

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

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

<b>Full name</b>	
<b>Student ID</b>	
<b>Writing workshop section number</b>	
<b>Writing workshop instructor</b>	
<b>Essay Question (copy and paste from the document on the LMES site)</b>	<b>To establish a strong nation, should all people in the nation speak the same language?</b>

**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).**

Intro: Combine the sections into a fully developed paragraph.

BP1: Rethink your topic sentence, and this paragraph lacks development and effective use of evidence.

BP2: Same as BP1. Your evidence is very limited in scope.

BP3: Japan is just one country.

BP4: Your counterargument is unclear and your rebuttal lacks credible references.

BP5: Maybe combine with BP4?

Conc: Lacks effective development: it's 2 sentences.

Language as the major vehicle of information, knowledge and culture, is one of the most essential element within the interactions of a community, therefore holds a high stake in determining the strength of a community and even as far as a nation. To establish a strong nation, it is ideal that all of its population shares one common language. This does not rule out the preservation of dialects, however, as long as there exist one language that is effective across all its regions. A unity in language can augment a nation's strength both on the economic aspect (the "hard power") and the cultural aspect (the "soft aspect") by aiding the flow of information whilst reducing the resources need for translations needed both within and across its national border, as well as reinforcing the connection and sense of belonging of its people.

The economic strength of a country shows positive correlation with its unity of language. The unification of national language not only reduces the translation cost for international trading, but also boosts business activities and productivity within the nation itself. Top 6 countries on both the Gross National Income ranking and the Gross Domestic Product ranking (namely the USA, China, Japan, Germany, France and the UK) [1] all possess one universal language of their own. The translation cost multiplies if a corporation decides to enter the market of a country without a universal language, which would require translations to several different languages in order to reach the different regions. Such disadvantage reduces the intention of foreign investments and hinders the economic growth of the country. As in within the country, multiple economic related aspects can receive benefits from a common language. An unobstructed information flow facilitates local business activity, consumers are more confident with products written in languages that they understand which increases the revenue of local business as a survey shows [2], citizens could seek employments or education more easily across the entire country without the blockage of not understanding the local language. A common national language provides great favor to the trading and economic activities within the country, as well as towards the international market compared to a multilingual nation.

A unity in language also strengthens a country in terms of the cultural influence and the solidarity of its people. The ease of translation again plays an important role on help spreading the cultural content to the rest of the world since only one language is enough to communicate with the entire nation and comprehend all its cultural knowledge. As a significant cultural exporter, Japan is an excellent example of how linguistic unity correlates to great cultural influence, while being the 1<sup>st</sup> place in tourism competitiveness in Asia and holding 60% of global animation production [3]. As nearly all the cultural elements about Japan that is exported overseas are carried in the standardized Japanese, the translation and learning of the language for foreigners is very much simplified compared to multilingual countries which would require multiple languages to understand the culture across different parts of the country. A lack of universal language has also shown to weaken the bond within the population of multilingual countries like Switzerland and India. Since they do not speak the same language and inherit a common cultural background, they

are less willing to identify themselves as “compatriots” with their linguistically dissimilar compatriots. For instance, the term “Röstigraben” as coined by the Swiss themselves, refers to the cultural boundary between German-speaking and French-speaking parts of Switzerland. People in the 2 regions have disparity from life style to political views, which the French-speaking part being more carefree and politically favoring towards active foreign policy whilst the German-speaking part being more formal and politically conservative. The hinderance in the bond between the 2 regions is shown in a report that less than half of the population is willing to cross the “boundary” once per year and less than 15% had never crossed it at all, quoting one interviewee “It’s like temporary immigrating to a different country where you can’t understand a word they say” [4]. India, boasting over 20 dialects with no official language, has a similar situation where, according to an Indian reporter, both knowledge and population are trapped in a small local region since it is hard to communicate with the outside [5].

While some might find Switzerland the 4-official-lanugage country holding the 2<sup>nd</sup> place in gross domestic product per capita and argues that it is instead a good example of a multilingual strong nation. However, this only considers the economic strength of Switzerland. While the economy of the country progress smoothly, report shows that the it is more like 2 separate countries (the French-speaking and the German-speaking) working under the name of one. Therefore when other aspects of this country is inspected, it could be seen not so much united and strong. Other than the “Röstigraben” boundary that segregates the 2 region, more than 60% of the population in the French-speaking zone find themselves under-represented on a global level, as the portrayals of the Swiss image outside the country are predominantly in Swiss German [4]. Other evidence includes the 48.0% turnout rate in the parliamentary election which is among the lowest ones in the world [6]. Switzerland is, as a matter of fact, a good example of how multilingualism obstructs the connection among compatriots and even has a negative effect on the political progress of the country.

A common national language means less resource spent on translations and coping with language related issues and more ease for business activities and cultural propagation. It also provides a corner stone for the bonding of its people and boost their sense of belong to the country. These add to the economic, cultural and political strength of the nation. Linguistic unity is therefore of tremendous advantage to the development and advancement of a country and crucial to what is required to be a strong nation.

## Reference

### 1. Chart of GDP per capita at current US\$ prices

Retrieved from

[http://www.google.com/publicdata/explore?ds=d5bncppjof8f9\\_&hl=en&dl=en#!ctype=l&strail=false&bcs=d&nselem=h&met\\_y=ny\\_gdp\\_pcap\\_cd&scale\\_y=lin&ind\\_y=false&rdim=region&ifdim=region&tdim=true&tstart=-312512400000&tend=1265410800000&hl=en\\_US&dl=en&ind=false](http://www.google.com/publicdata/explore?ds=d5bncppjof8f9_&hl=en&dl=en#!ctype=l&strail=false&bcs=d&nselem=h&met_y=ny_gdp_pcap_cd&scale_y=lin&ind_y=false&rdim=region&ifdim=region&tdim=true&tstart=-312512400000&tend=1265410800000&hl=en_US&dl=en&ind=false)

### 2. Why Switzerland is Mono- not Multi-national - Historical, institutional, attitudinal and behavioural aspects

Retrieved from

<https://web.archive.org/web/20121224231328/http://www.dardanelli.net/Aarau10.pdf>

### 3. Alexander, Vovin,. "Proto-Japanese beyond the accent system"