8

Multilingual (multiethnic) countries

8.1 Background

All multilingual countries are different. What unites them is that, implicitly or explicitly, they have to define a relationship between language and governance. This chapter reviews a number of examples and discusses the relevant factors that distinguish different types of multilingual countries. It considers the question of what has become of the nineteenth-century ideology of linguistic nationalism and the European ideal of the unity of state, nation, and language in the twenty-first century where minority rights have augmented if not replaced the call for ethno-cultural self-determination current before and after the First World War. The language regimes of two very different countries, one in Asia and one in Europe, are reviewed in detail. The chapter discusses the notions of national, official, and minority language and looks at how language groups are accommodated in various states, where conflicts arise, and it probes the role of national affluence for creating the conditions for a conflict-free coexistence of different language groups in one

state. Since populations change and languages change, conflict avoidance in the age of nation states is a permanent task.

8.2 Community relations

As we move from urban to national multilingualism, we may pause and take some time to tour Singapore, for Singapore is a city and a state. The city's language policy is not constrained by superordinate national law, for the city's language policy is the country's language policy. Because of the densely populated compact territory of the island (700 square kilometres, 7,697 inhabitants/km^2), there is no need for regional adjustments to the country's basic legal framework and no potential for any divergence of national and municipal policy goals. The principles underlying the city state's language policy were established by a leader who embraced multilingualism for pragmatic rather than sentimental reasons. Singapore is today, in many ways, a showcase for the successful institutionalization of multilingualism. Given that language rivalries were already an issue in colonial times and that outright hostilities were part of the reason why Singapore, somewhat unexpectedly, became an independent country, this could hardly have been predicted when the new state was founded.

A Crown Colony since 1946, Singapore achieved independence from British rule through its inclusion in the Federation of Malaya in 1963, which on the occasion was reconstituted as Malay*si*a, the 'si' in the name being Singapore. However, political differences between the city government and the federal government almost immediately surfaced, in which community relations played a major part. Singapore had to leave the Federation to become an independent republic in 1965.

At the time, community relations couched in race, language, and to some extent religion were tense. The principal reason for Singapore's break-away/expulsion from the Federation was political differences between Chinese and Malay elites who represented the two largest ethnic groups on the Malay Peninsula. Through the separation of Singapore, a new political entity with a large Chinese majority of some 75 per cent of the total population came into existence. Prior to Independence, anticolonial sentiments ran high, and the ideological association of language and nation was taken for granted the world over. No one outside Singapore would have been surprised, therefore, had Chinese been put at the apex of the postcolonial language hierarchy as the new country's

national language. As many leaders of the Chinese community saw it, such a policy would only have corrected the marginalization of the Chinese language under White rule—although, at the time, Mandarin was not the majority language among Singapore's Chinese.

Surprisingly, and largely due to a farsighted leader, this is not what happened. Lee Kuan Yew, who had been involved in educational policy before Independence, faced down vociferous demands by the Chinese Chamber of Commerce for Chinese to be made the national language and instead embarked on a distinct policy of multilingualism. An English educated 'Straits born' Chinese, Lee was keenly aware of the explosive potential of language and the risk it posed for a new state that was aspiring to become a nation. His view, which reflected his own upbringing and proved him a pragmatic politician, was that a nation does not have to be anchored in a language and, in the case of Singapore, could not be. No matter how large the Chinese majority, Singapore was a multiethnic polity, and care had to be taken to circumvent the perils of community strife. A policy of sidelining minorities could not be in the interest of the common good, Lee thought, citing Sri Lanka's language policy as a cautionary example.

'I do not want a Ceylon[1] position where with one stroke of the pen, they abolished English, made Sinhalese their official language, crippled the Tamils who had learnt English well. Endless trouble thereafter' (Lee 2011: 33). The path Lee Kuan Yew adopted instead was a policy of multilingualism with English as the pivot: 'English will be our working language, and you keep your mother tongue. It may not be as good as your English but if you need to do business with China or India or Malaysia or Indonesia, you can ramp it up' (Lee 2011: 292). 'Ramp it up' was what Lee himself did, first with his Hokkien Chinese and then Mandarin, in order to be a credible politician.

In Lee's words this sounds simple. In actual fact institutionalizing a bilingual education system without alienating any of the groups involved was a remarkable political achievement. Lee had been Singapore's Prime Minister before Independence, since 1959, and continued in that role until 1990. The two main pillars of his education and community policies were meritocracy and multiracialism, that is, the recognition of distinction coupled with the promise of equality. Four 'races', nowadays called 'ethnic groups', were recognized in Singapore and thus, in a sense, assembled. In census reports, school enrolment surveys, and other documents the

[1] Sri Lanka, a British Crown Colony from 1802 until 1948, was then known as Ceylon.

following four groups are distinguished: Chinese, Malay, Indian, and Other.[2] The last one is obviously an administrative formation, however, and to some extent this is also true of the other three, for the Chinese, the Malays, and the Indians do not form internally homogenous groups. Externally, that is, in relations with each other, these categories are intuitive and hence acceptable; nevertheless, accentuating 'race' as an element of national policy was not without its problematic. PuruShotam (1998) has analysed in great detail the tensions that arise from having a (constructed and officially promoted) racial identity and yet being fully equal in terms of status and opportunity, as required by a meritocratic social policy. For wherever the concept of race had been a determinant of politics, it was used to legitimize inequality, if not domination. This was certainly so during colonial times and was still a valid view in the mid-twentieth century when the wave of decolonization gained momentum.

A policy of racial recognition and separation grounded in the imperative of equality was both new and ambitious. Part of the equation was the dissociation of race and language. The four racial categories meant that Singapore's Chinese were Chinese, but not all of them spoke (standard) Chinese; the Malays were Malays, but not all of them spoke (standard) Malay; and, more obviously perhaps, the Indians were Indians, but not all of them spoke Tamil. As Lee Kuan Yew put it in an address to Senior Civil Service Officers at the Regional Language Centre, on 27 February 1979: 'Language has nothing to do with race. You are not born with a language. You learn it.'[3] Strong words that helped to demystify language without diminishing its importance for social life.

Under Lee's guidance, Singapore institutionalized a policy of multilingualism based on the recognition of Chinese (Mandarin), Malay, Tamil, and English as official languages[4] with Malay retaining the status

[2] Current statistics count 74.3% Chinese, 13.3% Malay, 9.1% Indian, and 3.2% Other (Singstat 2015).

[3] http://news.asiaone.com/News/Education/Story/A1Story20090227-125024.html (accessed 7 January 2017).

[4] Article 153A of the Constitution of the Republic of Singapore provides:

(1) Malay, Mandarin, Tamil, and English shall be the 4 official languages in Singapore.

(2) The national language shall be the Malay language and shall be in the Roman script: Provided that—

(a) no person shall be prohibited or prevented from using or from teaching or learning any other language; and

(b) nothing in this Article shall prejudice the right of the Government to preserve and sustain the use and study of the language of any other community in Singapore.

of national language[5] and English continuing to function as the primary language of education and administration. Since 1967, all pupils have been required to study their mother tongue as a school examination subject, in addition to English. The 'mother tongues' of the ethnic majority and the two major minorities are constructs associated with the officially recognized 'races' which PuruShotam (1998: 56) calls 'bureaucratic simplifications'. For the administration which had to deal with the mundane issues of curriculum design and organizing public services acceptable to all in a multiracial city, such classificatory measures were inevitable.

One of the consequences of the 'simplifications' was that, like it or not, by virtue of the quadrilingual policy every Singapore citizen is assigned a race, associated with which is a 'mother tongue' officially recognized and valorized as the vehicle of transmitting its culture—Mandarin for the Chinese, Malay for the Malays, Tamil for the Indians, and English for Others. In line with the status of these four languages, Art. 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of Singapore determines the ability to read and write at least one of them as one of the qualifications for membership of Parliament.

The ad hoc categorization of races and their languages created problems, for the vast majority of Singapore's Chinese came from homes where non-Mandarin varieties of Chinese were used, notably Cantonese and other Yue dialects, Hokkien and other Min dialects, and Hakka dialects. Similarly, the Malay race encompassed speakers of a complex array of vernacular and formal varieties of Malay, as well as Boyanese, Bugis, Javanese, and Minankabau. Other than Tamil, the languages spoken by Indians included Gujarati, Hindi, Malayali, Punjabi, Sindhi, Singhalese, and Urdu, among others (Khoo 1980). And even the speakers of English did not speak one English (see below in this section). In 1979, the Government confronted this situation in its *Report on the Ministry of Education*, acknowledging unsatisfactory school performance and ineffective bilingualism due mainly to the fact that 'the languages of instruction (primarily English and Mandarin) were not spoken at home by some 85 percent of school children'[6] for whom the policy of bilingualism actually meant trilingualism (English, Mandarin, and a dialect). This was a direct consequence of the segmentation of the population into four 'races'

[5] That is, the status it had in the Federation of Malaya.

[6] Report on the Ministry of Education 1978, prepared by Goh Keng Swee and the Education Study Team. Singapore: National Printers, 1979.

and the artificial mother tongue ascription. As a result, not all Singaporeans learnt their 'mother tongue' sufficiently.

A related criticism of Singapore's language policy was directed against the annual Speak Mandarin Campaign (SMC) that was first launched in 1979 in order to create a bond between all Chinese Singaporeans (Ng 2011). The campaign achieved its purpose in that it successfully promoted Mandarin, which as a result replaced Hokkien as the most widely used Chinese language in Singapore. However, SMC thereby also created a majority language that, by sheer weight of numbers, came to occupy a position which was hard to reconcile with the egalitarian concept underlying the choir of Singapore's many voices. If Mandarin gained in importance in the educational system, the possibility of Malay and Indian students interacting with their Chinese peers would be reduced and social cohesion threatened. The obvious solution was the further advance of English among all ethnic groups as a supplement to SMC. There is much evidence to suggest that this process has been going on for decades and still continues, ever more turning English into the country's lingua franca (Myers-Scotton 2006: 97–100; Singstat 2015), although not quite as expected by the government. In any event, that English was made the medium of instruction in all schools in 1987, while 'mother tongues' are taught as L2s helped the process along.

In view of this development, the allegation that SMC has devaluated Chinese dialects and hence amounts to a denial of genuine linguistic diversity in Singapore (Bokhorst-Heng and Silver 2017) has to be taken with a grain of salt. Making the country's multilingualism manageable by associating ethnic group and language in a straightforward way and thus reducing (officially recognized) diversity was one of the purposes of the campaign, with the same reasoning as affording Tamil a privileged status over Hindi, Punjabi, Guajarati, Malayali, and other Indian languages. Singapore's leaders tried to mould the diversity of races and languages into a unique trait anchored in Singapore, rather than China or India (Lee 2012), simplifying or overgeneralizing both categories in the process. Call it pragmatic or opportunistic, Lee Kuan Yew's language policy was realistic and motivated by a concern for the wellbeing of the Singaporeans, and in this regard very successful.

However, there is never a guarantee for a one-to-one correspondence between a policy goal and its outcome. As in other policy fields, unanticipated consequences of a language policy cannot be excluded. A case in point is the expansion of English referred to above. The kind of English

that has been spreading and which Singaporeans increasingly adopt as their home language is a distinct variety known as 'Singlish' (Alsagoff 2010, Leimgruber 2011). Because it incorporates many elements of local languages and also differs phonologically from standard British English, it is not appreciated by the educational authorities who see English as an asset that allows Singapore to hold its own in the international market place. In their view, universal reach is what counts rather than the local touch, hence the 'Speak Good English Movement' (Rubdy 2001). The government's promotion of standard English is reminiscent of the attitude underlying SMC; Chinese shall be Mandarin, and English, British English.

That Singlish plays a much bigger role today than it did in colonial times is an illustration of the unforeseen consequences of a language policy as well as of the fact that social language arrangements keep changing, and not always in a predictable way. A language profile of contemporary Singapore compiled along the lines discussed in Chapter 7 is markedly different from what its counterpart at the time of Independence looked like. In the mid-twentieth century, the administrative language of the Crown Colony was English and in addition there were more than 30 language groups with 1,000 speakers or more. Meanwhile, Singapore has four official languages and, reflecting the city state's increased economic standing, some new immigrant languages have materialized, notably Japanese, Korean, and Thai. The most substantial change is the adoption of Mandarin and English as home languages by many Chinese Singaporeans and the corresponding retrogression of other Chinese dialects.

Because Mandarin-speaking grandchildren allegedly no longer easily converse with dialect-speaking grandparents, the SMC-induced shift to Mandarin has been criticized for impeding communication across generations within families, but Zhao and Liu (2010) have shown that the spread of Mandarin must not be equated with the disappearance of Chinese dialects as home languages. The situation is more complex, as there is hardly a family in Singapore whose children are not routinely exposed to several languages. Home language use has been and continues to be a controversial issue of Singapore's language policy; other such issues include language recognition, status allocation, language use in the media, language combinations of bilingual education, and teacher training. For some of them, perhaps, better solutions could have been found. However, the government of the new state was called upon to

act, while pursuing, at the same time, the intricate task of nation building. Since Independence, Singapore has been a testing ground of national multilingualism challenged with balancing diversity and equality without compromising the material wellbeing of all.

The last-mentioned aspect is of utmost importance, reminding us of the fact that language policy is a distinct, but not an isolated policy field. Singapore's spectacular rise within a half-century from colonial backwater to one of the most affluent countries in the world benefited all groups. GDP per capita increased from US$427 in 1960 to US$56,284 in 2014[7] and, equally significant and related to material wealth, Singapore's schools rose to the top of the OECD's global student assessment ranking.[8] These achievements contributed to reinforcing confidence in government policies, including language policy, a great deal of criticism notwithstanding.

Singapore has something other than language to be proud of. Yet, balancing equality and racial distinctness remains a permanent challenge for policy makers. While the four groups and the four officially recognized languages are a manifest and widely accepted aspect of the country's social reality, many Singaporeans remember that societal language arrangements and identities are not hewn in stone. Ever the clearheaded realist, Lee Kuan Yew (2011: 291) pointedly said that 'identity varies with circumstances', and when asked whether the question of which language(s) should be used in Singapore was settled, he bluntly replied:

> No, language usage in the world will always evolve and shift. In the next 50 to 100 years, for us, the dominant languages will be English and Chinese in that order. But who can tell what languages are dominant in the world in 200 to 300 years? Latin was the language for Europe.... Gradually Latin disappeared. No one can say English will be dominant forever' (Lee 2011: 256).

8.3 Countries, nations, languages

Countries are difficult objects to compare. The 193 member states of the United Nations (2017) are polities of very diverse kinds, ranging in

[7] Index Mundi: http://www.indexmundi.com/facts/singapore/gdp-per-capita (accessed 7 January 2017).

[8] Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2014: http://www.oecd.org/education/bycountry/singapore/.

population size from less than a million to more than one billion; in geographical size from some tiny islands to a subcontinent; and in per capita income from some $500/year (Somalia) to more than $140,000/year (Qatar). Countries differ widely with regard to ethnic, linguistic, and cultural fractionalization, African countries heading lists of the most diverse countries, whereas European countries generally rank close to the bottom.[9] And countries differ in terms of age, in how long they have existed as a sovereign polity. China has existed as a nation for four and a half millennia; the Republic of South Sudan became a state in 2011. Singapore is the prototype of a young country, that is, a new polity that lacks any historical or at least mythical past on which to base its claim to nationhood. Multiracialism and multilingualism were built-in from the start.

Switzerland is a counterpart to Singapore. The Confederation of Localities—nowadays called 'cantons'—looks back on a history of some 700 years as a more or less autonomous state. Remarkably, the Confederation withstood the nineteenth-century political drive to linguistic monoculture in Europe that was already firmly established when Max Weber referred to it a hundred years ago when he observed,

> Today, in the age of language conflicts, a shared common language is pre-eminently considered the normal basis of nationality. Whatever the 'nation' means beyond the mere 'language group' can be found in the specific objective of its social action, and this can only be the *autonomous polity* (Weber 1978: 359).

As this quote shows, Weber was keenly aware of the risks inherent in using language as a principal criterion of political autonomy, perceptively characterizing his/our age as that of language conflicts. The matter-of-factness with which the principle of the national language is still taken for granted in the Western world is illustrated by a little episode set in present-day London.

> The teacher explained that our grade was going to stand up on the stage, and one by one we were to say 'Welcome' in our mother tongues. When the teacher asked me to speak in Pakistani, I certainly didn't know what to say (Rahman 2014: 213).

In England people speak English, in France French, in Portugal Portuguese, and in Pakistan—well, what if not Pakistani. In this regard, Switzerland almost looks like the exception that proves the rule. While

[9] Alesina et al. (2003) and Fearon (2003) have compiled lists of ethnic and linguistic fractionalization by country, based on data gathered and categorized by the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

discrimination on grounds of language, race, religion, and nationality are hardly unknown, in Switzerland people are more aware of national linguistic diversity, and managing its official multilingualism has been relatively free of conflict.

Three major European cultural languages, German, French, Italian, along with Rhaeto-Romansh are Switzerland's national languages.[10] The percentage of the speakers of each language in the population is given in Table 8.1.

The four national languages are eulogized in the country's new national anthem (see the text box) which embodies the commitment to multilingualism in a single hymn.[11] There are two main reasons why language has never been the cause of serious community friction in Switzerland. First,

Table 8.1 Permanent resident population by main language(s), 1970–2014, in per cent.

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2014
Total	6,011,469	6,160,950	6,640,937	7,100,302	8,041,310
German/ Swiss-German	66.1	65.5	64.6	64.1	63.3
French	18.4	18.6	19.5	20.4	22.7
Italian	11.0	9.6	7.7	6.5	8.1
Romansh	0.8	0.8	0.6	0.5	0.5
Other languages	3.7	5.5	7.7	8.5	20.9
Total in %	100	100	100	100	115.5*

Note: * Because many people who took the survey mentioned more than one main language, the total exceeds 100 per cent.

Source: Statistik Schweiz 2014.

[10] The Swiss constitution in Article 4 declares: Les langues nationales sont l'allemand, le français, l'italien et le romanche [the national languages are German, French, Italian, and Romansh]. And the Federal Law on the National Languages and Comprehension between the Linguistic Communities 441.1 of 5 October 2007 specifies:

Art. 5, Langues officielles

1 Les langues officielles de la Confédération sont l'allemand, le français et l'italien.

Le romanche est langue officielle dans les rapports avec les personnes de cette langue.

2 Les autorités fédérales utilisent les langues officielles dans leur forme standard.

[11] Translation: White cross on red ground, our sign for the federation: Diversity, independence, peace. Let us be strong and united, that the concord may enlighten us. Liberty for everyone, And equality for all. The Swiss flag, symbol of peace and unity.

Swiss multilingualism is based on the territoriality principle, and second, socioeconomic disparity is moderate and does not run parallel to language divisions. Historically the territoriality principle was a division between German in the east and French in the west of the country, Italian in the south being added in the nineteenth century, and eventually Romansh. Most cantons have a single official language; in seventeen cantons it is German, in four French, and in one Italian. Romansh enjoys co-official status in the trilingual canton of Graubünden, together with German and Italian, and, as specified in the 2007 language law (footnote 9), Romansh speakers have the right to communicate in their language with the authorities. The three cantons of Bern, Fribourg, and Valais are officially German-French bilingual. The territoriality principle means that schools use German as language of instruction in Zurich, French in Geneva, and Italian in Bellinzona. An official language other than the canton's language is typically learnt as an L2, although the advance of English in recent decades has undermined the policy of prioritizing the teaching of Swiss national languages for this purpose (Zustand…1989; Grin and Korth 2005), so much so that Watts and Murray (2001), referring to English, ask: 'the fifth national language?'

In September 2014, the Swiss, true to their tradition of direct democracy, chose a new national anthem through a process of online voting. Its special feature is not reproducible in the English translation: it unites four languages in one stanza:

Weisses Kreuz auf rotem Grund, unser Zeichen für den Bund:
Vielfalt, Unabhängigkeit, Frieden.
Soyons forts et solidaires,
que l'entente nous éclaire.
Per mintgin la libertad
e per tuts l'egualitad.
La bandiera svizzera,
simbolo di pace ed unità.

The most conspicuous figures in the statistics given in Table 8.1 are those indicating the increase within four decades from 3.7 per cent to 20.9 per cent of 'other languages' that survey respondents mentioned as their 'main language'. From the statistics it is not clear to what extent the 20.9 per cent of 'other languages' in the 2014 survey account for the 115.5 per cent of the total; or whether multiple answers to the question of

main language were not admissible in earlier surveys. Yet, there can be no doubt that a new element has entered the neat arrangement of four national and three and a half official languages.

A further dimension of complexity is added in German-speaking Switzerland, where a diglossia of spoken dialects (*Schwyzertütsch*, Baur 1983) vs. written standard German (*Schriftdeutsch*) obtains. Some of the dialects are as distinct phonologically from High German as are Chinese dialects from Mandarin and hence cause problems for Francophone and Italophone Swiss having learnt (High) German as an L2 at school. This occasionally provokes animosities if not linguistic chauvinism on both sides, however these are not embedded in a nationalistic discourse, but rather in a discourse about Swiss confederate cohesion. L2 instruction is meant to secure unhindered bilingual discourse: in a mixed setting, everyone speaking their L1 is certain of being understood by the others, but what they speak should not be too far removed from what the others have learnt as L2. However, maintaining clearly distinct Swiss German varieties, as opposed to German German is a crucial feature of the linguistic culture of the German-speaking cantons. It can be understood as an expression of local patriotism which, however, is mitigated by the national commitment to multilingualism. Although Swiss multilingualism is strictly territorial and there are, accordingly, many Swiss citizens who use but one language in their everyday lives, a monolingual ethos is much less deeply entrenched in Switzerland than in neighbouring countries, notably France and Germany.

The contrast between an old tradition-bound landlocked European confederation and a new postcolonial insular Southeast Asian republic could not be starker; yet, in regards to multilingualism there are some conspicuous parallels between Switzerland and Singapore (Table 8.2). Both countries take part in several major literary languages that serve as national languages elsewhere and which, therefore, are divorced from linguistic nationalism. In both countries, the language arrangement of the largest group is characterized by a pronounced diglossia involving a standard variety based in another country—China and Germany—and in both countries the presence of 'other languages' has made itself felt in recent decades, while the advance of English exerts pressure to change established patterns of language use.

In terms of population size and dynamics the two countries are also in the same league, and, most importantly, in terms to societal wealth. According to one projection, Singapore and Switzerland, together with

Norway, will be the wealthiest countries in the world by 2040.[12] Not surprisingly, therefore, both countries have a net migration surplus. While the two countries exemplify that linguistic diversity is not necessarily an impediment to affluence, it is also a fact that national wealth greatly facilitates managing official multilingualism (Liu 2015: 86). Running a multilingual administration and setting up a multilingual school system involve additional expenditures for textbook production, teacher training, administrative coordination, etc., and although economic parameters are not the only determinants of an effective bi-/multilingual education programme, it helps when budgetary limitations do not interfere. Note as an indirect indication the positive correlation between literacy rates and national wealth.[13] That richer countries have higher literacy rates shows that education is key for national wealth and that sufficient funding is a precondition for quality education. And note also that rich countries can afford to be generous to minorities. Whether they actually provide sufficient funding for minorities, for them is a political rather than an economic question.

Another important issue is the impact of the languages of schooling on economic performance. Official multilingualism in Singapore and Switzerland involves highly developed languages adjusted to all domains of use that enable access to a wide range of information and therefore have utility in the labour market. This is why these two countries are rare exceptions to Pool's (1972: 213) finding that 'there are almost no highly linguistically diverse, prosperous countries'. For where the linguistic fractionalization of a country involves a multitude of unwritten

Table 8.2 Switzerland and Singapore, some social indicators.

Indicator	Switzerland	Singapore
% of world population	0.11	0.08
Net migration 2016	+ 50,000	+ 60,000
Fertility rate	1.53	1.24
Median age	42	40
Nominal GDP per capita 2040 (estimate)	$173,423	$214,757

[12] Citigroup, Global Economics View. http://www.willembuiter.com/3G.pdf (accessed 7 January 2017).

[13] Cf., e.g., Unesco's literacy data at http://www.uis.unesco.org/literacy/Pages/data-release-map-2013.aspx (accessed 7 January 2017).

languages, this often works as a brake on economic development. Note in passing, however, that Liu (2015), analysing Indonesia's development since independence, argues convincingly that the potentially negative economic effects of a country's linguistic heterogeneity can be counteracted by a language regime that puts no group at an advantage. In Indonesia the lingua franca of the archipelago, the common Malay of trade among merchants, is the national language, rather than the language of the largest group, Javanese.

8.4 Formative factors of national multilingualism

So far in this chapter, we have considered two officially multilingual countries from which, although they are by no means typical, several lessons can be drawn about the factors that distinguish types of multilingual countries.

8.4.1 Age of country

Singapore is young and Switzerland old. While this is obviously a graded criterion, since many states have in the course of history changed their form of government, their territory, and the composition of their population, age is a factor to be taken into consideration, not least because it relates to the level of traditions and national histories and myths built up over time. The linguistic diversity that obtains in old countries such as Italy and France where an indigenous language was cultivated over several centuries and gradually dispersed throughout the whole territory, differs from that of young countries like the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Senegal that became states after the Second World War II by virtue of external political dynamics and with little regard for the indigenous languages. The political map of Africa is revealing by itself. About 44 per cent of all national borders are straight lines arbitrarily cutting across language territories and ethnic groups. Virtually all of the countries that were established within these frontiers are young states that had to deal with a multilingual populace from the start.

This is not to say that old nations, such as, for instance, China, Iran, or Greece are monolingual, but in their recent past they did not experience the (forced) adoption of an exogenous language, initially brought by

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This is not to say that old nations, such as, for instance, China, Iran, or Greece are monolingual, but in their recent past they did not experience the (forced) adoption of an exogenous language, initially brought by

foreign rulers and retained after self-rule had been achieved. A country's age, especially if it relates to a colonial past, thus has a bearing on the nature of its multilingualism and how it is managed.

8.4.2 *Official status of language(s)*

An important aspect of the legacy of the colonial period is the use of European languages in education and government. In twenty-two of the fifty-four African UN member states, French is the sole or a co-official language, in twenty-one countries it is English, in six Portuguese, and in one Spanish. Arabic is the official or co-official language in twenty-six countries. In some African countries, more than one European language has official status, for instance in Equatorial Guinea (Spanish, French, and Portuguese) and the Seychelles (English and French). In a few countries, African languages are accorded co-official status, notably Swahili in Tanzania, but an African language being the sole official language of the country, as Amharic in Ethiopia, is the odd exception. Some countries have a whole array of official languages, for example South Africa, eleven, and Zimbabwe, sixteen. Since European languages are invariably among them—in the said cases, English—their position tends to be strengthened rather than diminished by the large number.

These arrangements have various implications. First, legal acts, statutes and other official documents are published in what for large parts of the population is a foreign language. By the same token, access to higher education presupposes a good command of a language that differs from that of home and everyday pursuits (Zsiga et al. 2014). From the point of view of European linguistic monoculture this may seem taxing, but to Africans—and not just Africans—it is the normal state of affairs that official and quotidian activities require different languages.

European colonialism on the other side of the Atlantic was quite different, but its linguistic footprint is similar. Without exception, European languages fulfil the function of official language: Spanish in eighteen South and Central American countries, Portuguese in Brazil, and Dutch in Suriname. All countries and several dependent territories in the Caribbean are administered in English, Spanish, French, and Dutch. Indigenous languages are recognized as co-official in some countries, for instance, Quechua and Aymara in Peru and Bolivia where Guaraní also has official status, as it has in Paraguay. No indigenous language enjoys sole official status in any American country.

Canada is officially bilingual, its Constitution providing that English and French have equality of status and equal rights, while provincial and municipality laws grant various degrees of protection to minority languages (Foucher 2007). In the USA, the question of a national or official language has been contentious for a long time (Sullivan and Schatz 1999). In 2006, the US Senate voted to designate English the national language of the United States. However, the US Voting Rights Act requires states to conduct elections in minority languages if the minority group constitutes more than 5 per cent of the electorate. English is the official language of many States where it is used in nearly all governmental functions, although some States accord co-official status to Native American languages. The State of Hawaii has designated Hawaiian as an official language, largely for symbolic reasons, as it is spoken by only a very few speakers. In New Mexico and Louisiana some public services are provided in Spanish and French, respectively, giving these languages quasi-official status. In view of the fact that, according to the US Census Bureau, 20.8 per cent of the US population speak a language other than English at home (Ryan 2013), authorities at the state level have to be more pragmatic and accommodating than the federal government which drafts, deliberates, and enacts all legislation in English only.[14]

In Oceania, European languages dominate officialdom. Seventeen countries use English as the official language, three use French, and in five countries local languages enjoy (co-)official status, such as Filipino in the Philippines, Nauruan in Nauru, and Māori in New Zealand.

The situation in Asia is more complex: almost fifty indigenous languages have official status in the countries of the continent. However, Portuguese persists as an official language in Timor Leste and Macau, as English does in Hong Kong and in several major countries, notably Philippines, Pakistan, and India where it serves functions that were fulfilled by other languages in the past. As Chaudhary (2001) explains:

> In each age, along with many other languages, there has been a prestige language discharging prestigious functions like medium of administration, diplomacy, education, literature, science, etc. It was Sanskrit once upon a time, followed by Prakrit, Pali, Apabhramsa/Magadhi, then Arabic-Persian, English, and Hindi. But none of these so

[14] See especially Fig. 5 of the report, 'Percentage of people five years and over who spoke a language other than English at home': 2011. http://www.census.gov/prod/2013pubs/acs-22.pdf#page=12&zoom=auto,-14,316 (accessed 7 January 2017).

called 'prestige languages' have ever been the mother tongue of a sizeable group of people in India. (Chaudhary 2001: 143)

Chaudhary then continues, quoting himself (1968):

... for something like two thousand years no language spoken naturally by any section of the population of India has been the common language of the country's politics or culture. The languages actually current, as such over that period, have been three—Sanskrit—a synthetic language, Persian and English, both languages of foreign rulers. (Chaudhary 2001 (1968))

Incomplete as it is, this short circumnavigation of the globe suffices to show the overwhelming impact of the European expansion on national multilingualism around the world, especially with regard to official language status. For distinguishing types of multilingual nations, the official status of European languages in countries outside Europe is thus a significant criterion.

8.4.3 Demographic strength of languages

Official status does not imply demographic strength. A language may be official in a country where it is spoken by a minority of the population only. Such is the case in many countries where European languages have continued to serve official functions after decolonization, but non-European languages also come to mind. For example, Pakistan's official and national language is Urdu which, however, is the first language of just 7.5 per cent of the population.[15]

Since Urdu, in principle, is learnt at school by all pupils and promoted as the country's lingua franca, it would be misleading to characterize it as a minority language on the basis of its relatively low percentage of L1 speakers (Mansoor 2009). Punjabi has five times as many speakers in Pakistan, but lacks the prestige of Urdu. What is more, while Punjabi is heavily concentrated in the province of Punjab, Urdu has no geographic centre in Pakistan, which in the event is an advantage for allocating it official status, as its regional neutrality is less likely to incite resentment.

[15] Population by Mother Tongue. Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 1998. http://www.pbs.gov.pk/sites/default/files/tables/POPULATION%20BY%20MOTHER%20TONGUE.pdf (accessed 7 January 2017).

The incongruity of demographic strength and official status is a common occurrence. By way of conceptualizing the interaction between these factors of multilingualism, Srivastava (1984: 101) proposed a two-dimensional matrix (Figure 8.1). According to its relative political power and demographic strength, each one of a nation's languages falls into one of the four quadrants, A Majority, B Janata, C Elite, and D Minority (where Hindi *janata* (जनता) means both 'folk' and 'public'). English would be A in Britain, but C in India. An example of B would be Creole in Haiti where French is C. The vast majority of all languages of the world fall into field D which thus requires further differentiation (Section 8.4.4). The reference unit of the matrix is the country. Relative to it, a language's position in the matrix may both change and differ. Consider, for example, Chinese in Japan. In the pre-modern state, (written) Chinese was C, being used for administrative and other power-related functions. Nowadays, Chinese is a minority language in Japan in the sense of D, that is, of small demographic strength and divested of power. Status planning in Indonesia at the threshold of independence was directed at shifting Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia) from D to A, an exceptionally successful endeavour of postcolonial language planning, it may be noted in passing. In Macau, Portuguese is currently moving from C to D. Generally speaking, in many countries, the processes of modernization and democratization brought with it a drive to establish a language regime of intersecting fields A and B and the phasing out of C. D could not be spirited away however.

Population dynamics may cause the demographic strength of a language to change; modern immigrant countries can provide many examples. When Canada was founded in 1867, some 50 per cent of the population spoke French. Within a generation's time this was down to less than 8 per cent, without turning French into a minority language in

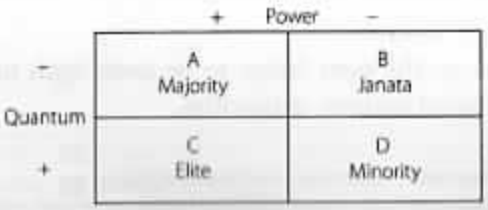

Figure 8.1 Matrix for classifying languages in terms of political power and demographic strength.

Source: Srivastava 1984.

the sense of D because it retained its status with regard to power as laid down in the Constitution.

Australia is another example of demographic change brought about by migration. Since the mid-twentieth century some seven million people have migrated to Australia, forcing the country to change its once rigid Anglophone outlook to embrace multiculturalism (Clyne 1991). A 2010 policy statement by the Australian Government declares:

> Today, one in four of Australia's 22 million people were born overseas, 44 per cent were born overseas or have a parent who was and four million speak a language other than English. We speak over 260 languages and identify with more than 270 ancestries. Australia is and will remain a multicultural society.[16]

The same policy statement also speaks of 'Australia's First Peoples—the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' to which the Australian Government pledges 'wide ranging support' which, however, comes late in the day. While the demographic strength of immigrant languages such as Turkish, Greek, Italian, but also Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian, Korean, and Vietnamese continued to grow, most Aboriginal languages have been driven to extinction, the few remaining ones counting their speakers in two or three digit figures.[17] They fall without exception into the D quadrant of the matrix in Figure 8.1, 'minus quantum' and 'minus power'.

Over time, then, and a very short time at that—the first white settlers having arrived in 1788—migration flows have twice fundamentally changed the demographic strengths of language groups and the linguistic profile of Australia. The Australian Government in the quoted policy statement maintains that multiculturalism 'gives [Australia] a competitive edge in an increasingly globalised world' to which, however, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples will contribute little. For in contradistinction to the international migrants, they have no links to anywhere outside Australia.

This brings us to the next factor to be dealt with in differentiating kinds of multilingual nations, minorities.

[16] *The People of Australia—Australia's Multicultural Policy*, https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/settlement-and-multicultural-affairs/publications/the-people-of-australia-australias-multicultural-policy (accessed 7 January 2017).

[17] For detailed information refer to the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander Studies at http://aiatsis.gov.au/collections/about-collections/languages (accessed 7 January 2017).

8.4.4 Minority languages

Numbers are important, but there is more to minorities and minority languages than numbers. A common differentiation among minority languages is between indigenous languages—Welsh in the UK, Breton in France, Sorbian in Germany—and immigrant languages—Punjabi in the UK, Arabic in France, Turkish in Germany. Both kinds of groups face a dominant majority and in many ways cannot avoid defining themselves in relation to, and being defined by, the majority. They may also compete with each other, as has been happening in the UK where of late more people speak Polish than Welsh (Figure 8.2).

Since immigrants put themselves into a minority position, whereas indigenous peoples have been incorporated into a state dominated by a majority against their will or at least without their doing, it is sometimes assumed that there is a greater willingness on the part of nation states to

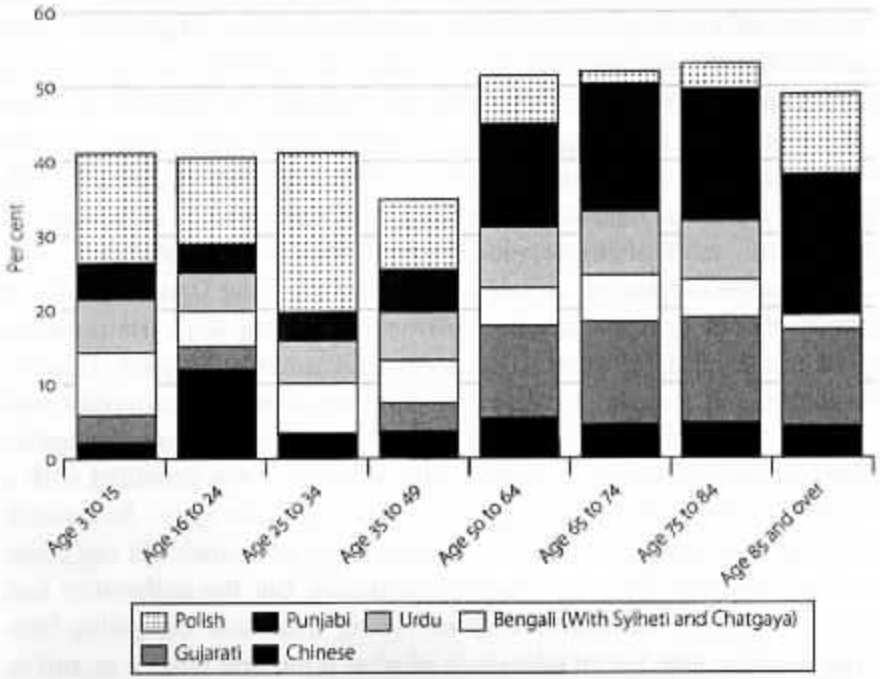

Figure 8.2 England and Wales, residents aged 3 and over whose main language is not English.
Source: http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/2011census/2013-05-16#main-language (accessed 7 January 2017).

make concessions for indigenous groups than for immigrants. This is not necessarily the case though, as illustrated by the example of the Australian Aborigines, among many others. Rather, it is the zeitgeist or the ideology that has changed. Rigid assimilation and discrimination policies were thought less offensive in the nineteenth century than nowadays, when White supremacy is no longer (openly) taken for granted and individual self-realization, subnational identities, language rights, and diversity are cherished.

As mentioned above, the Aborigines have no kin outside Australia, a lot they share with thousands of groups in many other countries, such as the Native Americans in the USA, the 180-plus ethnic peoples in Russia, and the sixty odd groups covered by the European Charter of Regional and Minority Languages in various European states. Given what was said above in Chapter 3 about the difficulty of counting languages, it comes as no surprise that in many countries the number of indigenous minority languages has proved hard to establish in a non-arbitrary way. In countries where many unwritten languages are present, this problem is particularly acute. Since a life without letters has become all but impossible in the modern world of nation states, the availability of a written form is often taken as a criterion of recognizing an idiom as a language. Alternatively, language recognition and the development of a writing system go hand in hand, as has been the case in China where the Central University of Nationalities (中央民族大学, formerly 'Central Institute for Nationalities') has since 1953 worked on the identification of ethnic minorities and their languages.

When the curtain fell on Imperial China (the Qing Dynasty) early in the twentieth century, just four nationalities other than the majority Han were ever mentioned in any formal documents: Mongol, Tibetan, Manchu, and Korean. By 1979, the number of ethnic minorities had swelled to fifty-five that had been identified and formally recognized by the Chinese Government, many of them having been provided with a writing system for the first time (Sun and Coulmas 1992). It is worth emphasizing that all of these 'new' minorities, of course, did not come out of nowhere. They had been there before, but the authorities had never occupied themselves with surveying them and compiling lists. The modern state has to take stock of what it has and what it is, and is, therefore, averse to fuzziness and white spots on the map. Just as it does not tolerate any territories without defined land rights, it tends to classify people in various ways, citizens and non-citizens, adults and minors,

and ethnic groups, among others. Participatory government and the rule of law presuppose a clearly delimited populace. In this sense, China's fifty-five ethnic minorities are a product of the modern classificatory state. Most of them are indigenous minorities, but some are not. China's ethnic Koreans are more properly described as a national or cross-border minority that is akin to the dominant ethnicity of a neighbouring state. With regard to national multilingualism this is an important distinction. National minorities whose language is the official or national language of a titular state are usually in a stronger position and have a better chance of being recognized and getting support for their language than indigenous or immigrant minorities.

Finally, the lattice of national borders has created transnational minorities that are dispersed over several countries but do not form a majority in any of them, such as the Basques in Spain and France, the Roma across Central and Eastern Europe, and the Kurds in the Middle East.

The four types of minorities described in Table 8.3 may not be exhaustive; some minority languages do not fit into any of them, but the categories are wide enough that most do. Some of the exceptions are of interest mainly because they expose the conceptual and methodological weaknesses of language assignment. Take, for example, Latin, Sanskrit, and other liturgical languages that are conventionally regarded as dead

Table 8.3 Types of minorities in modern states.

Type of minority	Definition	Examples
Indigenous minorities	Ethnic groups whose homeland is entirely incorporated into a state dominated by another people	Australian Aborigines, ethnic groups in China, Ainu in Japan, Welsh in UK, Romansh in Switzerland
Immigrant minorities	Recent (post-Second World War) immigrants with or without citizenship	Moroccans in Netherlands, Punjabis in UK, Turks in Germany, Brazilians in Japan
National (or cross-border) minorities	Ethnic groups who live in a state, but are kins of and speak the language of another, often neighbouring nation	Koreans in China, Russians in the Baltic Republics, Hungarians in Romania, Romanians in Italy
Transnational minorities	Ethnic groups whose homeland stretches across national borders, but who do not form a state of their own	Kurds in Turkey, Syria, Iran, Iraq; Berbers in Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Mali; Catalans in Spain, France, Italy

languages. Latin is one of the official languages of the State of Vatican, spoken fluently by many members of the Roman Catholic clergy, though not as a native language. Sanskrit was still claimed as a mother tongue by some 14,000 speakers in India from Delhi to Bangalore, according to the 2001 census. Sanskrit enthusiasts therefore submitted a writ petition to the High Court of Punjab for declaring it a minority language. But there is something peculiar about Sanskrit in that it shows wide demographic fluctuations over successive census surveys, rising from 6,106 speakers in 1981 to 49,736 in 1991 and then falling back to 14,135 speakers in 2001. How is that possible in ten-year intervals? Ganesh Devy of the People's Linguistic Survey of India offers the following explanation. 'This fluctuation is not necessarily an error of the Census method. People often switch language loyalties depending on the immediate political climate' (quoted from Sreevastan 2014). This is an aspect of the interaction of individual and national multilingualism worth keeping in mind. Against the background of the ideological European concept of mother tongue/national language of which there can be only one and an 'either/or' mind-set, this statement is astounding. However, it is congruent with Lee Kuan Yew's remark quoted at the end of section 8.2 that identity varies with circumstances, reminding us once again that when it comes to language we are not only dealing with fuzzy categories and perennial change, but also with different attitudes some of which may be at variance with received views.

Other minority languages that are difficult to assign to any of the four categories are those that do not exist for the authorities. Max Weber's dictum about 'the age of language conflicts' refers not just to border-crossing minorities that may give rise to international territorial conflicts, but also to contentious status allocations within one state. Italy, home of nineteenth-century irredentism, nowadays prides itself on a liberal language regime that guarantees protection to twelve regional and minority languages.[18] Venetian is not among them because, according to the Italian authorities, it is a variety of Italian and as such does not need special protection. The Regional Council of Veneto has

[18] These languages are: French (120,000 speakers), Occitan (50,000 speakers), Franco-Provençal (70,000 speakers), German (295,000 speakers), Ladin (28,000 speakers), Friulian (526,000 speakers), Slovene (85,000 speakers), Sardinian (175,000 speakers), Catalan (18,000 speakers), Arberesh (a variant of contemporary Albanian; 100,000 speakers), Greek (3,900 speakers), and Croatian (1,700 speakers), as listed by National law—482/1999 'Norme in materia di tutela delle minoranze linguistiche storiche' (Law governing the protection of historical linguistic minorities), adopted on 15 December 1999 (quoted from Sierp 2008: 304).

adopted a different stance, passing a law in 2007 to the effect that Venetian *is* a language.[19]

In sum, because minority status may be contentious and because of shifting loyalties and ethnolinguistic affiliations, it is not always possible to answer the question of how many languages are spoken in a country with exactitude.

8.4.5 *The wealth of nations*

A final factor that has a bearing on how national multilingualism is institutionalized and lived is the relative wealth of a country. Generally speaking, nation states, compulsory education, and capitalism have been bad for minor languages. If market forces are left unchecked, many minor languages will cease to be spoken as their speakers turn to bigger languages that offer better economic opportunities. In a nutshell this is the reason why minority protection is necessary, assuming that it is in the interest of the minority or of the common good to maintain its language. This is a modern idea that has gained ground with increasing affluence. Whereas in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries assimilationist policies or more or less benign neglect were the norm, the second half of the twentieth century has seen a marked shift towards tolerance for and appreciation of diversity. The rich countries of the West, in particular, adopted more minority-friendly policies.

The prime example of an indigenous minority language that benefits from national affluence is Romansh in Switzerland. Spoken by just 0.5 per cent of the population, it enjoys the status of national language and partly-official language. It is advantaged in territory allocation, that is, even communities with a Roman population share below 50 per cent can be designated Romansh-speaking. The Canton of Graubünden maintains a translation service and provides bilingual textbooks up to high school level. Romansh can be studied at the Universities of Zurich, Freiburg, and Geneva. There is a radio station, a TV programme, a news

[19] Art. 2—Lingua veneta

1. Le specifiche parlate storicamente utilizzate nel territorio veneto e nei luoghi in cui esse sono state mantenute da comunità che hanno conservato in modo rilevante la medesima matrice costituiscono il veneto o lingua veneta [The speech forms historically used in the territory of Veneto and in places where the same have been preserved to a significant degree constitute Venetian or the Venetian language].

agency, a daily newspaper, and a publishing house (Chasa Editura Rumantscha). The language society *Lia rumantscha* is subsidized by the government which also funds other activities for the benefit of Romansh, such as nursery school teacher education and the compilation of an idiomatic dictionary.[20]

These measures and the overall policy of supporting Romansh must be seen as part of Switzerland's quadrilingual language regime and its eternal balancing act of avoiding German-language dominance or the collapse of the system by the incursion of English. Within this context, Romansh benefits from conditions that few other indigenous minorities can even dream of. And yet, all actions aimed at securing its survival may amount to no more than an attempt to square the circle, as one of the renowned experts in the field puts it (Solèr 2008). Romansh exists in three different spoken varieties which, since the sixteenth century, developed five written forms. Corpus planning resulted in the compromise variety Rumantsch Grischun in 1982, which is promoted by the authorities although it is not much liked by anyone. All speakers of Romansh are at least bilingual, many speaking both German and French, the languages they use for all purposes of communication that go beyond the concerns of the inner community. Rumantsch Grischun is intended to give the language the modern appearance that the local varieties lack and thus help it survive. However, as Solèr argues, this well-meant policy may be counterproductive, as Romansh speakers prefer local varieties and use other standard languages for modern purposes anyway. Romansh serves a function in a habitat (in the Bourdieu sense) of tradition and community life, and if that habitat disappears, Romansh will disappear. It does not take much imagination to see that many indigenous minority languages that were bypassed by industrialization, modernization and, today, globalization face a similar catch twenty-two, without however receiving the generous support from a benevolent and wealthy society that enables Romansh to persist. Switzerland can afford to pay much attention to its indigenous minority and treat it well. Less affluent countries often have other priorities.

[20] For a detailed account of the present situation of Romansh, see *Romansh. Facts & Figures*. 2004. Chur: Lia rumantscha [second revised and updated edition], a publication made available in Romansh, German, French, Italian, and English.

8.5 Conclusions

There is hardly a state that is not in one sense or another multilingual, and many of the factors that have an influence on national multilingualism are very particular and result from a country's history. However, some that have been discussed in this chapter are of a more general nature and cannot be ignored in any description and analysis of multilingual countries. The age of a country as a sovereign polity plays an important role, especially with regard to the colonial history (European expansion) that led to the transplantation of European languages to all continents. The colonial legacy is conspicuous when we direct our attention to the languages which are accorded official status. That European languages are employed for official and educational purposes in countries outside Europe where they are the L1 of a small section of the population at most is a characteristic feature of young postcolonial states, while relative proximity of official/national language and the majority population's L1 characterizes 'classical' nation states. The absolute and relative size of the majority is a variable and hence the demographic strength of the languages present in a state territory which does or does not coincide with their speakers' relative power. It is, therefore, necessary to distinguish several kinds of linguistic minorities. In fact, multilingual countries differ from each other most significantly in the kinds of minorities they encompass and how they are accommodated in the language regime. The geographic distribution of languages in a state territory as well as language recognition and the ascription of language to ethnic group were shown to be further important factors that are subject both to legal provisions and economic conditions. In conclusion, at the state level multilingualism is above all a matter of relations between a majority and minorities and should be understood in terms of diverging or converging interests of minorities and their reference majorities.

Problems and questions for discussion

1. What is the territoriality principle, and what does it mean for managing linguistic pluralism? Give some examples.
2. What kinds of linguistic minorities can you think of? Make a list and describe any differences you deem important.
3. Try to apply the quantum/power matrix (Fig. 8.1) to languages in your country.

4. Why could the capitalist economic order be a problem for linguistic diversity?
5. According to India's national census, Sanskrit had 6,106 speakers in 1981, 49,736 speakers in 1991, and 14,135 speakers in 2001. What do these figures tell us?

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9

Diversity in cyberspace

The multilingual internet

9.1 Offline

Imagine a life offline! No, try again, imagine a life where the term and the concept of offline do not exist! This is a life without apps, chat rooms, and emails; no smileys, emoticons, or emoji; a life without Facebook, Line (ライン), Weibo (微博), Islamic Social Network (الاسلام تاج الاجتماعي التواصل شبكة), and Odnoklassniki (Одноклассники); a life without text messaging, cyberbullying, and blogposts in the electronic information loop. There are no tweet storms, no Flickr, no Instagram, no YouTube, no WeChat (微信), no e-commerce, and no customer tracking. Wikipedia is unknown, and so is WikiLeaks, not to mention League of Legends. There are no data monsters like Google and NSA; big data is beyond imagination, and online dating science fiction. The e-book is yet to be invented, and students know no more about CMC, CAT, and CAI[1] than their teachers do. No spam, no hacking, phishing, or malware. Digitalese

[1] Computer-mediated communication, computer-assisted translation, and computer-assisted instruction, respectively.