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## Research Forum

# Report on the International Mother Language Day Forum: My Mother Tongue Amidst the Languages I Speak

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## **Report on the International Mother Language Day Forum**

*My Mother Tongue Amidst the Languages I Speak*  
University of Tsukuba (Japan), February 22nd, 2019

Organized and sponsored by the University of Tsukuba  
(Center for Education of Global Communication, Faculty Development)  
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### **Abstract**

*This paper reports on the International Mother Language Day Forum held at the University of Tsukuba (Japan), on February 22nd, 2019. Lectures followed by open discussion, documentary video screening and poster sessions, each took up the theme of mother tongue in a multilingual context. Taking a region of Europe and the former Dominion of Pakistan as case studies, Andrej Bekeš and Mohammad Abdul Malek discussed how cycles of violence, language repression and assimilatory policies have had, and continue to have, far-reaching consequences, leading not least to severe political, educational and economic oppression of targeted peoples. The event concluded with a Declaration to establish International Mother Language Day at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Tsukuba in order to recognize the value of linguistic and cultural diversity and to promote the preservation, development and dissemination of mother tongues.*

**Keywords:** mother tongue, language repression, economic oppression, linguistic diversity, visibility, preservation and development

## 要旨

本稿は、2019年2月22日筑波大学（日本）で開催された第一回国際母語デーフォーラムに関する報告である。フォーラムでは、基調講演と公開討論、ドキュメンタリー映画上映、ポスター発表が行われ、多言語社会における母語というテーマを中心に議論された。ベケシュ・アンドレとモハンマド・アブドゥル・マリクが、それぞれヨーロッパの地域と旧パキスタン（ドミニオン）をケーススタディとした発表を行い、繰り返される暴力、言語的抑圧および同化を推進する政策が広範囲にわたる深刻な被害をもたらし、その影響が今でも人々に対する政治・教育・経済的抑圧といった側面に及んでいることについて論じた。フォーラムの結果、言語的・文化的多様性の重要性を認め、世界の諸母語の保存・発展・普及を促進するために、筑波大学人文社会科学研究科で国際母語の日を設立するという宣言が行われた。

キーワード：母語、言語抑圧、経済的抑圧、言語の多様性、視覚化・可視化、保存と発展

## Participants

### Keynote lectures:

- Mohammad ABDUL MALEK  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Tsukuba (Japan)
  
- Andrej BEKEŠ  
University of Ljubljana (Slovenia), National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics (Japan)

### Poster presentations (faculty and students of the University of Tsukuba, Japan):

#### Comparative Research in Human and Social Sciences (Institute)

- Anubhuti CHAUHAN  
Research field: Japanese language education, second language acquisition

#### Comprehensive Human Sciences (Graduate School)

- Alula Tesfay Asfha  
World Cultural Heritage Studies  
Research field: Utilization of heritage for sustainable urban development in Mekelle city, Ethiopia

- Ravi Shankar PANDIT  
Sport and Olympic Studies  
Research field: Corporate social responsibility - analyzing the return on investment for sports initiatives in India

Global Issues (Bachelor Program)

- Ravi SINGH  
Research field: Effect of the growing population on human health - communicable disease

Humanities and Social Sciences (Graduate School)

- Nourhan RAMADAN
  
- Shirali GULOMALIEV  
Research field: Socio-linguistic study on Wakhi adjectives

Humanities and Social Sciences (Faculty)

- Bruno JACTAT  
Research field: Didactics, foreign language education
  
- Jeremie BRIDE  
Research field: Intercultural mediation, didactic-anthropology, physical education and sport sciences

Life and Environmental Sciences (Graduate School)

- Hassna HANIF  
Biological Sciences  
Research field: Developmental and physiological biology of *Drosophila Melanogaster*
  
- Mamadou Diallo  
Research field: Environmental policies in Africa, particularly the role of International Organizations in influencing environmental management

- Nathanael Eldrick Delvin  
College of Agro-Biological Resource Sciences  
Research field: Description of avocado ripeness by RGB camera
  
- Yllah OKIN KANG  
Environmental sciences / SUSTEP program  
Research field: Application of life cycle assessment in solid waste management

Social and International Studies (Graduate School)

- Sitara KAKHRAMONOVA  
College of Social Sciences

Sports Studies (Tsukuba International Academy)

- Dyan puspito Rini  
Sports and Olympic Studies  
Research field: potential of nature sport tourism for sustainable development: study of East Java, Indonesia

Systems and Information Engineering (Graduate School)

- Kouakou Hyacinthe KOUASSI  
Department of policy and planning sciences  
Research field: Effect of urbanization on the urban poor - focusing on waste management services in Anyama, Côte d'Ivoire

## **1. Opening session**

The forum opened with an address in both English and Japanese from Saburo Aoki. His message stressed that the current 'crisis of civilization' is a crisis of cultural diversity, mainly brought about by conflicting movements of uniformity and unification against fragmentation and segmentation. Aoki ended on the reflection that it was when a young child utters his first words, usually a form of 'mother' language, that he first becomes conscious of being a separate person and thus a member of society.

The keynote lecture by Andrej Bekeš portrayed the sensitive issues of mother language in Europe, notably in his home country of Slovenia. He gave an ironic instance of the generally accepted emotional perception of mother language before discussing the exclusionary nationalist trends in Europe between and after the two World Wars, illustrating the case with violence, language repression and assimilatory policies against ethnic minorities. Though present day Europe has policies in place to protect ethnic and linguistic diversity the same phenomenon of violence against ethnic minorities can still be observed, albeit at a lower level. He concluded by remarking that this was by no means a question of history or restricted to a small region of the world, but was happening every day on every continent. The full text of the lecture is given below.

The second keynote lecture by Mohammad Abdul Malek began with an overview of the events at the origin of February 21st being designated International Mother Language Day by the United Nations. It was indeed in 1952, in his home country of Bangladesh, then East Pakistan, that a peaceful language movement was brutally repressed. He went on to demonstrate how such repression of language had had far-reaching effects on the region, leading to severe educational and economic oppression. He concluded by showing that while, within a period of twenty three years, repression of language had made the region the economically poorer province of Pakistan, over the subsequent four and a half decades following independence, Bangladesh had become a much stronger country economically speaking than its Pakistan counterpart. The full text of the lecture is given below.

The keynote lectures were followed by a short question and answer session. Many of the issues raised from the floor concerned ways and means of preserving minority languages and just how important, or not, it was to preserve a language from outside influences, such as technical terms or modern speech. In response, it was pointed out that even though language policies and language planning were important, the key was to use the language in as many areas of life as possible, in every region where it exists, and to make it visible. The problem of language in a multi-ethnic country is one of recognition. As to the point on how to preserve a language from outside influences, this was deemed extremely difficult to control, and as it was largely a matter of perception, it was generally agreed not necessary to address.

**Keynote Lecture I - *The Last Lesson*, the ‘First Lesson’, and the Lesson about the Importance of Mother Language**

Andrej BEKEŠ

University of Ljubljana (Slovenia)

National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics (Japan)

**Introduction: International Mother Language Day**

Mother language is a portmanteau expression covering often much more complex realities in our multilingual and multiethnic world. I will use it as such in my talk.

International Mother Language Day (IMLD), designated a worldwide annual observance by UNESCO in 1999 and later by the UN General Assembly in 2009, is held on February 21st every year. Its aim is to promote awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity and to promote multilingualism.

It was the People’s Republic of Bangladesh who proposed such an observance day be held worldwide in commemoration of the victims killed by police during peaceful demonstrations for the recognition of Bangla (Bengali) as the official language of Bangladesh, which, at the time, was East Pakistan.

Such brutal suppression of languages and cultures of entire peoples has been happening everywhere and is still happening even now.

I come from Europe, a place known for aggression and suppression of those who are different, beginning with religion and going all the way up to ethnic and linguistic forced assimilation, from displacement to ethnic cleansing. Europe is also known for its colonial domination of vast stretches of the world until the recent past.

But after WWII, Europe also became a place that strove to overcome past animosities and to build understanding and cooperation instead of hatred, as exemplified in the goals (if not always in the practice) of the EU and its attempt to build a multicultural, multilingual association of sovereign states. But Europe, including the EU, seems also to be a place where new generations of politicians are trying to revert to old patterns of nationalism, as we can see in Spain’s dealing with Catalonia and in the recent surge of nationalism across the EU, among others. As such, Europe is a place

that is especially sensitive to issues of Mother Language, and I will focus on a case study involving the experience of my mother and her generation.

A small aside: from the years 1900-2000, the Slovene capital of Ljubljana was ruled by six different states.

## **1. School and mother language**

### **1.1 Daudet's *The Last Lesson***

The short story by Alphonse Daudet (1840-1897) *La Dernière classe* [The Last Lesson], (1880: 1-9), is an emotional narrative told by a small Alsatian boy about the last French lesson in Alsace following a decree issued by the Prussian government declaring that in the newly annexed territories of Alsace and Lorraine education was to be exclusively taught in German. The story is widely popular, and has been included in elementary school readers in Japan; I remember it from my school days in Slovenia as an example of love of the Mother Language.

But, as the sociolinguist Katsuhiko Tanaka points out in his book *Kotoba to kokka*, ことばと国家 [Language and Nation] (1981), there is a slight problem. The majority (86%) of the children were Alsatian, their mother language being Alsatian (an Alemannic German dialect) and not French! Furthermore, Alsace itself had only been incorporated into France some 200 years earlier during the seventeenth century. Alsace became part of the German Empire once more from 1871-1918. Then, since 1919, Alsace has again been ruled by France; with the exception of the years 1940-1945 when it was occupied by Nazi Germany.

### **1.2 The Littoral under Italy 1918-1943: the 'first lesson'**

Every 'last lesson' is followed by a 'first lesson' under the new regime. This was also the experience of my mother and her peers who were living in the western part of the Slovene lands, the Littoral province of Istria and parts of Dalmatia which were ceded to Italy by what today would be called the 'international society', i.e., by the allied powers after WWI, in return for Italy's constructive switching of sides during the war. The whole story actually evolves in several stages.



- **Stage 0: Tolerance of multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic reality.**

Austria-Hungary before 1918 was accommodating to the multi-ethnic, multi-language reality; since the eighteenth century elementary education had been taught in the regional languages (including Slovene, Croat, Italian, etc.).

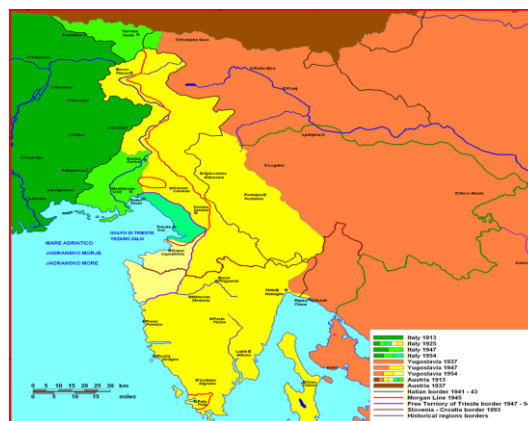
Until 1918, this territory was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, ethnically and linguistically mixed, with Slovene and Croat-speaking inhabitants forming the majority population, while the Italian speakers were concentrated in the coastal cities.



(Wikipedia - Creative Commons)

**Fig. 1: Before 1918 - Ethnic distribution under Austria-Hungary**

(grey = majority Slovene; beige = majority Croat; yellow = majority Italian)



(Wikipedia - Creative Commons)

**Fig. 2: After 1918 – Change of country boundaries**

(light green, yellow = annexed by Italy; green = Italy since 1913  
orange = Yugoslavia from 1920)

- **Stage 1: Ethnic intolerance.**

In the newly annexed territories radical Italian nationalists, in particular Fascists, began carrying out acts of violence towards minorities as soon as WWI ended. One example is the setting on fire of the Slovene Cultural Center in Trieste, the main port of the Austro-Hungarian Empire with a thriving multi-ethnic population and thriving Slovene community. The act perpetrated by Fascists in 1919 was never dealt with in the context of the then Italian laws.



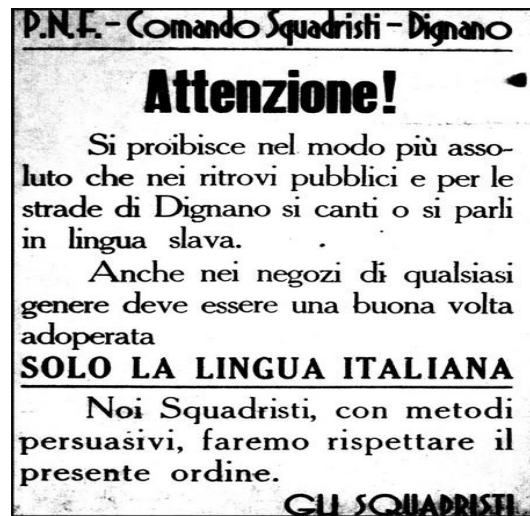
(Wikipedia - Creative Commons)

**Fig. 3: Slovene Cultural Center in Trieste  
set on fire by Fascists in 1919**

- **Stage 2: Assimilation with no means spared.**

After the Fascists came to power in 1922 the pressure on non-Italians in the annexed territories escalated.

From 1923 the language of instruction was to be only Italian. Public use of local languages was forbidden. From 1925 Italian became the only language recognized in courts of law. Local languages were also forbidden in religious services. These measures were accompanied by forceful Italianization of family names. For example, my mother's family name Močnik (motʃnik) in Slovene was Italianized to Mocenigo (motʃenigo).



(Wikipedia - Creative Commons)

**Fig. 4: Poster prohibiting the use of ‘Slav’ language (*lingua slava*) in public spaces, including shops, in Vodnjan**

This was the background of my mother’s and her peers’ ‘first lesson’ conducted in Italian when she was at elementary school in the village of Grahovo, near her home in Koritnica. The children could not understand anything and were utterly shocked. Teaching methods also included physical punishment and it took quite some time before the children could follow classes in any meaningful way. However, their attachment to their mother language persisted.



(Wikipedia - Creative Commons)

**Fig. 5: My mother’s native village of Koritnica**

At the same time the Fascist regime also ‘encouraged’ the emigration of Slovene and Croat people either to other parts of Italy or abroad. Many, including my mother’s family, moved to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and many others emigrated to the Americas or Australia. Their attachment to their home village grew even stronger, and though life carried her away from her village across Slovenia my mother chose to be buried in the cemetery of her home village to be together with her parents who had also chosen to be returned home. One other aspect of my mother’s relation with the Italian language is that she did not hate the language itself. During WWII, as she had joined the resistance, she was also active in Italy and had many good Italian friends; such good friends in fact, that the friendship actually continues into my generation.

- **Stage 3: Revolt against assimilatory policies.**

The pressures of ethnic assimilation were so hard that people started to revolt - the Revolutionary Organization of the Julian March T.I.G.R., active in the annexed Littoral and Istria region, was the first to wage armed struggle against the Fascist regime in Europe.

- **Stage 4: Renewed aggression and repression - WWII.**

After April 1941, the Axis powers attacked the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Central-West Slovenia was occupied and incorporated into Italy becoming the Province of Ljubljana. Dalmatia and Montenegro were also occupied by Italy.

To stifle any attempt at resistance, mass arrests were carried out and people deemed potentially dangerous to Italian efforts were imprisoned in concentration camps such as Rab (It. Arbe), Gonars, etc., under extremely harsh conditions

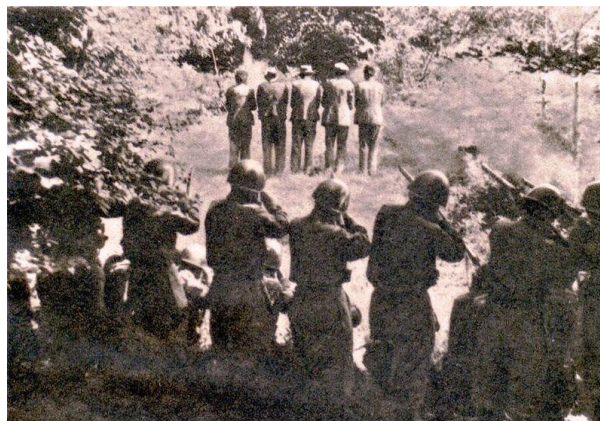


(Wikipedia - Creative Commons)

**Fig. 6: Dead inmates  
in the Italian concentration camp of Rab**

- **Stage 5: Armed resistance and escalation of violence.**  
With escalating repression by the Italian and other Axis powers, well-organized resistance fighters, the ‘Partisans’, appeared.

In reprisals for Partisan attacks, civilian hostages were customarily shot to frighten the general populace from supporting the Partisans.



(Wikipedia - Creative Commons)

**Fig. 7: Shooting of hostages  
by the Italian army in Italian-held territories**

- **Stage 6: Post WWII normalization.**  
After WWII ended some of the pre-war injustices were remedied, such as the new border between Italy and SFR Yugoslavia which reflected the ethnic distribution more faithfully, even though substantial minorities, Slovene on

the Italian side and Italian on the Yugoslav side in the Littoral and Istria region remained. The European Union (EU) also sprung up as one remedy for the wars waged in Europe in the first half of the twentieth century, reconciling former foes into a closely-knit economic and later political union. Policies protecting ethnic and linguistic diversity become a declared goal and also a norm in the EU. As the EU grew, the Schengen agreement provided free movement not only for goods but also for people. For Slovenia, newly independent after the demise of Yugoslavia, and other East European countries joining the EU, the Schengen area provided healing for many artificially disrupted ethnic communities split by state borders

- **Stage 7: Exodus of Italian minority from Littoral, Istria and Dalmatia.** There was also a darker side - economic factors (Yugoslavia's industrial and agricultural base destroyed in WWII), political factors (Yugoslavia perceived as part of the Soviet camp), fear (of those who sided openly with the fascist regime) and also worry about their status at becoming a minority - that resulted in the reverse exodus of many ethnic Italians from the region, which after WWII had become a part of Yugoslavia, to Italy. This was remedied by agreements between Yugoslavia and Italy, and after 1954 the border between the two countries became one of the most open in Europe. As part of the agreements, the people who opted for Italy were also entitled to compensation. And yes, the Iron Curtain actually moved further east, to the border of Yugoslavia (which broke with Stalin as early as 1948) with its eastern neighbors who remained in the Soviet orbit.

## **2. Mother language of minorities in the civilized environment**

### **2.1 International law and domestic law.**

Mother languages are protected by international law as well as by domestic law. Most of the countries in Europe are signatories to the *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* (Strasbourg, 1995); of the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (Strasbourg, 5 November 1992); of the *Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights* (Barcelona, June 1996) and of more specific international agreements regulating the language rights of minorities in particular countries. Based on international law, there are also



domestic laws and statutes regulating the implementation of these rights. In actual fact, however, many governments are slow at implementing this legislature; for example, it took twenty-five years for the international agreement on the Slovene minority in Italy to be implemented into the Italian domestic legal framework.

## **2.2 Most vulnerable areas: schooling, media, visibility**

In Italy, for example, the status of the Slovene and Friulian (an indigenous Romance language) minorities in schools was only recognized and implemented in the whole territory of the minorities around the year 2000. While Slovene is used as the medium of instruction in several designated schools Friulan is only tolerated, if the parents wish so, as a language to be taught in elementary school.

Media in minority languages are also of extreme importance as they give voice to the minority in the area where they live. There are guaranteed minimal standards of media presence for the Slovene minority in Italy, though unfortunately not always implemented for reasons of budgetary limitations. Again, the indigenous Friulan minority is worse off in this respect.

Visibility, a testimony to the presence of the minority in the area where they live is also vital, and for this reason strongly opposed by the narrow nationalist sentiment; toponyms, shop names, institution names etc., in recognized minority areas should be written in both majority and minority languages.



(Wikipedia - Creative Commons)

**Fig. 8: Bilingual toponym in Italian and Slovene  
(actually in Resian dialect)**



(Wikipedia - Creative Commons)

**Fig. 9: Multilingual road signs in Friulan and Italian**



(courtesy of Matjaž Hmeljak)

**Fig. 10: Multilingual and monolingual road signs near Trieste**

As often happens, there is some opposition among a certain section of the population. In the photo above, the Slovene name of the city of Koper (It. Capodistria) in Slovenia, and of the city of Rijeka (It. Fiume) in Croatia, are smeared by local ‘patriots’. In the case of Fiume, Italiana is added to stress the right of Italy to this former territory.

### **3. Romantic movement and its heritage**

The Romantic movement and its thinkers brought together language, ethnicity and political autonomy, thus establishing the basis for both the ethnic and linguistic emancipation that started in the nineteenth century and for the exclusionary nationalism that more often than not accompanied it. For example, in Yugoslavia



following its demise in 1991, the bloody wars and ethnic cleansing waged in Bosnia and Croatia showed one of the worst results that come from exclusionary nationalism. But Yugoslavia began as an inspiring integrative idea in the middle of the nineteenth century, first as a project of common Serbo-Croat language, potentially through a common standard uniting linguistically close dialects in Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Montenegro, and then also as an idea of a shared political entity of Slavic-speaking people in the Balkan peninsula.

Its underside, as it turned out, was ethnic and linguistic intolerance following the ideal of imagined ethnical and linguistic purity of the dominant ethnic group.

This is the equation which joins striving for political emancipation of different ethnic and linguistic communities, the 'One language - One people - One state' and the excluding nationalistic Hitler's 'One people - One state - *Ein Führer*' (but also 'One *Duce/Poglavnik/Vožd*'), and the nightmare the world saw for the first time in WWII but which has been repeated over and over on a smaller scale, in the wars after the demise of Yugoslavia, and in too many others as well.

A sobering example of struggle for political emancipation in the tradition of exclusionary nationalism is Kosovo. From being a part of the Ottoman empire it became a part of Serbia and then the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, with the majority ethnic Albanians having no linguistic rights whatsoever before WWII. After WWII, in SFR Yugoslavia, Kosovo had a high degree of cultural and economic autonomy within the republic of Serbia but which was revoked unilaterally by Serbia after Yugoslavia started falling apart in the late 1980s. Armed struggle by ethnic Albanians followed, and then intervention by the 'international society' that, after punitive bombing of Belgrade and other targets in Serbia, persuaded the Milošević regime to pull out of Kosovo. From 2008 Kosovo has been under the administration of EULEX, practically independent and recognized by more than 110 countries. Yet all the suffering experienced to achieve independence does not prevent the now majority population from oppressing other minorities, in particular ethnic Turks and Roma people. Indeed, the cycle of oppression repeats itself on a lower rung of the ladder.

#### **4. Ainu, Ryukyu, Japan's involvement in Asia in the twentieth century**

My mother's story is not just a story that happened in a remote corner of Central Europe. There are parallels everywhere.

Just a few days before giving the present lecture in fact, we read encouraging news (cf. *Asahi Shinbun*, 6 February 2019) that the Ainu people were soon going to be legally recognized as an indigenous people of Japan. Yet this news has come 150 years too late for the Ainu people, and at what cost?

Furthermore, as the members of the Ainu community made clear in their protests a few weeks after the content of the law was announced (cf. *Asahi Shinbun*, 3 March 2019), this decision was formulated without consulting the Ainu ethnic community and without any provision for redressing the wrongs perpetrated for so long by the Japanese state. The law was finally promulgated in its original form in April of this year, without reflecting the content of the Ainu ethnic community protests (cf. *Asahi Shinbun*, 19 April 2019).

After all these long years of suppression and discrimination how many native speakers of the Ainu language are there still left, how much of Ainu culture is still alive and developing not just being stored in museums?

It is the same with the Ryukyu languages, from Amami to Yonaguni. They were finally recognized by UNESCO as endangered languages, with most of the native speakers in their seventies or over. There is an ongoing effort for the revitalization of at least some of these languages, but how successful can these efforts be? And how much has been lost already?

And last but not least, there is Japan's pre-WWII colonial effort and military aggression in Asia. To mention just one example, the fate of the Korean language closely parallels that of Slovene in the Littoral annexed by Italy after WWI as experienced by my mother - chasing the language from public spaces and schools, assimilation through changes to family names; same methods at the same time in different geographic locations. And all the high-flying Wilsonian doctrine of national emancipation was brushed aside for the expedience of the then 'international society'.

## **5. Conclusion**

The above is just a simple case study. My mother's experience with her 'first lesson' is just an episode. As I have mentioned, similar or worse cases are aplenty on all continents. Normalization processes backed by the UN, UNESCO, the EU, etc., are encouraging. Yet there are ongoing struggles for political autonomy by 'minorities' of regions equivalent to medium-sized European countries, with activists conveniently labeled terrorists: Uygurs in the People's Republic of China, Kurds in Turkey, Catalonians in Spain (an EU member country), and countless others from Western Irian Jaya to the tragic plight of the Rohingya in Burma and the millions of forest-dwelling indigenous people in India facing eviction from their ancestral grounds, to mention just a few that appear on the front pages of newspapers. There are struggles of indigenous people going on in every corner of every continent.

There are also worrying trends in our developed world. Near my home, in the EU, excesses of nationalism after 2010 are becoming more and more conspicuous and the norm of the day, with rhetoric openly reverting to pre-WWII style of exclusionary nationalism.

One very recent example of this is a speech given on February 10th this year by none other than the President of the European Parliament, Antonio Tajani; the speech was on the occasion of the 'National Memorial Day of the Exiles and Foibe' held in the village of Basovizza near the border with Slovenia, and reported on, among others, in the Independent (18 February 2019). Tajani concluded with the irredentist slogan "Long live Italian Istria, long live Italian Dalmatia!". An excess, destroying the very foundations on which the EU itself is built, and passed over in Brussels without much ado - with the exception of protests by Slovenia and Croatia.

Another such example of ignorance at the level of the EU is that of Greece and its ethnic Macedonian minority. In spite of all the suffering that Pontic Greeks had to endure on being sent back to their 'home country' after more than 2,000 years of living along the Asia Minor coasts of the Black Sea, Greece, until recently, denied the very existence of Macedonians as an ethnic group. Macedonia after becoming independent had, on the insistence of Greece, to apply for UN membership under the name of FYROM (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia). The situation has

been remedied following the recent agreement between Macedonia and Greece, resulting in Macedonia being officially renamed North Macedonia. Yet, as is well documented, Greece still does not recognize its substantial ethnic Macedonian minority within its own borders (cf. the latest article by the BBC of February 24th, 2019: *Greece's invisible minority - the Macedonian Slavs*). Macedonians in Greece are still being exposed to pressure and harassment for just being Macedonians. It is also shameful that the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights in its reports on persecuted and deprived minorities nowhere mentions the Greek ethnic Macedonian minority and its plight, even though the primary reason for the agency's existence is the protection of the legal rights of minorities.

The cycle of jingoism leading to destruction and violence, thought long to be part of the past, seems to have been latent and is now resurfacing even in the heart of the EU. What can and what must we, as conscious individuals, under such circumstances, do?

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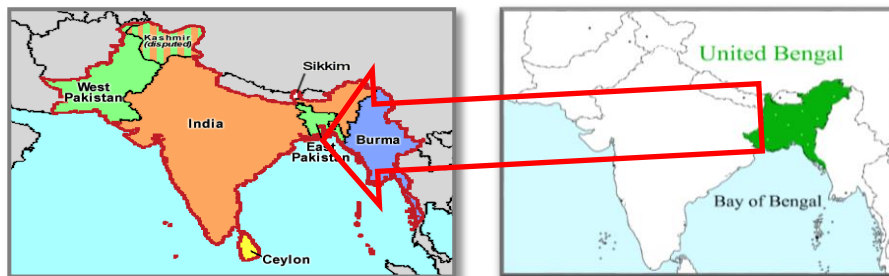
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## **2. The Dominion of Pakistan**

Between 1947 and 1948, four new independent states were created from the former British Colony of India, of which the Dominion of Pakistan, created on 14th August 1947, was one. Despite calls for a United Bengal, the Dominion of Pakistan was composed of two provinces, West Pakistan and East Bengal (later East Pakistan, today's Bangladesh), based on a shared religion though not on a shared language, culture, etc. Geographically, the two provinces of Pakistan were located some 1,200 km apart.



(Wikipedia creative commons [arrow added])

**Fig. 2: The four new independent states (left); United Bengal (right)**

The question as to what should be the state language of Pakistan was raised immediately after its creation. Muslim scholars and leaders believed that Urdu, only spoken by 7% of the population, should be the common language throughout the Dominion of Pakistan. However, the people of the East Bengal province (56% of total Pakistan population), where Bengali was the mother tongue, regarded Urdu as being the language of the elite, not the language of the people.

## **3. The 1952 Bengali Language Movement**

Knowing that a nation was not a nation without its own language and culture, the central government's main intent was to destroy the Bengali culture and language which was the root of the East Bengalese people, and impose Urdu as the only national language of the country for both provinces of Pakistan. Within a year this policy transformed into aggression on language, primarily to make the educated society of East Bengal 'illiterate' and 'ineligible' for positions in government, administration, education, etc. Domination of any alien language seems to be one of the worst kinds of domination.

Thus Urdu was imposed as the only national language of the country for both East Bengal and West Pakistan. The people of East Bengal could not agree and demanded Bengali be one of the state languages. Representations to the Assembly of Pakistan, general strikes, student movements, etc., followed while interdictions against the Bengali language became ever more severe. The confrontation came to a climax on February 21st 1952, when students from Dhaka University held a rally in defiance of the government and were fired upon by the police.

In 1956, after years of conflict, the central government conceded and granted official status to the Bengali language.

#### **4. Growing disparity between East and West Pakistan became rampant during 1947-1970**

The Pakistani government not only brought about injustice in the language but also in other fields such as politics, education, economy etc. The Language Movement created a great sorrow and hatred within East Pakistan (East Bengal became East Pakistan in October 1955). Following language and cultural aggression, the disparity between the two provinces of Pakistan (East Pakistan and West Pakistan) within two decades became rampant, especially in education and economy. Table 1 is a typical example of differences between the two provinces in the education sector. While the number of graduates and post-graduates in East Pakistan were decreasing it was the reverse in West Pakistan (Asadullah 2010).

**Table 1: Number of graduates and postgraduates in Pakistan, 1951-1961**

	Graduates			Postgraduates		
	1951	1961	Change	1951	1961	Change
Pakistan	86,000	82,000	-4.6	23,000	31,000	39.6
East Pakistan	41,000	28,000	-32.3	8,000	7,000	-12.0
West Pakistan	45,000	54,000	21.3	14,000	24,000	68.6

(Adapted from Akhter 1963)

**Table 2: Per capita income in East and West Pakistan  
(1959-60 prices, in rupees)**

	<b>1949-50</b>	<b>1959-60</b>	<b>1969-70</b>
Pakistan	311	318	424
West Pakistan	338	366	537
East Pakistan	287	278	331
East-West gap	51	88	206

( Five-Year Plan of Pakistan 1965-70:11, Government of Pakistan;  
Report of the Panel of Economists on the Fourth Five-Year Plan 1970-75: 132, Government of Pakistan)

**Table 3: Government spending in East and West Pakistan**

	<b>Spending on West Pakistan*</b>	<b>Spending on East Pakistan*</b>	<b>Amount spent on East as % of West</b>
1950-55	11,290	5,240	46.5
1955-60	16,550	5,240	31.7
1960-65	33,550	14,040	41.8
1965-70	51,950	21,410	41.2
Total	113,340	45,930	40.5

\* In millions of Pakistan Rupees  
(Report of the Advisory Panels of the Fourth Five-Year Plan 1970-75, Vol. I, Government of Pakistan)

The economic disparity was very visible between the two provinces (Tables 2, 3). Despite having 60% of the population, East Pakistan's share of development expenditure was as low as 20% during 1950-51 to 1954-55, to peak only at 36% during the Third Five-Year Plan period (1965-66 to 1969-70). To support the process of industrialization in the Western Province, the central government transferred visible resources away from the East to the West. In addition, the central government drew out of East Pakistan more income than it injected through expenditures (Feldman 1971). The resulting transfer was worth \$2.6 billion (Rahman 1968). Starting from the early 1950s, disparity of per capita income between East and West Pakistan began widening. While per capita income in East Pakistan rose by 0.7% a year, the rate of increase in West



Pakistan was 2% (Rao 1972). This discrimination and misuse was discussed and examined in detail in scholarly writings of the time, which not only reinforced the feeling of hatred among the masses but also underscored the adverse effects on the economy. A young Professor, Rehman Sobhan of the University of Dhaka gave more evidence on economic disparities: i) East Pakistan was earning around 60% of the country's export but was receiving only 30% of national imports and 30% of total foreign aid; ii) Annual trade deficit in East Pakistan was 62 million Pakistan Rupees in the early 1950s which increased to 425 Million in the 1960s (Sobhan 1993).

Despite such prevailing disparities, in 1968, Ayub Khan (President of the Dominion of Pakistan at the time) celebrated his tenure as Ten Years of Development Success. The celebration was a slap in the face of East Pakistan. On the contrary, no attention to the demand for a separate Framework for East Pakistan's Development Planning was given. The people of East Pakistan complained against the discrimination of unequal growth and development between the two provinces of Pakistan. From the 1950s to 1960s, the discriminatory policy and practice left the people of East Pakistan seriously dissatisfied.

### **5. What next of those repressions?**

The Language Movement along with the aforementioned disparities catalyzed the assertion of a Bengali national identity in East Bengal (later East Pakistan), and became a forerunner of the Bengali nationalist movements, including the Six Point Movement and subsequently the Bangladesh Liberation War, the India-Pakistan War and eventually the independence of Bangladesh on December 16th, 1971.

### **6. Where are Bangladesh and Pakistan today?**

While the per capita income gap in the two provinces of Pakistan increased to 206 Pakistan Rupees from 51 Pakistan Rupees during 1947-70, and Bangladesh (East Pakistan) per capita income was almost half that of West Pakistan in 1969-70 (Table 2), in recent years (2017-18) their per capita income is comparable and in many indicators Bangladesh is doing much better than Pakistan (Table 4). In an interview by a Pakistani news station (ZemTV) on December 18th, 2013, the current Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan, confessed that under its rule

Pakistan had carried out acts of injustice towards Bangladesh. A noted Pakistani journalist, Zaigham Khan, recently advised his government to adopt the Bangladesh Development Model for his country's future development (The Economic Times, 24 September 2018).

**Table 4. Comparison between Bangladesh and Pakistan today (2017-18)**

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Bangladesh</b>	<b>Pakistan</b>
GDP Per Capita (USD)	1,592.00	1,555.00
Literacy rate (%)	73.00	58.00
Life Expectancy at birth (years)	72.00	68.00
Human Development Index	0.68	0.56

(Countryeconomy.com/countries/compare/Bangladesh/Pakistan, 7 May 2019)

## **7. Concluding remarks**

This keynote briefly traced the history of the two provinces of the Dominion of Pakistan and how the Language Movement in the eastern province transformed into a liberation war that created independent Bangladesh. It was also shown that while repression of language made East Pakistan (today's Bangladesh) the economically poorer province of Pakistan within twenty-three years of the creation of the Dominion of Pakistan (1947-1970), within the subsequent four and a half decades (1971-2018) following independence Bangladesh has become a much stronger country than its Pakistan counterpart.

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## **2. Video and poster session**

### **2.1 Documentary video on the meaning and importance of mother language**

The forum continued with a preview screening of the documentary video produced by Linguapax Asia especially made for International Mother Language Day 2019 events. Beginning with greetings in nine different languages, the documentary focused on a series of clips where people from all walks of life and from different communities in Thailand and Miyako Island in Japan expressed the importance and meaning of mother language. The video clips clearly portrayed the generally perceived emotional connection with mother language and the link between language and identity.

Greetings were from participants of the JALT 2018 Shizuoka Conference (Japan), recorded by Jelisava Sethna; video clips were recorded and compiled by the Research Institute for Languages and Culture of Mahidol University (Thailand) for the Thai communities, and by Sachiyo Fujita-Round and Jelisava Sethna for the Miyako Island communities. Sponsors: Linguapax Asia, Unicef, Mahidol University, with special thanks to Sawilai Premsrirat. The preview version can be viewed at:  
<[www.youtube.com/watch?v=wsgsree\\_38g&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR051rDv\\_Q0Xb\\_rIZaXWjrbE8v0K63fcZojSYwYq4gto01q5absTs0Pk4kY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wsgsree_38g&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR051rDv_Q0Xb_rIZaXWjrbE8v0K63fcZojSYwYq4gto01q5absTs0Pk4kY)>

## **2.2. Poster Session**

Languages represented: Arabic, Bahasa, Baoulé, Bengali, Breton, Fulani, Haut-Jurassien, Hindi, Kikongo, Nepali, Tigrinya, Uzbek, Wakhi

Students and faculty from a wide range of research fields presented their perspectives on their mother languages, giving a historical overview, the geographical location showing that a minority language was often spoken in wide areas crossing well beyond state divides, the salient characteristics of the language with sample writing systems and phrases, and so on, and highlighting the fact that the mother language existed in a multilingual context. Furthermore, it was remarked that a mother language was not necessarily defined once and for all, that it could change over time, according to social context, and so on.

Certain posters echoed the narratives of the two keynote lectures with similar cycles of oppression, forced assimilation, political, educational and economic domination, leading to revolt and eventually the establishment of legal frameworks and visibility. Yet others focused on instances where a common language did not result in the oppression of minority languages, but, on the contrary, by forming a cohesive identity over a wide, disparate geographical area opened a doorway for exchange amongst all the different cultures, philosophies and collective inherited knowledge, thus guaranteeing the dissemination and preservation of each minority language. The posters are given in the appendix.

## **3. Declaration**

In order to ensure the sustainability of this event and its goals, a declaration of the International Mother Language Day of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Tsukuba has been drafted (cf. hereafter);

For the Center for Education of Global Communication, Faculty Development Committee: Bruno Jactat, Editing Coordinator;

**Declaration of International Mother Language Day  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Tsukuba**

Whereas more than 3,000 foreign students, researchers and professors of more than seventy different nationalities officially study, research and teach at the University of Tsukuba;

Whereas both foreign and Japanese students, researchers and professors speak a multitude of languages that greatly enrich our academic and research culture;

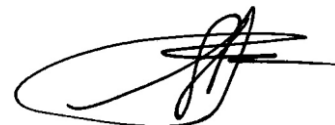
And whereas the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Tsukuba wishes to recognize the value of linguistic and cultural diversity on its own campus, and within its institutional and academic partnerships in Japan and in the world;

Now, therefore, the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Tsukuba, by and with the advice and consent of the Faculty, declares as follows:

**INTERNATIONAL MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY**

At the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Tsukuba, in each and every year, the twenty-first day of February is to be known as ‘International Mother Language Day’ and events will be carried out to promote the preservation, development and dissemination of mother tongues to not only encourage linguistic diversity and multilingual education but also to develop fuller awareness of linguistic and cultural traditions in Japan and throughout the world and to inspire solidarity based on understanding, tolerance and dialogue.

Declaration signed on February 22nd, 2019



Saburo Aoki  
Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences  
University of Tsukuba (Japan)

Appendix – Poster Session

<h3>ARABIC</h3> <p>Nourhan Ramadan</p> <p>Arabic is the most famous Arabic word is... Arabic is the only language that has a peace sign... Arabic is spoken in more than 27 countries and has more than 28 million speakers.</p>	<h3>BAHASA</h3> <p>Dyan puspito Rini</p> <p>BAHASA INDONESIA, BAHASA JAWA DAN BAHASA SURABAYA The Origin of Bahasa Indonesia The Origin of Javanese Language and Surabaya Patois (Suraboyan)</p>	<h3>BAHASA</h3> <p>Nathanael Eldrick Delvin</p> <p>Bahasa Indonesia The formation of Bahasa Indonesia The origin of Bahasa Indonesia</p>
<h3>BAOULE</h3> <p>Kouakou Hyacinthe Kouassi</p> <p>The Baoule Language International Mother Day, Feb. 22nd February 2019 Baoule is a dialect spoken in the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire.</p>	<h3>BENGALI</h3> <p>Hassna Hanif</p> <p>My mother tongue amidst the languages I speak 'The Bengali language' The History Global Movement What can we do to protect this?</p>	<h3>BRETON</h3> <p>Bruno Jactat</p> <p>The survival of Breton language in France Breton is a Celtic language spoken in Brittany, France Breton is a language of the past and the future.</p>
<h3>FULANI</h3> <p>Mamadou Diallo</p> <p>2019 International Mother Tongue Day University of Tsukuba Fulani/Fulfulde/Fular</p>	<h3>HAUT-JURASSIEN</h3> <p>Jeremie Bride</p> <p>LE PARLER HAUT-JURASSIEN Haut-Jurassien is a dialect of French spoken in the Haut-Jura region of France.</p>	<h3>HINDI</h3> <p>Ravi Shankar Pandit</p> <p>INTERNATIONAL MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY 2019 Hindi is the most spoken language in the world Hindi is a language of the past and the future.</p>



<p style="text-align: center;"><b>HINDI</b> Anubhuti Chauhan</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">International Mother Language Day 2019 Mother Language is a multi-racial cocktail — A case from India —</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>KIKONGO</b> Yllah Okin Kang</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">International Mother Language Day 2019</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The "Munku tuba"</p> <p style="text-align: center;">My mother tongue amidst the Languages I speak</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>NEPALI</b> Ravi Singh</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">International Mother Language Day 2019 (20th Anniversary of Treaty of the 1974 Language Act)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Importance of Nepali Language</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>TIGRINYA</b> Alula Tesfay Asfha</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Tigrinya Language</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A Language and Culture that Succeeded with Hard Work of Generational Mentors</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>UZBEK</b> Sitira Kakhramonova</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">BY MOTHER TONGUE AMONGST THE LANGUAGES I SPEAK THE UZBEK LANGUAGE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sitira Kakhramonova University of Tashkent, Social Sciences</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>WAKHI</b> Shirali Gulomaliev</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Six main factors of weakening of Wakhi language</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Shirali Gulomaliev University of Tashkent, Social Sciences</p>