a gradual way without any attempt by the government to suppress the use of other local languages in informal domains. The result of this very tolerant process of promotion is nationwide bilingualism. Indonesian is used by everyone in the population in formal areas of life – in government administration, higher levels of education, inter-regional commerce, legal matters and to access science and technology – while regional languages are regularly used in the home and in other casual interactions with friends and family. This combination of Indonesian as nationwide official lingua franca with local languages used as informal means of communication seems to work very well, and language issues have not been the causes of ethnic conflict in Indonesia's very mixed population.

Although Indonesian is technically classified as the official language of the country, it has frequently been noted that Indonesian performs more than just purely utilitarian functions, and its use over time has helped stimulate the development of Indonesian national identity, hence it additionally serves in national language functions. The language facilitates communication between different ethnolinguistic groups and is a clearly unifying feature of the population, for Bertrand "the strong-

est symbol of national unity" (Bertrand 2003: 279), and "the primary shared component of the country's emerging national identity" (Simpson 2007b: 334) encoding an all-Indonesian identity. The language planning policies of the Indonesian government since independence have therefore been very successful, and show that it is in fact possible to develop a single indigenous language as an official (or national-official) language in an ethnically very mixed country, if this is carried out with careful toleration for other languages spoken in a population. Perhaps the most important lesson to come from Indonesia's post-independence language program is that the continued use and even encouragement of local minority languages alongside the development of a nationwide official language does not pose a threat to the successful promotion of the latter, as official and local languages may be used for different functions which are not in competition with each other but instead serve as distinct assets enriching a population's linguistic repertoire.

38.6 Singapore – official linguistic pluralism

A consideration of post-independence Indonesia demonstrates how a *single language policy* promoting one official language can be successful even in a heavily mixed population, if implemented well, with no attempted suppression of other home languages. Singapore, by way of contrast, is a good example of an ethnically mixed state which has striven to effect a pluralist, multilingual official language policy at the national level, and made such an ambitious policy succeed for half a century already.

Under British colonial rule from 1824 to 1958, Singapore developed a complex population, principally made up of Chinese, Malays, and South Asians. When self-government was granted in 1958, the new political leaders of the state faced the challenge of how to unify the mixed population as an independent nation. No feelings of trans-ethnic, collective identity had been nurtured under the British (quite the opposite, in fact), and the natural historical means to build a common national identity were not present, as Singapore had no long history with co-participation of the three major ethnic groups in struggles to defend and improve the state. In an attempt to begin to bind the population together, the new leaders of Singapore decided to focus on the future and stressed joint economic growth and the protection of equal rights as goals for the development of the state and its population. It set about promoting cultural and linguistic pluralism and the growth of a new Singaporean identity founded on respect for broad, traditional Asian values. The result has been a determined program of language planning sustained over many decades, with regular attempts to guide and sometimes redirect the common language practices of the population in the interests of the state and the maintenance of harmonic relations among the population.

With regard to state language policy and the question of what language might be privileged with the role of official language of Singapore, rather than selecting a single

language for such a status, the decision was taken to promote four official languages in a fully equal manner: Mandarin Chinese, Malay, Tamil and English. The first three languages provided official linguistic representation for the three major ethnic groups, and English was added as a fourth official language for its international, utilitarian value and as recognition of its important use as a language of interethnic communication. Additionally, Malay was given the role of national language, for political reasons, as Singapore's larger neighbors to the north and south were both Malay-speaking states (Malaysia and Indonesia). Malay's status as national language has, however, largely been symbolic and gives it no dominant role in daily life. In all major areas of formal life in Singapore, such as schooling, government administration, legal matters and media air time, the four official languages have been guaranteed equal treatment, and are very widely used.

A key component of the Singaporean government's attempts to integrate the population and remove barriers to communication between the different ethnic groups has been an evolving program of mandatory bilingual education. Initially, students entering school were required to select two of the four official languages as mediums of education. One language was used in 60 % of a student's classes (the "L1"), and the other in the remaining 40 % (the "L2"). The government hoped that students would learn the languages of the other primary ethnic groups in Singapore, and in doing so increase their cultural knowledge of others in the population. However, it turned out that, for pragmatic reasons, most students selected a combination of English and the official language identified with their own ethnic group rather than the language of another group. As a result of this massive convergence on selection of English as the 60 % "first language" of education, the school system was fully reorganized, converting schools that had previously focused on teaching with Mandarin Chinese, Malay and Tamil as the L1 into L1 English schools. All schools became uniform in their structure, using English as the L1 and offering the other three official languages as L2. While the initial hoped-for cross-cultural bilingualism did not arise from bilingual education, and Chinese students learned through English and Chinese not Malay or Tamil, and Malay students took English and Malay, not one of the other two official languages, there nevertheless was a very positive side-effect of the restructuring of schools in Singapore. As the older Chinese, Malay and Tamil schools were merged into L1 English schools, students from Singapore's different ethnic groups all began to attend the same schools and mixed with each other much more than in previous generations, improving their understanding of their neighbors from other ethnic backgrounds.

The government's regular involvement in aspects of language planning has also aimed at improvements in the speaking of two of the four official languages, with broad campaigns targeting adults as well as younger people. The "Speak Mandarin Campaign" asked speakers of different varieties of Chinese, such as Cantonese and Hokkien, to switch to using Mandarin both at work and in the home, in order to improve cross-generational knowledge of Mandarin Chinese and bring together the

Chinese population with a single form of Chinese known/spoken by all. Mandarin classes were offered free of charge to adults and the government began to require the use of Mandarin in workplace interactions between ethnically Chinese Singaporeans, rather than Cantonese or Hokkien. Over a period of years, the Speak Mandarin Campaign did indeed considerably improve the Chinese population's proficiency in Mandarin and led to Mandarin becoming established as the common form of communication among Chinese from different dialect backgrounds.

A second major campaign was focused on English and was a response to worries on behalf of the government that the use of colloquial Singapore English or "Singlish" was negatively impacting people's abilities to speak standard English. Singlish is a combination of English, Malay and Chinese vocabulary and grammar and quite distinct from standard forms of English, though a majority of the words used in Singlish are in fact easily recognizable English words. When Singlish came to be used frequently in popular television shows during the 1990s, the government imposed a ban on Singlish in television and radio, voicing concern that Singapore's ability to prosper as an international center of commerce depended on its use of standard English and that this was threatened by a decline into the vernacular forms of Singlish, not easily comprehensible to non-Singaporeans. In 2000, the "Speak Good English Movement" was then a further step to direct people away from Singlish and toward the "better" standards of international English. In reality, most Singaporeans seem to be able to switch between Singlish and standard (Singaporean) English according to the situation and there does not seem to be any obvious decline in abilities in the latter. Ironically, as a language form binding the mixed population together, it is actually Singlish which functions as the most obvious informal symbol of a race-neutral, general Singaporean identity, yet Singlish is felt to be much too informal for any official promotion in such an integrative role.

Viewed overall, language planning instituted by the Singaporean leadership in the form of official multilingualism can be said to have stimulated the growth of a unifying national identity based on multiculturalism with equal linguistic rights for each of the three major ethnic groups in the population and the official language linked to each group. Linguistic pluralism has helped create conditions of social stability and a beneficial foundation for the development of a new Singaporean identity which references properties of all three major ethnic groups in an inclusive way, and emphasizes inter-ethnic cooperation and the celebration of cultural diversity. While the maintenance of multiple official languages requires both money and constant attention to preserve genuine equality, Singapore continues to show that such a policy is both possible and can be very successful, helping decrease the likelihood that language issues will become causes of conflict between different ethnic groups, and increase the potential for different groups to bond together as a single multicultural nation (Simpson 2007c).

38.7 The Philippines – difficulties in promoting the acceptance of a national language

The ethnolinguistic composition of the Philippines is similar to that of Indonesia in many ways – the country has a large population made up of many languages and ethnic groups (perhaps over 150 languages), spread over an extensive archipelago of islands. The area of the Philippines was ruled over first by the Spanish, from the 16th century to the end of the 19th century, and then by the USA in the first half of the 20th century, until independence was achieved in 1946. While 300 years of Spanish presence in the Philippines resulted in little knowledge of Spanish being established among the population, the US government saw the spread of education and the English language as a major priority, and by 1939 there came to be more (L2) speakers of English than any single Filipino language. At the time of independence, however, the new leadership of the country felt that the promotion of an indigenous national language was critical for the building of a unified national identity to help bind the mixed population together, and it set about the selection and development of such a language, first called Pilipino, later renamed Filipino. Several decades years after this process had been initiated, however, the director of the Philippines Institute of National Language admitted that the national language had still not been accepted by the general population of the country and that Pilipino remained "a language in search of a people (or a nation)" (Gonzales 2007: 360). Currently, widespread success continues to elude the establishment of Filipino as a truly national language, and national identity has not been strengthened by language planning in the Philippines, unlike the situation in Indonesia and Thailand. The reasons for this comparative lack of success in the Philippines' national language program relate to both status and corpus planning issues, and the lingering interfering presence of the ex-colonial language English.

First of all, the *selection* of a specific language form to be promoted as new national language was not handled well. The leadership of the independent Philippines took the decision to make use of a slightly adjusted form of Tagalog, the language of the largest ethnic group in the country (12 million people at the time of independence), as the country's national language. Tagalog in the guise of national language was subsequently renamed as Pilipino in 1959 and then Filipino in 1973. This choice of a thinly disguised Tagalog as national language caused much discontent among other large ethnic groups in the Philippines such as the Cebuano (10 million) and the Ilocano (5 million), and was generally viewed as the Tagalog speaking leadership giving members of its own ethnic group unfair advantages in the future development of the country. Because of these feelings of resentment at the selection of the language of much of the ruling elite as national language, and the perception that Tagalog-speakers from the north of the Philippines would benefit heavily from the spread of Pilipino/Filipino as national and also official language, speakers of other Filipino languages

did not take up the learning and use of Pilipino/Filipino with any great enthusiasm. Second, it has been widely acknowledged that the government has failed to develop Pilipino/Filipino well and has not provided it with the linguistic resources necessary to serve national and official language functions in an effective way. There has been no satisfactory standardization of the language, insufficient development of its formal vocabulary, lack of support for its effective spread in education, and a general failure to win prestige and respect for the language through the creation of literature and a linking with other forms of high culture and scholarly learning. These selection and implementation issues have contributed greatly to the ambivalent, lackluster attitude towards the national language that prevails to the present in much of the country, and its lack of success as a language uniting the nation and stimulating strongly positive feelings of national identity.

The continued presence and attraction of English in the Philippines is also a factor which has affected the uptake of Filipino by the general population. English is considered to be extremely important for the access it provides to higher-paid jobs in the Philippines and the possibility of working overseas in various service occupations requiring a knowledge of English. The continued, common "clamor for more English" leads Gonzales (2007) to note that "the Filipino's first priority in language-learning for life is English, not Filipino" (Gonzales 2007: 370). For the government too, the development of English skills among the population is financially very important, as the foreign revenue which the country receives from Filipinos working overseas is more than from any other "export" from the Philippines and critical for the economy. In order to achieve the goal of spreading knowledge of both the national language and English, bilingual education was established in schools in 1974 with English and Filipino being used as mediums of instruction to teach different subjects. However, rather than producing competent bilinguals, it is frequently complained that standards of English have dropped and that Filipino is also not being learned well. Many observers have blamed the program of bilingual education for this perceived failure to acquire either English or the national language in an academically proficient way. Yet such an assessment has also been challenged, and a 1986 study reported that well-run schools did a good job in teaching both languages, whereas poorly-run schools performed unsatisfactorily in their delivery of bilingual education. Gonzales (2007) concludes that the key factor in language teaching success has been economic, with "the quality of teaching higher in more affluent schools being higher due to the presence of more competent teachers" (Gonzales 2007: 369). It seems that the desire to spread advanced knowledge of both English and Filipino throughout the country often leads to pressure on the delivery of education in two languages which only the better supported schools are able to handle well, and the general attraction of English to the Filipino population can both be financially beneficial at times, but also serve to hinder academic progress due to problems in the actual implementation of bilingual education.

The formal status of Filipino and English since the proclamation of the 1987 constitution is that Filipino is the national language of the Philippines and both Filipino

and English are the country's official languages. The on-the-ground reality of everyday language use is that English is used in higher, formal domains of life, Filipino is spoken as an informal link language between people from different language groups and heard in national media, while regional languages dominate local informal interactions. There is consequently a hierarchy of languages (Hau and Tinio 2003) with English privileged as the language of political, economic and intellectual power and opportunity, above Filipino, which is regarded as a national lingua franca, useful for informal interethnic communication rather than as an expression of national identity, and regional languages which are valued for the ways they express personal and local identity. The national language has become a purely functional, pragmatic means of communication in contexts where neither English is appropriate nor local languages can be understood by all speakers, and the opportunity for Filipino to bind the population enthusiastically together as a single unified people with a shared national identity has unfortunately not been realized. The success of national languages depends on careful selection, development, promotion in education, and the winning of psychological acceptance as a prestigious symbolic representation of the nation, and in the case of Filipino, these conditions for success have not been effectively satisfied so far.

38.8 Laos – economic, geographical and population challenges for national language planning

Laos is another country in Southeast Asia which has not seen much success with the use of a national language to stimulate feelings of unity and belonging to a single people. The causes of this lack of success partially overlap with those described for the Philippines – economic underdevelopment leading to a lack of available financial support for mass education and language programs, insufficient standardization of a (potential) national language, and negative attitudes among some groups to the privileging of one particular language in a national role. Other challenges facing Lao language planning have been the geography of the country and a lack of infrastructure connecting different parts of the country, and complications caused by issues relating to adjacent Thailand and the Lao population living there.

The six million population of Laos is made of 65 % who are ethno-linguistically Lao, related to the Thais, 25 % who speak Mon-Khmer languages, and 10 % who are speakers of Sino-Tibetan languages. These different groups are distributed over a large area dominated by mountains and forests with few major roads and railways, making travel and commerce less easy than in many other Southeast Asian countries. Before the 20th century, there were several different kingdoms in the territory of modern-day Laos and no unity or shared identity among the groups living in the area. The first attempts to forge a national identity for the "Lao" people were actually made by the

French as a defensive measure against Thailand. During the ultranationalist period of 1930s in Thailand, claims were made by the Thai government that the Lao were related to the Thais and so should be absorbed into a growing Thai nation. The French, who had occupied a significant portion of modern Laos, strove to counter this expansionist move with their own local nationalist program designed to create and stimulate a separate Lao national identity, and make the population of the Lao regions feel distinct from their neighbors in Thailand. The way that this was done was to present the language and culture of the ethnically Lao group as the all-encompassing national identity, despite the fact that the languages and cultures of the Mon-Khmer and Sino-Tibetan groups are significantly different from those of the Lao.

Later on, in the 1970s, there was a new initiative to build unity and feelings of national identity among the population of the country. However, this resulted in use of the term "Lao" also for the non-Lao groups, labelling the Mon-Khmer as "Midland Lao" and the Sino-Tibetan speakers as "Upland Lao". The attitude of the government therefore seems to have been that the identity of the entire population and the country should be centered around Lao ethnicity, which has not been welcomed by members of the non-Lao groups.

The general results of the government's attempts to stimulate growth of a Lao national identity since the 1970s have been rather weak. With regard to national language planning, no effective steps have been taken to establish and spread knowledge of a well-standardized national language. The form of Lao associated with the capital Vientiane may be widely understood in the country and a proxy-national language, but it has not been made the language of education and is not the only form of Lao to be used in formal acts of communication such as government administration, public announcements and religious activities. The areas of life which are typically utilized to build up familiarity with and use of a new national or official language are therefore not being exploited in Laos to strengthen the status of any single variety of language, and although Vientiane Lao is often heard, it is not perceived to have the strongly unifying power of national languages elsewhere, for example Thai and Vietnamese. In contrast to spoken Lao, the way that Lao is written is in fact uniform all over the country, making use of a script which is unique to Lao. However, literacy levels are generally low in Laos and so the potential for written Lao to serve as a symbol of unity in the Lao population is not being realized. A second challenge to attempts to build a strongly unified Lao nation arises from the geographical features dominating the country and the difficulties for internal communication and travel caused by the presence of mountains and forests in most of the country, which limit regular, integrative interaction between people from different parts of Laos. An additional obstacle to the development of Laotian national identity is the odd composition of its population, created as an artificial grouping by the French colonial expansion in Indo-China. The heterogeneous mixture of the Lao, Mon-Khmer and Sino-Tibetan components of the population makes it difficult to identify any common cultural or linguistic symbols that could be used to promote a sense of shared national consciousness. Furthermore,

the majority of the Lao people, approximately 80 %, actually live in northeast Thailand, not in Laos, due to the international borders formed by Siam and the French. Such a separation of the Lao into two territorial states makes the potential imagining of a truly "Lao nation" just within Laos considerably more complicated. Finally, the use of television programming in Laos to spread a national form of Lao language and identity is regularly hindered by the accessibility of Thai television programs, which are better financed and produced and frequently attract more viewers than programs produced by the Lao government, promoting knowledge of Thai rather than a semi-standardized form of Lao. For all these reasons, it is not surprising to find that the use of language to help unify a nation has not been successful in Laos and it is likely that the current situation of a weakly-linked population will continue on into the future, unless there is significant economic growth and the financial means to invest much more in physical and linguistic communication in the country (Keyes 2003; Simpson and Thammasathien 2007a).

38.9 Burma/Myanmar – language planning and political goals

Watkins (2007: 263) observes that two major struggles and tensions have characterized the sociolinguistic situation in Burma/Myanmar during the 20th century. The first of these has been "a nationalist drive […] to establish, maintain and develop an independent state free of colonial and other foreign influence, coalescing an essentially Burmese national identity at the centre and heart of the country" (Watkins 2007: 263). The second tension has been the developing relation of the majority Burman ethnic group to the range of other minority groups which constitute a third of the population, and how the latter might be integrated in a single nation together with the majority Burmans. To some extent, challenges facing the development of an all-encompassing national identity in Burma/Myanmar resemble those experienced in Laos – the proportions of majority to minority groups are similar in both countries, and in both countries there have been economic challenges holding back the successful promotion of a national identity which is heavily anchored to the language and culture of the ethnic majority. In Burma/Myanmar there have also been additional political complications which have hampered the success of language planning and popular enthusiasm for "national" Myanmar culture.

Early moves to make use of language and culture in Burma/Myanmar as means to unify the population in a struggle against outsiders were prominent in the 1930s, in the nationalist anti-colonial movement, which campaigned against the use of English, as a foreign imposition by the British colonial government, and exhorted the central majority to be proud of Burmese language and cultural traditions. It was argued that there was a need for Burmese to be asserted as the national language and for other

components of Burman culture to be stressed as symbols of resistance to continued British rule and an affirmation of the desire to form an independent nation.

When independence was attained in 1948, the new leadership faced the problem common in new multi-ethnic states of how to unify the mixed population and coalesce, in some way, the many different groups which had previously not had any strong connections with each other, or feelings of loyalty to a single polity. The basic approach adopted by the government was to promote the language and culture of the Burman majority as representations of the entire nation, however many non-Burman groups in the border areas were against the attempt to brand the whole country with linguistic, cultural and political "Burmanization" (Callahan 2003). Nevertheless, the push to spread Burmese, the language of the Burman majority, continued on in the decades following independence, with increased literacy campaigns in the 1960s and the development of a standard form of Burmese, whose learning the government thought would be able to convey its political message and convert the population into effective socialists.

Later on, in the 1980s, politics and the struggle for political control of the country triggered further initiatives relating to the promotion of language and culture. The military junta which had taken power in 1987, following widespread demonstrations caused by the near-collapse of the economy, became concerned that the political opposition, the National League for Democracy/NLD, might succeed in gaining anti-government support from the many minority groups for an end to military rule. In order to block the formation of alliances between the NLD and non-Burman minorities, the military government made attempts to keep the minority groups fragmented and disconnected from each other and the NLD through encouraging the use (and in some cases revitalization) of their distinct languages and different cultural practices. If communication between the minority groups and the NLD could be hampered by linguistic differences, this could help keep useful divisions between these groups, it was thought. Callahan (2003: 144) notes that, quite paradoxically, this *stimulation* of ethnolinguistic differences by the military government came at a time when it was also involved in a politically-driven "cultural homogenization program [...] designed to *erase* differences among the peoples of Burma" (Callahan 2003: 144; emphases added), and making claims that the peoples of Burma were all closely connected in a single ethnicity. In 1989, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) established by the army took the view that the anti-government demonstrations of 1988 had been caused by a lack of unity in the country, and that a re-imaging of the nation was required to "remind" the population of its close ethnic and historical links to each other. The name of the country was changed from "Burma" to "Myanmar" and the innovative (but ungrounded) claim was made and broadly dispersed that all groups in the country were descended from a single ancient race called the "Myanmars", hence all the indigenous inhabitants of modern-day Myanmar were ethnically related as one people. The Burmese language was renamed "Myanmar", and all uses of the term "Burma" were removed from books, signs and public records. The military govern-

ment suggested that the switch from the terms Burma/Burmese to Myanmar for reference to the country, the people and the language would benefit the country and make the non-Burman minorities feel more included in the nation, due to use of a broader national term rather than terms related to the Burman majority. However, as pointed out in Callahan (2003) and Watkins (2007), this shift in terminology did nothing to change the fact that it was still the language of the Burman majority group that was being presented as the national language, and the switch to use of a different name for the language appeared vacuous to many and a continued show of dominance of the Burmans over the minority population. The national language situation in Burma/Myanmar is thus quite akin to Laos and the Philippines, where the language of the largest group in the country has been promoted as the national language in a situation where at least one third of the population are not speakers of this language, and it is felt that unfair advantages and symbolic power are transferred to native speakers by such an advancement of the language of the majority/largest group. As in the Philippines, the name change applied to the national language has failed to change perceptions of its ethnolinguistic bias and even increased negative feelings towards its nationwide promotion.

In assessing the effects of language planning policies in Burma and attempts by the post-independence leadership to create greater unity in the population, Watkins (2007) argues that the promotion of Burmese/Myanmar as a national language has not stimulated the growth of a strongly unifying national identity, and that efforts to establish such a binding identity among the population have been hampered by three non-linguistic factors, compounding the difficulty of developing a genuinely inclusive approach to national/official language issues. First, the borders of the country were created during the colonial period and resulted in a very mixed population with no shared ethnicity or history being grouped together in a single territory, as in many other ex-colonial states. Second, Watkins notes that the economy of the country has long been heavily depressed and that such a situation has an important negative effect on the development of positive feelings of pride and hope in the nation and its future. Finally, it is pointed out that "the attempted promotion of a Myanmar national identity [...] is strongly associated with the military government" (Watkins 2007: 286) and this association may cause a negative reaction toward its promotion in much of the population who are sympathetic to the political opposition. It will be interesting to see if attitudes toward language and national identity may perhaps undergo change in Burma/Myanmar now that a new, democratically elected leadership has replaced the military government, if foreign investment can also be attracted into the country to improve the condition of the economy and ethnic stability can additionally be achieved.

38.10 Cambodia – the development of a natural national language held back by upheaval

Cambodia is a state in which national language planning efforts have been severely impacted by internal conflict, regime change and a poor economy. While there have been periodic attempts to build a national identity during the course of the 20th century, these have regularly faltered due to lack of sufficient resources and the effects of political and civil instability, and while the country has a population which overwhelmingly comes from one ethnic group – at least 90 % are ethnically Khmer – programs of "Khmerization" to promote strongly positive feelings of belonging to a single re-emerging nation have not been greatly successful, despite the availability of potential symbols of nationhood, such as widely shared language (Khmer) and religion (Theravada Buddhism).

The first attempts to develop a new national consciousness in modern times began in the 1920s and 1930s under French rule, when Cambodian intellectuals and French colonial administrators jointly promoted the idea of a Khmer/Cambodian nation which would re-kindle the previous glory of the Angkor period (9th – 14th century) and project it in an even greater way as a modern nation. The spreading of education, creation of printed materials in Khmer, and the development of Khmer as a national language were all seen as extremely important elements in this process of national restoration and improvement, and would distinguish Cambodia significantly from its neighbors, Vietnam, Laos and Thailand, although French remained the official language of government matters (Heder 2007). Later on, as independence came to Cambodia in 1953, the nationalist momentum of the 1930s was lost, as Prince Norodom Sihanouk became the leader of the country. Sihanouk had no great interest in promoting the status of Khmer further in formal domains and French was retained as the language of administration, higher education and politics through until the end of the 1960s. The immediate post-independence experience of Cambodia was therefore different from other newly independent nations in Southeast Asia such as Vietnam and Indonesia which quickly moved to develop an indigenous language for use in the formal domains of life, as a replacement for ex-colonial languages.

When Sihanouk was eventually overthrown by Lon Nol in 1970, the direction of official and national language policy changed from the maintenance of French to support for greater roles for Khmer, and during the Khmer Republic (1970–1975) the state helped spread new writings in Khmer and disseminated nationalist propaganda in praise of traditional Khmer culture and the greatness of the Khmer race. As the Khmer Republic fell, the regime of Democratic Kampuchea (1975–1978) took its place, led by Pol Pot, ushering in three murderous years of the persecution of all those deemed against the establishment of a perfect Marxist Communist state aimed at restoring Cambodia's glory. During this period of internal genocide causing the deaths of over 20 % of the population, only the speaking of Khmer was sanctioned by those

in control of the country, and use of other foreign languages could lead to a person's execution. Ultimately, Pol Pot's dictatorship collapsed after only a few years when Vietnamese forces invaded Cambodia, and as peace was restored, the People's Republic of Kampuchea (1979–1991) began a new systematic development of the Khmer language, spreading its use in government administration and as the language of education. Publications in Khmer also dominated from this time on. However, despite such positive moves to promote knowledge and the use of Khmer as a unifying national language, implementation issues plagued the success of linguistic Khmerization and limited economic resources held back the spread of mass education, so that much of the population remained illiterate and unable to take advantage of newspapers, books and magazines printed in Khmer, and at the beginning of the 21st century, only a third of the adult population can effectively read and write the language. Cambodia therefore remains well behind most other Asian countries in the achievement of widespread literacy, as well as in young people's attendance of schools.

While there has consequently been *some* progress toward the development of Khmer as a national language also used in official language roles and in education, and Khmer is unquestionably the language spoken in some form by just about all of the population in Cambodia, the general effect of national language policies and initiatives has been weak, due to the dual problems of semi-constant political upheaval and lack of financial backing for government attempts to improve education and access to knowledge through Khmer. As a result, the use of language planning to help stimulate feelings of national unity has been more limited in what it has achieved in Cambodia than in neighboring Thailand and Vietnam, and, as noted by Heder (2007) "after a series of at best weak and at worst catastrophically self-destructive regimes since the 19th Century – late classical, colonial, royalist, republican, Communist and liberal democratic – Cambodia still lacks an effective modern state and a self-sustaining national identity" (Heder 2007: 288).

38.11 Malaysia – using state language policy to protect a challenged majority

In Malaysia, the government has played a major role in language planning since attaining independence from British rule in 1957, and the dominating theme of these activities, in the eyes of the national leadership, has been the use of language policy to help create a balance in socio-economic opportunities among the mixed population, as well as stimulate a unified national identity and create a prosperous, modern state. The population of the country consists in three major groups. The largest group, making up 69 % of the country's total, is officially referred to as the *Bumiputra* or indigenous population, and consists in Malays, 55 % of the population of the country, defined in the constitution as those who speak Malay, practice Islam and maintain

Malay culture, and indigenous non-Malays, mostly living in Sarawak and Sabah on the island of Borneo, comprising 14 % of Malaysia's population and speaking Austronesian languages such as Iban, Dusun and Kadazan. The other two large ethnic groups are the Chinese, 24 %, speaking a range of varieties of Chinese, and South Asians, 7 %, mostly speakers of Tamil. The ethnic mix and the proportions of the different groups to each other closely resemble the population situation in Singapore. As in Singapore, prior to independence, there was little integration of the different groups, and the different groups maintained their own schools where Malay, Chinese and Tamil were used as mediums of instruction.

With the achievement of independence in 1957, an important worry among the majority Malay population was that the economically much stronger Chinese and Indian communities might come to control Malaysia if nothing were done to provide special protection and equalizing opportunities for the Malays and other Bumiputra. In the area of language, Malay politicians argued that Malay should be given a privileged position following independence as the country's single national language, but other, non-Malays worried that this would significantly disadvantage them, as many Chinese and Indians only had a very basic proficiency in Malay. They therefore suggested that a multilingual policy be adopted instead, with four official languages: Malay, Mandarin Chinese, Tamil, and English. Ultimately, the Malay majority was successful in its bid to establish a special position for Malay, and Malay was made into the country's single national language, a role it still maintains. Malay was also given the status of official language of the state, with English being recognized as a second official language for a restricted period of ten years to help with the transition of the country in the immediate post-independence years, after which it was anticipated that Malay would become the only official language of Malaysia. This language situation indeed continued until 1967, when the temporary period of English as a second official language came to an end and English formally lost this role. However, the National Language Act of 1967 which re-affirmed Malay as Malaysia's official language also permitted "the continued use of English at the discretion of state and federal officials, as well as for the use of Mandarin and Tamil (and other Indian languages) in all unofficial matters" (Ganguly 2003: 248).

In 1969, Malaysia experienced disturbing inter-ethnic violence due to discontent at the results of national elections. An investigation of the causes of the conflict carried out by the government's new National Operations Council attributed these, in large part, to the continuing socio-economic differences between the Malay and Chinese and Indian communities and the lagging behind of the Malays and other Bumiputra. The policy which the government subsequently adopted as an attempted solution to even out the distribution of wealth among the population was the introduction of increased privileges for the Bumiputra, including cheaper housing, priority in applications for government employment and licenses for business and commerce. Additionally, in education, the language of instruction in post-primary government schools came to be Malay, with a phasing out of English as medium of education from 1970 onward.

The National Operations Council also presided over a change in the name of the national language designed to be more inclusive in nature. A switch was promoted from use of the term *Bahasa Melayu* (language of the Malays) to the new designation *bahasa Malaysia* (language of Malaysia). It was hoped that this name change would deflect criticism from non-Malays that the national language was the language of one particular ethnic group and not genuinely representative of the mixed population. However, as with the strategic renaming of Burmese as Myanmar, and Tagalog as Filipino, in attempts to increase the general acceptance of a national language associated with one ethnic group, the recasting of Malay as Malaysian has not obviously changed perceptions among non-Malays that "Malaysian" is primarily a symbol of the Malay group and not the entire population.

The embedding of Malay as the national language and also the promoted language of everyday use among the population has continued over the years, making it heavily salient in daily life in Malaysia and a language that is regularly heard both in informal and formal acts of communication. Due to the widespread introduction of Malay-medium teaching in government schools since the 1970s, there is a good knowledge of Malay among all generations who have passed through the education system since that time, although Chinese and Indian Malaysians also use Chinese and Tamil in casual communication with other members of their ethnic groups.

While a high level of proficiency in Malay thus became much more common among ethnically non-Malay parts of the population from the 1980s onward, the linguistic advancement of Malay was accompanied by a decrease in rising generations' abilities in English, with the result that new university graduates found it increasingly difficult to find employment in multinational firms doing business in Malaysia. Reacting to this unanticipated development, viewed as unwelcome for its effects on the Malaysian economy, the prime minister and leader of the country Dr. Mahathir decided on an important change to language policy in education and announced that, from 2003 onward, all government schools would use both Malay and English as mediums of instruction, with English being required for the teaching of science and mathematics. Bilingual education was therefore introduced throughout the country and the pragmatic usefulness of English was stressed by Mahathir, arguing that knowledge of modern science, technology and business strategy were only easily accessible through a knowledge of English, and consequently the learning of English was still vital for the progress of Malaysia as a successful, modern state. English was subsequently given the status of "second most important language" of the country (now shortened to "second language") and continues to have a significant presence in various formal and official areas of life and in business in Malaysia, required in many government documents (complementing the use of Malay), and widely used in the financial sector, engineering, medicine, scholarly discussion and private business, among other domains (Omar 2007).

Public language use and learning has thus been directed and re-directed by the leadership of the country multiple times since the arrival of independence, and state

language planning has attempted to achieve both nation-building and utilitarian goals, with the nationwide promotion of Malay aimed at protecting the originally challenged position of the Malay majority and simultaneously stimulating more national unity among the different parts of the population, and English made use of to help Malaysia's competitiveness in global markets and its growth as a modern nation. As a result of such language policies, Malay has certainly become a very important marker of national identity for the Malays, though it is less clearly so for the non-Malays. However, the additional sideline presence of English and the continued toleration of other languages in informal domains has helped Malaysia and its mixed population remain stable since the 1970s, with language issues not becoming the cause of any serious conflict in the country.

38.12 Summing up – common themes and lessons to be learned

This chapter has attempted to give a sense of the different trajectories taken by countries in Southeast Asia in the development of national and official language policies as part of general nation-building initiatives. In describing some of the principal factors that have affected governmental language planning and its outcomes in Southeast Asia, a number of themes have reoccurred, offering lessons for future attempts to direct the language habits of national populations in ways that will benefit both individuals and the formation of stable, successful nations. In this closing section, five of these themes will be returned to, highlighting their importance for state-led language planning.

Several of the studies reported here emphasize how important the selection of national and official languages is for the subsequent success of governmental language policies, and how choosing the "right" language for the roles of national and official language(s) is essential in order to avoid negative reactions in ethno-linguistically mixed populations. In the Philippines, a poor choice of national language, Tagalog tagged as Pilipino, resulted in a largely failed national language program and significant apathy towards the learning and use of the national language, whereas in Indonesia, with a similar very mixed population, the choice of a smaller language not associated with any powerful group has led to the very successful establishment of a single official language for the entire country. In other cases where the language of the large majority group is promoted as the national language of a country, we find that this may be accepted by minority groups if the latter can also attain benefits through knowledge of the language and participation in the national economy, as in Thailand. However, where minorities are not made to feel fully equal partners in the development and prosperity of a state, as perhaps in Malaysia with its privileging of the Malay group, the selection and promotion of the majority language as single national/official language may not serve to unify a population well.

A second recurrent theme we have seen is the observation that simply giving an existing language a new name as a national language does not result in any significant transformation, and may often be resented by groups who see such renaming as an attempt to promote the language of a dominant group in an underhand way, by means of a linguistic disguise. This occurred with the renaming of Tagalog as Pilipino, Burmese as Myanmar, and also Malay as Malaysian. However, it can be added that the adoption of a new name for an existing language or country is not necessarily bound to trigger a negative reaction from the public and would seem to depend on such a process being accompanied by other actions that enhance the situation of speakers, their opportunities in life and/or their self-esteem, which has happened successfully with Malay being recast (and then strongly developed) as Indonesian, and the renaming of Siam as Thailand during the country's reorganization as a modern nation.

A third issue which has surfaced multiple times in the chapter is the importance of corpus planning in national language programs and the need for sufficient linguistic development of languages promoted in national and official language roles. A lack of standardization and expansion of vocabulary in technical, commercial and academic fields has clearly held back the success of national/official languages in Cambodia, Laos, and the Philippines, whereas the concerted development of these resources has made standard Thai, Indonesian and Vietnamese into languages that can be used in all formal (and informal) domains of life, in government business, higher education, legal matters and commerce, without the need for any ancillary official language such as English, French or Spanish.

Aspects of the learning of new national and official languages have also affected how well such languages come to function in different countries, especially in situations where high level bilingualism is targeted, as in Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines. The observation made in the Philippines is that the attempt to use both English and Filipino as mediums of instruction in higher education has placed too high a learning burden on students whose home language is often a third language, and this has caused standards of English and the national language to be worryingly low in many instances. Singapore, by way of contrast, has managed to develop advanced bilingualism in much of its population, and so the critical issue may be the quality of bilingual education that a state can provide, which may in turn depend on resources that are available, such as well-trained teachers and appropriate teaching materials. However, even Singapore has experienced concerns about the achievement of bilingualism in its schools, and the Goh Report in 1978 noted that the bilingual education program was not producing the high results hoped for, leading to a lowering of targets for certain students who showed difficulties in second language learning.

Finally, a major non-linguistic factor which has frequently been seen to impinge on the success of national and official language planning and its potential role in nation-building is the strength of a country's economy. A strong economy will help governments assign important financial support to corpus planning activities and

education, both important for the development and spread of new national/official languages, and a strong economy may also engender feelings of pride in national success and bolster the growth of national identity, as, for example, in Singapore. Where a country experiences extended economic difficulties, there will be less support available for national language and education programs, and psychological pressure on the stimulation and maintenance of a strong national identity. This has been the case in Burma, Laos, Cambodia, and the Philippines, where the infrastructure to develop and spread national language throughout the population has been lacking, when compared with other Southeast Asian countries, and general feelings of pride in national success and achievements are weaker than in other states. "If the nation thrives, so will its language" (Hidup Bangsa, Hidup Bahasa) is a belief attributed to Malaysia's leader Dr. Mahathir in Omar (2007: 356), and such an expression underlines the frequent connection which may exist between economic buoyancy and popular attachment to a promoted national language.

All over the world, language planning and the spread of a shared language across a population may often be major components in the successful building of new nations, and used to bind different ethnic groups together as a single people at the national level. Yet there are many difficulties to overcome in such a process, in the selection, development, implementation/spread of national languages and in winning their acceptance. A study of the states of Southeast Asia states shows how these steps in national and official language planning are constrained by a range of practical and psychological factors and their interaction with each other, and that there is considerable variation in the ways that countries are able to overcome demographic, linguistic, and economic challenges to establish viable and enabling language policies that will lead their mixed populations toward unity, peace and prosperity. Hopefully, as more insight is gathered about past attempts at national language planning among complex populations, future governments will be able to manage statewide language issues with consistently more uniform success.

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