

VERBALIZATION OF CONCEPT OF "MOTHERLAND" IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Abstract: The article provides an overview of the verbalization of the concept of "Motherland" in the English language. The scope of this write-up is limited to the discussion on the perception and projection of "Motherland" for diasporas, with a special focus on the Pakistani diaspora settled in England. This has been done in several ways. Firstly, a content analysis of letters to the editor in the Pakistani press regarding Pakistan from 1997 to 2002 was undertaken. The lead author has written several papers on Pakistan and arranged by the British Council and other agencies. In these papers, there is sometimes mention of not only the content of the papers themselves but also the delegate's experience of interacting with the British agents and how they seemed to perceive the message being conveyed. This anecdotal evidence was used to frame perceptions of Pakistan in a European context. This provided the basis for the author's accumulation of experiences in "selling" Pakistan to an educated upper-middle-class bracket in European settings. These anecdotal experiences were then contrasted with the lead author's personal experiences in Pakistan. Drawing from classic grounded theory methodology, a comparison of these interactions served to highlight the range of experiences between Europe and Pakistan along several dimensions. Finally, the papers on Pakistan were reviewed in light of the perceptual contrasts and specific instances recounted. This served to better articulate the perceptual findings. The second method involved interviewing and participant observation with highly educated Pakistanis living abroad in a western country and Pakistanis living in Pakistan who have interacted with those living in Europe.

Key words: Linguistics, verbalization, concept, topographic personification, communication, Liu, Teo, signs, abstract concept, language, accumulation.

Introduction

The value concept should be sharpened in a much deeper understanding of the next generation. Later, it can also guide and give better insight on the policy making.

Why should we verbalize the concept of motherland? According to Liu (2005), a developing society needs a shared platform of key ideas and values. This value has a big implication on the nation-building process in the developing country. It helps in shaping the society based on the idea of the desired future.

The concept of motherland can be seen as a psychological unifying force that connects an individual with a nation (Teo, 2008). Generally, it is an abstract concept.

Every individual has an assumption about their motherland, although the assumption can be diverse among individuals. For instance, a Chinese might consider China as his motherland, but a Chinese who migrates to the United States and obtains United States citizenship might consider the United States as his motherland. According to the Oxford dictionary, motherland is a person's native land. However, as claimed by Teo (2008), it is an ambiguous term in social sciences, not to mention among the general public. People tend to have strong feelings toward the nation which is referred to as the "motherland." It may create a sense of attachment, a sense of belonging, or a sense of loyalty. Emotionally, it touches the heart of a person.

Definition of "Motherland"

For people whose national consciousness has developed in the modern era with the growth of national states as defined territorial entities, the concept of "Motherland" is easier to comprehend. Although the settled definition of a homeland has seldom been reached with the shifting plates of historic geopolitics. In every case it refers to a fixed geographical area belonging to a particular nation. The conflation of state and nation often causes difficulty in

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defining a homeland separate from the political entity of the state, but all of the history of European international relations is the history of contestation between states as entities of political power. The end of this process has been concisely described as "the principle that each nation should have its own state" said by AJP Taylor in 1990.

It would be expedient to start with the statement that "Motherland" is a topographic personification of one's own country. But it is too simplistic a description for what is a more abstract concept of land symbolizing the history and achieved self-consciousness of the nation. This is reflected in the fact that there is no wholly adequate translation of the term "Motherland" in other languages. The English term mother country is a partial equivalent, but this does not convey the affection associated with the term "Родина" (Rodina) or "Patria", and strictly speaking mother country refers only to the country of one's birth.

The concept of "Motherland" is perhaps amongst the most complex in the whole family of national-historical ideas. The complexity and richness of that idea is not easy to be described for it is the symbol of the people's national historical heritage. Another reason is that the concept is different in meaning and content from one people to another depending upon the historical tradition of each.

Importance of verbalizing the concept

Miscommunication occurs both in internal and external dialogue. It is not unusual for incompatible views on the motherland to be expressed by Russians against one another and confusion over what Russia's "Motherland" is can be a source of tension in Russian post-Soviet society. Terms such as "родина" (the concept of motherland is discussed below) are sometimes used interchangeably with "Russia" (in the sense of the Russian federation), sometimes are meant to include non-Russian territories of the federation and sometimes are intended to refer only to ethnic Russian territories. An understanding of the concept is crucial for debating issues related to nationalism, or the role of Russia as a state and cultural community. In international dialogue, understanding of the Russian conception of motherland is significant given its relevance to Russia's involvement in the world at large be it in politics, trade or involvement with global issues and conflicts. Failing to understand what Russia is seeking to preserve or achieve for its motherland may lead to actions being misinterpreted and vice versa.

The importance of verbalizing the term "Motherland" is not only academic, but also practical. In Russian society, the notion of motherland is typically regarded as being self-evident and non-problematical term. Commonly used in everyday speech as well as political rhetoric, it is usually deployed in the assurance that speaker and respondent are "talking about the same thing." This assumption usually entails a collective understanding of what "Motherland" means. However, an assumption of common understanding is premature and can lead to miscommunication and misunderstanding. It must be said here that Russia is not unique in this. Terms such as "nation," "state," "society" are used in international discourse to refer to groups of people with certain shared characteristics and yet the exact bounds of what these terms entail is poorly defined and varies between users. This problem is further compounded for "Motherland" given its emotive power. It is not unusual for a speaker simply to presume that it is a person's native country, yet even this is not a universally shared assumption.

Origins and Evolution of the Term "Motherland"

This is supported by the fact that many countries or nations have a term relating to "Motherland" with obvious maternal connotations, although it is known that usage of the term and the specific connotations may differ. An example would be "La Patrie" in French (the fatherland is also termed le pays), or "Heimat" in German. In both cases, the idea of the motherland is quite specific and has a definite edge over the fatherland. In French, the term la terre mere may be used, which in literal translation also means mother earth, indicating a further layer of meaning with regards to a mythical homeland or a land of ancestral and almost

mystical ties. La patrie it was on Lisa del Giocondo's lips that the desire for its recovery turned into guilt and lost illusions.

The term "Motherland" evokes thoughts of one's home as the birthplace, the place where one is bred, and the place to which one is rooted. Throughout history, the concept of a "Fatherland" has been used extensively, albeit with no specific opposite number. The term "Motherland" is known to play an important role in the Russian and Soviet political psyche. Stalin's famous Order no. 227 is known as "Not a step back," which demonstrates the significance of the land in relation to a parent, where having to give ground is akin to a retreat during a battle, and thus to a failure of the parent to protect their child. The prevalence of maternal and familial idioms in reference to the state is widespread and appears to cross cultural and national boundaries. It would appear that there is something specific about the concept of the "Motherland" which sets it apart from the general idea of the state and makes it such a powerful idea.

Historical Origins of the Term

The contemporary term "motherland" or its linguistic counterparts are used to refer to a person's native country, the country of one's ancestors, the country he or she owes a debt of cultural inheritance, or the country in which an individual has citizenship. Usage can vary in its depth of feeling and expression of attachment to one's country. There is a process within psychoanalysis called motherland identification by which the motherland becomes an ideal notion representing a place to return to safety and security. This process is found commonly in times of crisis or disaster when a collective of individuals experience a genuine threat to their survival and has been identified as a defense mechanism. This use of the concept directly stems from the initial Indo-European religious or mythological cultural identification with a mother goddess. In "A History of the Concept of Motherland in Western European Political Language," John Breuilly states that the concept of motherland has a "particular emotional power or has been particularly devalued" in specific historical contexts, and investigates various time periods in the attempt to define its significance. The term itself has been more recently coined the "fatherland," a term which blew through 19th and 20th century nationalism and at some points replaced the concept of motherland. The difference is subtle however, and is best illustrated with the example of German totalitarian Nazi regime, which would refer to the German territory as the fatherland and would call for soldiers to fight and die for the "mother" Germany usually in propaganda referring to the civilians. Said example effectively illustrates the degree of ambiguity that can go into defining the two concepts and will be expanded upon later, however for the scope of Western European usage, fatherland only brings a more patriarchal personification of the state with effectively the same meaning.

Evolution of the Concept over Time

The concept of "Motherland" has been used in various capacities over different periods of time. Throughout its history, it has transformed from the simple meaning of "the land where one's mother lives," to a meaning that encompasses a country's native language, culture, and history. As such, it is difficult to separate the term "Motherland" from nationalism, which has also evolved somewhat over time. Nationalism, as an ideology that prescribes how the homeland should be, was given its most famous form in the concept of "La Patrie" of the French Revolution, and subsequent movements to liberate and unite peoples who shared a common language, culture and history into a nation-state, such as the Italian Risorgimento or the German Unification. United by a feeling of collective identity, people in a given territory would help to achieve the goals of the nation-state, and in return the nation-state would work to promote the people's common weal. At the height of nationalism in many European societies, the state and the nation were seen as being synonymous, thus the concept of the "State" and "Motherland" became blurred. This is especially evident in the fascism of Mussolini, once asked "What is a country?... Country is a history of the Past... Country is art... Country is a tradition". In these words it is clear that Mussolini's conception of the State is the same as the

traditional conception of Motherland, and the Fascist State attempted to merge the concept of the State and Motherland. (Ruth Ideas and Ideologies pp 97) This of course led to a negative connotation with the term "Motherland" and an attempt to differentiate the state and nation in future in efforts prevent totalitarianism, as has occurred in the Soviet state and its merging of the concept of the Motherland and State in the ubiquitous Rodina-Matushka.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the concept of motherland is used in various contexts, often in nationalist and ethnic narratives. For post-colonial countries and fragile state nations, the idea is imbued with efforts to promote common identity and restore pride for dispossessed peoples, by recapturing or retaking the national lands of which they were deprived.

Motherland is a concept whose definition varies by region and individual perspective. No matter how it is defined, it often holds deep emotional and cultural significance. The importance and the complexity of the concept make it an interesting subject for linguistic analysis.

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