

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology: Division of Humanities/Center for Language Education

HUMA 1000: Cultures and Values: **Cover sheet for final essay**

Full name	
Student ID	
Writing workshop section number	
Writing workshop instructor	
Title of essay (please copy and paste from the document on Canvas)	The occurrence of multiple languages within a state stands in the way of national bonding and unity. In consequence, a common national language should be forged to enhance the development of a desired national identity. Do you agree with this claim? Why or why not?

Declaration: The attached essay represents my own work. I have read and understood the University's policies on academic honesty and I confirm that the attached work conforms to these policies.

Please type your name:

Response to feedback: note here the comments from your instructor you have responded to (you can copy these from your feedback sheet).

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The language we speak determines how we perceive and think about the world. Our thinking controls the way we speak and the words we speak reflects our point of view towards the world. Therefore, if we have similar thinking, we may have used identical wordings to represent ourselves. People have sense of unity and have bonding in between is because they think they have mutual notion. As the main reason behind a state having national bonding and unity is not necessarily having common language. In my opinion, the main reason should be people have common ideas in between themselves. In the following paragraphs, the claim will be argued in three points. Relationship between sense of belonging, national bonding and unity will be the first contention. And the second argument is the implication of 'Chicken speaks with duck'. The last point will be the proof of common language not necessarily leading to higher national bonding and unity.

Firstly, sense of belonging not only depends on whether citizens have common language but also depends on other aspects such as acceptance from the society, relationships with others, and what they encounter in their life. Take the poor as an example, as they have financial challenged to cope with their daily matters and some may even have to do repulsive works to maintain their life, these shows they are just like being isolated by the society. Although ironically the community is always there to help them, the poor do not have sense of belonging towards the state as the assistance cut no ice with the poor. Not to mention about the low national bonding and unity between citizens even when they share a common language. Not gaining acceptance from the society, leading them to have a lower sense of belonging. Even in the condition of having common language to communicate between each other, but their sense of belonging will not be high when compared to the rich. As for the rich, they have the ability to make contribution or even can make profound impact to the society so it is a must for them to have a higher acceptance. Therefore, they may not have sense of belonging towards the state, still less to have national bonding and unity between citizens even they are having common language.

'Chicken speaks with ducks', is a famous story in Chinese community. Literally, it simply means a chicken is talking with a duck. However, figuratively, it means two parties are

having conversation that the other party cannot understand one's expression. Does having same mother tongue equal to having the ability to apprehend each other and leads to a higher bonding between two parties? No, instead. Contrarily, they probably have a higher bonding in between when they do not share same language. For instance, there is no common language between human beings and animals. But then, a human-animal- bond exists ("Human-Animal Bond," n.d.) in the world. Sometimes pet-to-human relationships are better than human-to-human relationships. In an investigation done by the American Animal Hospital Association ("Pets & Humans," n.d.), over portion of respondents said that if they were stranded on a desert, they would prefer their pets to be their partner and companion rather than a human friend. From the above, the decision made by the respondents reflects the fact that whether they can convey their message or not is not imperative but finding the one who can comprehend your sentiments is the main concern. The same can be applied to human beings. People might not have the same communication language, but they can still understand each other if they have the intention to figure out.

Some may argue that common language can ease the way of communication. By using the same dialect, one can reduce the chance of having misunderstanding towards the others, thus minimize the occurrences of conflicts. However, it is not a must. Take Europe as an example, most of the Europeans know how to speak English. However, as they learnt this language in their local area, they may not have the same mindset in speaking that language due to culture shock. According to the book "Culture Bound" authored by Joyce Merrill Valdes (Valdes, 1986), culture shock refers to phenomena ranging from mild irritability to deep psychological panic and crisis. And it is a common experience for a person learning a second language in a second culture. As their process of learning English may be interrupted and affected by other cultures nearby, they may have a contaminated culture and mindset when they use their common language to express themselves. Therefore, even when they share a common language in, it can cause misunderstanding and conflicts, which means it is not necessarily leading to a higher national bonding and unity.

To conclude, there is no need to forge a common language deliberately to build up or maintain the national bonding and unity, as bonding does not mainly depend on the existence of a common language. There are various factors affecting people's sense of belonging and different ways to influence their bonding between each other. Having same mother tongue does not equal to having the ability to apprehend each other and leading to a higher bonding between two parties. Therefore, it does not really matter whether there are multiple languages within a state, it. The main point is that people need to have mutual notion so they can understand each other easily. When the mature moment comes, we need to think about how to maintain a non-contaminated common language. There is still a long way to go before thinking about forging a common language or not. Therefore, I disagree with the claim to a large extent.

Reference

Human-Animal Bond. (n.d.). In AVMA. Retrieved November 11, 2017, from <https://www.avma.org/kb/resources/reference/human-animal-bond/pages/human-animal-bond-avma.aspx>

Pets & Humans. (n.d.). In pet education. Retrieved November 11, 2017, from <http://www.peteducation.com/category.cfm?c=0+1278>

Valdes, J. M. (1986). Culture bound: bridging the cultural gap in language teaching. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]; New York