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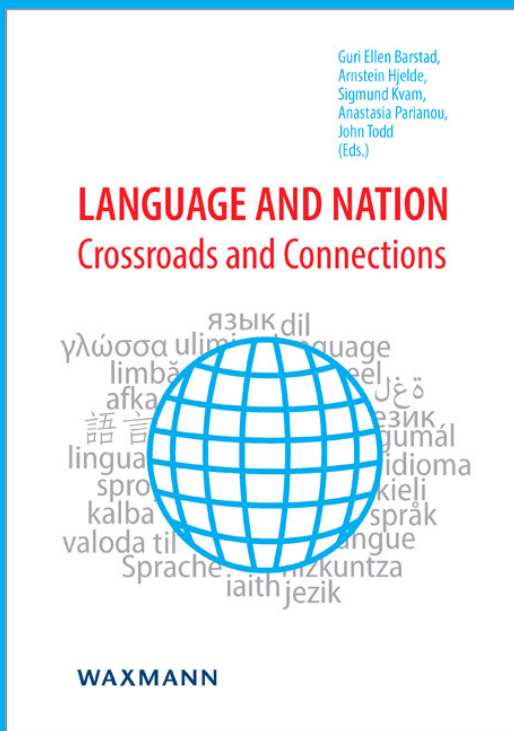
Guri Ellen Barstad,
Arnstein Hjelde, Sigmund Kvam,
Anastasia Parianou, John Todd
(Eds.)

Language and Nation

Crossroads and Connections

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Preface

This interdisciplinary work on language and nation, with its contributions from the fields of linguistics, translatology, history, literature and political science, could not have been produced without a willingness to work across boundaries and the support of a number of institutions. The editors would like to thank in particular the Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture (Institutt for sammenlignende kulturforskning), Oslo, for its generous publication grant. Østfold University College also deserves gratitude for the time devoted to this book by a number of contributors and editors. The cooperation of contributors and their ability to appreciate the benefits of cross-disciplinary effort is also worthy of praise. Of course, no work such as this would be of the same value without peer review: we are very grateful to the peer reviewers for their thoroughness and efficiency in reviewing and helping strengthen the articles presented here.

Vorwort

Der vorliegende Band mit interdisziplinären Beiträgen aus den Bereichen Linguistik, Translationswissenschaft, Geschichte, Literatur und Politikwissenschaft hätte ohne die enge Zusammenarbeit verschiedener europäischer Hochschulen und Universitäten nicht entstehen können. Die Herausgeber möchten sich beim Institut für Vergleichende Kulturforschung (Institutt for sammenlignende kulturforskning) in Oslo für die großzügige finanzielle Unterstützung bedanken sowie bei den Kollegen bzw. Lektoren des Østfold University College für die kostbare Zeit, die sie auf diesen Band verwendet haben. Dank gebührt weiterhin den Beiträgern für die Zusammenarbeit an diesem disziplinenübergreifenden Sammelband. Last, not least möchten sich die Herausgeber bei den Gutachtern bedanken, ohne deren Hilfe dieses Werk in der vorliegenden Form nicht zustande gekommen wäre.

Préface

Cet ouvrage interdisciplinaire sur nation et langue présente les contributions de chercheurs en linguistique, traductologie, histoire, littérature et sciences politiques ; il eût été impossible sans l'ouverture d'esprit, la détermination et la bonne volonté toujours souhaitables pour qu'une collaboration par-delà les frontières soit fructueuse, il eût été difficile sans l'aide de plusieurs institutions. Les éditeurs voudraient remercier tout particulièrement *Institutt for sammenlignende kultur-*

forskning (l'Institut pour la Recherche de Culture humaine comparée) à Oslo, dont la générosité a permis la parution de cet ouvrage. Nous tenons aussi à exprimer notre reconnaissance à Østfold University College pour le temps que plusieurs de ses chercheurs ont consacré à ce projet, tant comme contributeurs que comme éditeurs. Nous nous devons de signaler l'excellente coopération des contributeurs et leur capacité à reconnaître la valeur d'un effort transdisciplinaire. Et, bien sûr, sans le regard critique de leurs pairs, les chercheurs n'auraient pas pu voir leurs contributions reconnues à leur juste valeur : que tous nos confrères qui ont déployé efficacité et minutie dans leur relecture des articles se voient ici remerciés, leur abnégation et leurs encouragements ont grandement rehaussé la qualité de ce travail collectif.

Guri Ellen Barstad, Arnstein Hjelde, Sigmund Kvam,
Anastasia Parianou, John Todd

Making the case for an interdisciplinary approach to language and nation

The last 100 years have witnessed many challenges to how we understand and experience the idea of nations. Consider how decolonisation processes, different periods of mass migration, increasing nationalism and European integration (and potential disintegration) have affected the concept of nation in varied and often conflicting ways. This anthology therefore seeks to make a contribution to our understanding of the concept of nation and its relationship to use of language.

It is obvious that there is a strong link between nation and language. This is clearly seen in recent history, where language has played an important role in structuring Europe into states and creating a national identity among its members. Here we can point at the ideology of German romanticism, where philosophers like Johann Gottfried Herder and Wilhelm von Humboldt stressed the prominent position language had for a nation and as a consequence, the language would be important for defining the borders of a state. This can also be seen in France's model for a civic state, where the majority language was imposed on a multilingual state, or the German national state, where the language of the people defined the borders of the state. Thus, language has also played an important role in the process of nation building.

The present work begins from this ontological perspective that language and nation are closely interrelated, but in many complex ways. There are many important works on this subject (Shapiro & Der Derian 1989, Bartelson 1995, Cronin 1996, Neumann 1996, Wright 2000, Tymoczko & Ireland 2003, Lehnghuth 2013) so we do not seek to provide a total explanation of the interaction between these phenomena. Instead, we wish to shed light, via a range of interdisciplinary approaches, on *how* these phenomena produce and reproduce one another.

In doing so, we need to make clear a number of epistemological assumptions. First, that language conceptualised as *discourse* and *narrative* establishes and reproduces *identity* (national identity included) – and vice versa. Second, that processes of negotiation and hybridisation are important in how discourse and identity shape one another and thus contribute to communities with a common, negotiated narrative, defining them as social groups, including nations.

The disciplines presented in this anthology each apply a particular methodological lens to bring different aspects of these identity reproduction processes

into focus. The articles take as their empirical sources *texts*: literary texts, translations, legislation, constitutions, speeches, manifestos and newspaper articles. As indicated above, texts are not only linguistic entities in a traditional structural sense; they also express meaning in different functional contexts. The multitude of different functional settings makes other disciplines than 'just' linguistics crucial, and we will therefore give a short overview how the various disciplines represented in this anthology are relevant:

Language is the predominant means of human communication, and therefore is a necessary precondition for creating narratives. Narratives can be retold and put into new situational settings, thereby crossing temporal, intentional, cultural or linguistic boundaries. Consequently, they have the potential to create, maintain and even change group identities, including at the national level. This not only points at the general gnoseologic function of language, but also at the teleologic use of language for the purpose of establishing the necessary group identity required for nation (re)building and maintenance (Ehlich 2011). History, with its emphasis on the study of temporally based human actions, is thus a foundation for understanding the development of group identities in general, but also more specifically the formation of nations and national identities.

In order to grasp these temporally rooted phenomena, communication and negotiation between people are needed; thus language. This not only gives linguistics a prominent role as a tool for analysing such narratives, but also the history of a language itself is also important for the creation of national identities. This is made clear in the contribution on the relevance of Scots for nation building in Scotland by *Arne Kruse* and the analysis of how the spelling reforms in Norway influenced the writing habits of Norwegian immigrants in the USA in the article by *Arnstein Hjelde* and *Benthe Kolberg Jansson*. The study of how temporally based narratives, established through negotiated or even partly imposed linguistic means, is therefore crucial to the understanding of the nation as a temporally emerging narrative. This is demonstrated by analysing both the broad perspectives of language and political history across the centuries and the development and use of specific linguistic phenomena. *Hans Petter Hermansen* takes the broad perspective in investigating the tension between the external historical influences and the official national attempts at steering linguistic developments within the Nordic countries. *Sigmund Kvam* and *Jürgen F. Schopp* meanwhile provide analyses of specific linguistic phenomena, respectively on nation building in the GDR and the use of adjectives as ideological markers of national identity, and the use of graphematic alternatives in different historical and national settings.

The fundamental ability of language and thus texts to create meaning in political contexts on a supranational level is shown in the contribution by *Vilemini Sosoni*: her article gives important insight into language and the making of law within the framework of the supranational structures of the EU. The use of translation as a

means of creating legislation across language boundaries is not only self-evident, but it also indicates the power and possibility of translation as such in nation building and what can be called nation reshaping. In her article, *Anastasia Parianou* shows how translation as a fundamental textual activity pursuing communicative goals across linguistic and cultural barriers contributes to creating and reshaping national and cultural identities in a world of migration in the 21st century.

Discourse within nation-states also gives us important insights into how language is used to frame, construct and contest a sense of national identity. *Franck Orban* describes how the discourse of the Front National in France has aimed to capture the 'real' French nation by promoting the party as the political successors of Charles de Gaulle, whilst *John Todd* analyses how Eurosceptics in the United Kingdom have sought to frame the European Union as an existential threat to the British way of life.

This changing nature of national identity as shown in the three previously mentioned articles, can be richly illustrated in fictional narrative. This is clearly demonstrated in four articles from different geographical areas, all of which are focused on identity issues. *Guri Ellen Barstad* analyses how the conflict between language and cultural identity is addressed in two novels from Québec. *André Avias* turns to three francophone writers from different parts of the French speaking world and argues for the existence of a plural francophone cultural identity. *Wladimir Chávez Vaca* aims to demonstrate the importance of how historical memory is produced and exploited in the contemporary political discourse of Ecuador in order to consolidate a particular Ecuadorian national identity. Finally, *Elin Nesje Vestli* discusses transnational and multilingual identity discourses through an analysis of two works written in German by authors with a different first language.

Conclusion

National identity is complex and needs a range of theoretical insights to explore the core of the concept in the requisite depth. Language is, as we have argued, key in defining national identity – whether it is through the process of language and nation building, or the use of language to define in and out groups at a national level. Language and national identity are of course important in the context of migration and globalization as well. This is particularly the case in today's circumstances of mass movement of people (both voluntary and enforced) and of an increasingly interconnected world. Language is key for how people interconnect and interact across cultural, ethnic and national boundaries. In its framing of national identity, we show how language draws upon existing political, cultural and historical narratives. We only have to look at debates across Europe on the refugee crisis, immigration and integration to see the political importance of these narratives.

The chapters presented in this book seek to contribute to our understanding of the crossroads and connections between disciplines when addressing the concepts of how language and nation are intertwined. Of course, this work is neither the first nor the last word on this subject, but we hope it provides new and useful insights and a foundation for further research.

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