

Does India exist? - An analysis from the perspective of the linguistic minorities¹

Graziela Ares²

Abstract: This article analyzes three aspects of India's language conflicts that affect linguistic minorities: i) the rights of vernacular languages to the detriment of other mother tongues, ii) illiteracy, and iii) the choice of Hindi as the language of unification. The objective is, firstly, to categorize the types of language violence observed in modern India, followed by an analysis of the minor literature in English as a form of resistance, re-subjectification of the language, and inter-identity based on the selected work of the poet Adil Jussawalla (1976) and the novelist Salman Rushdie (1991). The analysis of how language conflicts contribute to regulation, appropriation, and violence, distancing linguistic groups, despite resistance from such groups, is framed by Deleuze & Guattari (2003), Bhabha (2004), Agamben (2008), Santos (2007, 2009), and Lecercle (1990).

Keywords: linguistic minorities, rights, immigrant, minor literature, inter-identity

Introduction

The title "Does India exist?" is rhetorical, and like Salman Rushdie when he asked the same question in "Imaginary Homelands" (1991: 27), I do not intend to answer it. However, this linguistic resource sheds light on diversity, national identity, and democracy from the language perspective in India.

The close relationship between language and power from colonialism and their social impact persisted after independence was declared. In India, the role of English and other official languages is still challenging for linguistic minorities and illiterates. The Constitution grants more political rights to 22 shortlisted languages out of the 19,569 mother tongues registered in 2011. Other language-related issues are illiteracy

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² Ph.D. student at the Discourses: History, Culture, and Society program at the Centre of Social Studies of the University of Coimbra, Portugal. Master of Arts in International Marketing and Sales at the University of Applied Sciences of Vorarlberg, Austria. Master of Arts in Science and Technology Policy and bachelor's degree in Economics at State University of Campinas/UNICAMP, Brazil. Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5512-580X>.

and the promotion of Hindi as the unification language. The 2011 Census and the Constitution of India are the primary sources of information used to present India's current situation.

My research aims to map and categorize the violence related to the different languages in India and their impact on the rights and freedoms of linguistic minorities. The focus is on the violation of language (Lecercle, 1990) to resist and express subjectivisms, and the language as a tool for oppression, regulation, and appropriation (Agamben, 2008; Santos, 2007, 2009). Thus, language may play the role of victim, violator, or as a means of violence in India.

The secondary question is if English can be the language of the Indian minor literature (Deleuze & Guattari, 2003). Verses from Adil Jussawalla (Mehrotra, 1992) and four essays by Salman Rushdie (Rushdie, 1991) provide the basis of the investigation to answer it. The criteria employed to select the authors for the minor literature analysis comprises accessibility to their work and their relevance among Indian writers in English.

Finally, my research pursues the elements of resistance, re-subjectification of the language (Agamben, 2009), and confirmations to the inter-identity of the immigrant (Bhabha, 2004) in the work of the Jussawalla and Rushdie that are themselves subjects of the Indian diaspora. The study expects to prove the contribution of India's language situation to the regulation, appropriation, and violence, enhancing the distance between linguistic groups, despite the resistance from many, including the selected Indian writers.

The battle of languages

The marks left by colonialism are still present in a few aspects of modern India, such as the English language. Notwithstanding, the issues related to the traditional languages have gained relevance since the Independence Act. The battle of languages results from language-related issues that undermine the rights of minorities, such as i) the institutional situation, ii) illiteracy and regional differences, and iii) efforts to make Hindi the national language in India.

The Republic of India enacted its first Constitution as a secular parliamentary democracy on January 26, 1950 (Government of India, 2020). Since then, language has been the subject of disputes in India and has motivated the establishment of Part XVII of the Constitution of India (Government of India, 2007) that ruled the official languages³ and the so-called Eighth Schedule⁴. Table 1 lists the vernacular languages by date of register in the Eighth Schedule:

Eighth Schedule - 22 languages by year of register			
1950	1967	1992	2004
1 Assamese	15 Sindhi	16 Konkani	19 Bodo
2 Bengali		17 Manipuri	20 Dogri
3 Gujarati		18 Nepali	21 Maithili
4 Hindi			22 Santhali
5 Kannada			
6 Kashmiri			
7 Malayalam			
8 Marathi			
9 Oriya			
10 Punjabi			
11 Sanskrit			
12 Tamil			
13 Telugu			
14 Urdu			

Table 1 - List of Scheduled (or Vernacular) Languages

Source: elaborated by the author. Data from the Ministry of Home Affairs (2017: 1) was retrieved on November 28, 2020.

In 1975, the Ministry of International Affairs created the Official Language Department⁵ to deal with these specific provisions⁶. The department aimed to promote the progressive use of Hindi for official affairs to represent Indian culture in all its forms (Department of Official Language, 2020). Article 344 of the Constitution (Department of Official Language, 2020) attributed the responsibility of dealing with official languages to a committee of representatives of the scheduled languages. The

³ The Constitution (Gusain, 2012: 43) does not mention *national language*. Despite the conceptual difference, this paper follows the country's norm and uses *official language(s)* when referring to any *institutional language*. Besides being the official language for many purposes, the Government promotes Hindi as the *unifying language*.

⁴ When my research ended, thirty-eight other languages were awaiting the Government's decision regarding their inclusion in the list (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2017: 2).

⁵ According to the 2011 Census, a mother tongue is: "3.1. *the language spoken in childhood by the person's mother to the person. If the mother died in infancy, the language mainly spoken in the person's home in childhood will be the mother tongue. In the case of infants and deaf mutes, the language usually spoken by the mother should be recorded. In case of doubt, the language mainly spoken in the household may be recorded*" - Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner (Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, 2020: 3).

⁶ Such as the articles 344, on the "commission and committee of parliament on official languages parliament", and 351, which is the "directive for development of the Hindi language".

committee advises the President on policies to promote Hindi as the unifying language⁷ and restrict the use of English. The responsibilities of the committee involve the analysis of the Justice system's official languages, assimilation of influences of the scheduled languages into Hindi, and preservation of the essence of Hindustani⁸ (Department of Official Language, 2020).

The census captures the languages' dynamics and demographic changes over time to validate the Eighth Schedule (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2017: 3). Being part of the list is crucial because the representatives of selected languages may participate in related official decisions. Therefore, it represents power and identity in the country - hence the concern to obtain a faithful and independent representation of Indian society in the census.

The 2011 census registered mother tongue as declared by the individual, without distinguishing language and dialect or correcting anything. The census taker must assure that the citizens have voluntarily provided their legitimate mother tongue (Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, 2020: 3) without any influence from third parties.

The raw data registered 19,569 self-declared mother tongues in 2011 (Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, 2020: 4). The first analysis recognized 1,369 rationalized mother tongues, and the others 1,474 were not identified. The final review grouped the languages into i) 22 scheduled languages, ii) 98 languages spoken by at least 10,000 inhabitants in India; iv) total other languages that include those used by smaller groups (less than 10,000 people), and v) other mother tongues that grouped the 1,474 not recognized answers (Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, 2020: 4–5).

⁷ The political debate about officializing Hindi, Urdu, or Hindustani as the *lingua franca* for India started in 1925 (Gusain, 2012: 44–45).

⁸ Hindustani is the representation of Hindi and Urdu. The first uses Devanagari writing, and the second, the Arabian alphabet and diacritics signs. Hindustani and many other mother tongues in the Northern belong to the Indo-European languages, while the non-Indo-European languages prevail in Southern India (Störig, 1990: 46–47).

		Share of population	Number of languages	Number of mother-tongues	Number of identified mother-tongues	Number of non-identified mother-tongues
i)	Eighth Schedule	97%	22	123	1 369	18 095
ii)	Spoken by >10,000		98	147		
iv)	Spoken by <10,000		1	1		
v)	Others (non-identified)	3%	N/A	N/A	1	1 474
Total		100%	121	271	1 370	19 569

Table 2 – Results of the 2011 census in India: languages

Source: elaborated by the author. Data from Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner of India (2020: 4–5) retrieved on November 28, 2020.

Table 2 shows scheduled languages representing 97% of the population (Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, 2020: 04). The 3% of non-scheduled languages are spread around the country, but the non-scheduled languages prevail in states such as Nagaland (88% of its population), Mizoram (88%), Meghalaya (85%), and Arunachal Pradesh (72%) (Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, 2011f). Despite being less populated states, their opinions should count politically in a democracy.

In short, the Constitution institutionalized language as the pass to certain political rights and participation in India. The restriction of privileges to scheduled languages prevents the linguistic minorities from taking part in the committee's decisions, regardless of the impacts on their democratic rights. It is important to reiterate that these minorities may speak 98 non-scheduled languages and possibly any of the other 1,474 mother tongues declared during the census but considered non-identified during the data processing.

Those who do not speak the official languages may not know their rights and duties since publications of laws, court decisions, and institutional matters may not be communicated in all minority languages (Department of Official Language, 2020). Awareness and understanding of illiterates (37% of the population)⁹, especially in rural areas (29%), may be limited. The proportion of illiterate women in rural areas (17%) is higher than men (12%) (Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, 2011a, 2011c), highlighting an intersectional impact.

⁹ The country's effective literacy rate is 73%, 67.8% in rural areas, and 84.1% in urban areas. The female effective literacy rate is 64.6% (57.9% in rural and 79.1% in urban areas) and male is 80.9% (77.2% in rural and 88.8% in urban areas) (CensusInfo, 2011).

The precarious infrastructure worsens the situation by isolating the communities from information, especially where there is no access to television or internet. The impact is challenging to measure, but at least 32.75% of households have no access to electricity (Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, 2011e) and word of mouth and radios are still the sources of information for many people. In addition, language violence is institutional and structural and imposes barriers to timely, voluntary, public, and reliable communication.

Northern areas concentrate 67% of the population who speak scheduled mother tongues and 2% of other languages while, in the Southern, the shares make up 30% and 1% for scheduled and other languages of the total population (Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, 2011f). The distribution of languages corresponds to the population concentration within the territory. One of the disputes between the Northern and Southern areas is the Hindi language.

State and union territories	Region* N - North S - South	Population with Hindi mother-tongue				Rural				Urban			
		Total	M	F		Total	M	F		Total	M	F	
UTTAR PRADESH	N	187 979 055	16%	8%	7%	149 936 334	12%	6%	6%	38 042 721	3%	2%	1%
BIHAR	N	80 698 466	7%	3%	3%	71 381 862	6%	3%	3%	9 316 604	1%	0%	0%
MADHYA PRADESH	N	64 324 963	5%	3%	3%	46 244 040	4%	2%	2%	18 080 923	1%	1%	1%
RAJASTHAN	N	61 274 274	5%	3%	2%	45 740 708	4%	2%	2%	15 533 566	1%	1%	1%
HARYANA	N	22 322 157	2%	1%	1%	14 446 655	1%	1%	1%	7 875 502	1%	0%	0%
CHHATTISGARH	N	21 361 927	2%	1%	1%	16 374 316	1%	1%	1%	4 987 611	0%	0%	0%
JHARKHAND	N	20 436 026	2%	1%	1%	15 065 889	1%	1%	1%	5 370 137	0%	0%	0%
MAHARASHTRA	N	14 481 513	1%	1%	1%	4 064 495	0%	0%	0%	10 417 018	1%	0%	0%
NCT OF DELHI	N	14 255 526	1%	1%	1%	401 801	0%	0%	0%	13 853 725	1%	1%	1%
UTTARAKHAND	N	8 992 114	1%	0%	0%	6 386 687	1%	0%	0%	2 605 427	0%	0%	0%
WEST BENGAL	N	6 356 059	1%	0%	0%	2 027 869	0%	0%	0%	4 328 190	0%	0%	0%
HIMACHAL PRADESH	N	5 895 529	0%	0%	0%	5 326 104	0%	0%	0%	569 425	0%	0%	0%
GUJARAT	N	4 264 868	0%	0%	0%	509 321	0%	0%	0%	3 755 547	0%	0%	0%
ANDHRA PRADESH	S	3 120 413	0%	0%	0%	2 255 673	0%	0%	0%	864 740	0%	0%	0%
JAMMU & KASHMIR	N	2 612 631	0%	0%	0%	2 260 826	0%	0%	0%	351 805	0%	0%	0%
PUNJAB	N	2 594 831	0%	0%	0%	759 095	0%	0%	0%	1 835 736	0%	0%	0%
ASSAM	N	2 101 435	0%	0%	0%	1 554 646	0%	0%	0%	546 789	0%	0%	0%
KARNATAKA	S	2 013 364	0%	0%	0%	1 088 225	0%	0%	0%	925 139	0%	0%	0%
ODISHA	N	1 239 037	0%	0%	0%	692 414	0%	0%	0%	546 623	0%	0%	0%
CHANDIGARH	N	776 775	0%	0%	0%	20 380	0%	0%	0%	756 395	0%	0%	0%
TAMIL NADU	S	393 380	0%	0%	0%	48 662	0%	0%	0%	344 718	0%	0%	0%
GOA	S	150 017	0%	0%	0%	26 926	0%	0%	0%	123 091	0%	0%	0%
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	N	98 187	0%	0%	0%	50 692	0%	0%	0%	47 495	0%	0%	0%
DADRA & NAGAR HAVELI	N	89 905	0%	0%	0%	19 981	0%	0%	0%	69 924	0%	0%	0%
DAMAN & DIU	N	88 312	0%	0%	0%	5 711	0%	0%	0%	82 601	0%	0%	0%
TRIPURA	N	77 701	0%	0%	0%	56 503	0%	0%	0%	21 198	0%	0%	0%
ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS	S	73 424	0%	0%	0%	42 080	0%	0%	0%	31 344	0%	0%	0%
NAGALAND	N	62 942	0%	0%	0%	17 280	0%	0%	0%	45 662	0%	0%	0%
MEGHALAYA	N	62 905	0%	0%	0%	18 465	0%	0%	0%	44 440	0%	0%	0%
KERALA	S	51 928	0%	0%	0%	12 428	0%	0%	0%	39 500	0%	0%	0%
SIKKIM	N	48 586	0%	0%	0%	17 938	0%	0%	0%	30 648	0%	0%	0%
MANIPUR	N	31 703	0%	0%	0%	15 201	0%	0%	0%	16 502	0%	0%	0%
MIZORAM	N	10 677	0%	0%	0%	2 069	0%	0%	0%	8 608	0%	0%	0%
PUDUCHERRY	S	6 403	0%	0%	0%	908	0%	0%	0%	5 495	0%	0%	0%
LAKSHADWEEP	S	160	0%	0%	0%	17	0%	0%	0%	143	0%	0%	0%
Total Hindi mother-tongue		528 347 193	44%	23%	21%	386 872 201	32%	17%	15%	141 474 992	12%	6%	5%
Distribution by region	N	522 538 104	43%	N		383 397 282	32%	N		139 140 822	11%		
	S	5 809 089	0%	S		3 474 919	0%	S		2 334 170	0%		
Total population (2011)		1 210 854 977	100%			833 748 852	69%			377 106 125	31%		

Shares of Hindi speakers in North Areas of India 99%

Table 3 - Hindi as the mother tongue, by state (2011 Census)

Source: elaborated by the author. Data from the Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner (2011d) was retrieved on November 28, 2020.

Note 1: the author made the segregation between North and South for this research. The division between states in the North and South is shown in Figure 1. Note 2: M – male; F – female.

Table 3 shows that Hindi is the declared mother tongue of 44% of the population, of which 99% live in the North of the country (Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, 2011d). About 36% live in Uttar Pradesh, 15% in Bihar, 12% in Rajasthan, and 12% in Madhya Pradesh¹⁰. This northern area is called the Hindi Belt. One of the Government's objectives is to turn Hindi into the language of unification, but this has yet to be unanimously accepted, with resistance from those who see it as another type of language-related violence.

Contemporary Hindi has strong Urdu, Sanskrit, and other languages influences, distancing itself from other Indo-European languages (Störig, 1990: 47). The Hindi popularized in India, including on TV and movies¹¹, is colloquial (Gusain, 2012: 48). There are many reasons for this, though it is not within the scope of my work to discuss them. However, the fact that many people learn Hindi without formal education, the influences of other native languages and local cultures, its use as a subsidiary language by many, and the efforts of the Government to make it acceptable to more people might have contributed to the transformation of that language over time (Ledgard, 2013a). A similar phenomenon has also taken place with English in India.

It shall be the duty of the Union to promote the spread of the Hindi language, to develop it so that it may serve as a medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India and to secure its enrichment by assimilating without interfering with its genius, the forms, style and expressions used in Hindustani and in the other languages of India specified in the Eighth Schedule, and by drawing, wherever necessary or desirable, for its vocabulary, primarily on Sanskrit and secondarily on other languages. (Department of Official Language, 2020, pt. XVII chapter IV, article 351)

Article 351 illustrates how the Indian Constitution selected Hindi as the potential representative of Indian culture, which is one more element to endanger the rights of minorities. In addition, political privileges restricted to selected mother tongues

¹⁰ The scheduled languages represent more than 90% of these states' population (Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, 2011f).

¹¹ Bollywood movies are mainly in Hindi and have helped the population learn the language (Gusain, 2012: 43).

(scheduled languages), multilingualism, and English heritage are worth mentioning here.

The Constitution says that the governments should provide primary schooling for children of linguistic minorities (Department of Official Language, 2020), but it says nothing about higher levels of education. Thus, it can be deduced that the mother tongue is not available to all students at all levels of schooling. The schools may teach regional languages, but the Government promotes Hindi medium public schools (Ledgard, 2013a). Affordable for the elite only, private schools are primarily bilingual or English medium (Ledgard, 2013a, 2013b).

Despite the multilingualism presented in Table 4, only 26% of Indians speak a second language (Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, 2011a, 2011c). Table 5 shows that 23% of Indians are bilingual and literate, and 7% are trilingual and literate. While 37% of the population is illiterate, only 3% are bilingual and illiterate, and less than 1% are trilingual and illiterate. The scheduled languages are the first subsidiary language for 19% and the second subsidiary language for 3% of the population.

	Native speakers				1st subsidiary language (bilinguals)				2nd subsidiary language (trilinguals)			
	Total		M	F	Total		M	F	Total		M	F
ASSAMESE	15 311 351	1%	7 810 583	7 500 768	7 583 346	1%	4 072 110	3 511 236	734 379	0%	424 001	310 378
BENGALI	97 237 669	8%	49 798 752	47 438 917	9 095 810	1%	4 761 384	4 334 426	1 138 764	0%	690 293	448 471
BODO	1 482 929	0%	745 017	737 912	57 583	0%	29 722	27 861	20 132	0%	12 161	7 971
DGRI	2 596 767	0%	1 369 581	1 227 186	126 334	0%	64 970	61 364	40 883	0%	24 065	16 818
GUJARATI	55 492 554	5%	28 562 042	26 930 512	4 017 825	0%	2 190 593	1 827 232	778 930	0%	449 276	329 654
HINDI	528 347 193	44%	276 610 187	251 737 006	138 909 608	11%	79 211 044	59 698 564	24 307 234	2%	14 169 693	10 137 541
KANNADA	43 706 512	4%	22 111 292	21 595 220	13 609 709	1%	7 030 694	6 579 015	1 434 578	0%	795 554	639 024
KASHMIRI	6 797 587	1%	3 505 539	3 292 048	127 039	0%	67 610	59 429	70 197	0%	41 153	29 044
KONKANI	2 256 502	0%	1 104 587	1 151 915	238 345	0%	121 016	117 329	87 134	0%	47 676	39 458
MAITHILI	13 583 464	1%	7 112 056	6 471 408	651 987	0%	349 747	302 240	48 843	0%	29 520	19 323
MALAYALAM	34 838 819	3%	16 712 384	18 126 435	581 591	0%	311 891	269 700	218 932	0%	129 651	89 281
MANIPURI	1 761 079	0%	875 943	885 136	384 357	0%	197 191	187 166	101 690	0%	58 049	43 641
MARATHI	83 026 680	7%	42 565 803	40 460 877	13 001 079	1%	6 993 104	6 007 975	3 031 027	0%	1 687 699	1 343 328
NEPALI	2 926 168	0%	1 524 029	1 402 139	366 648	0%	197 488	169 160	143 798	0%	90 806	52 992
ODIA	37 521 324	3%	19 103 304	18 418 020	4 670 796	0%	2 414 897	2 255 899	397 213	0%	228 815	168 398
PUNJABI	33 124 726	3%	17 340 931	15 783 795	2 237 126	0%	1 216 571	1 020 555	719 901	0%	410 175	309 726
SANSKRIT	24 821	0%	13 636	11 185	1 134 362	0%	713 772	420 590	1 963 640	0%	1 266 098	697 542
SANTALI	7 368 192	1%	3 678 969	3 689 223	278 448	0%	140 847	137 601	76 663	0%	47 206	29 457
SINDHI	2 772 264	0%	1 412 101	1 360 163	281 177	0%	144 918	136 259	48 591	0%	27 657	20 934
TAMIL	69 026 881	6%	34 600 690	34 426 191	6 668 000	1%	3 432 803	3 235 197	900 985	0%	546 209	354 776
TELUGU	81 127 740	7%	40 658 539	40 469 201	12 167 609	1%	6 270 136	5 897 473	1 206 254	0%	700 004	506 250
URDU	50 772 631	4%	26 180 481	24 592 150	11 348 978	1%	6 297 814	5 051 164	1 117 836	0%	668 039	449 797
Scheduled languages	1 171 103 853	97%	603 396 446	567 707 407	227 537 757	19%	126 230 322	101 307 435	38 587 604	3%	22 543 800	16 043 804
ENGLISH	259 678	0%	129 115	130 563	82 717 239	7%	48 049 279	34 667 960	45 562 173	4%	26 944 173	18 618 000
OTHER NON-SCHEDULED LANGUAGES	39 491 446	3%	19 744 697	19 746 749	4 733 774	0%	2 416 782	2 316 992	1 859 803	0%	1 048 859	810 944
Total population	1 210 854 977	100%	623 270 258	587 584 719	314 988 770	26%	176 696 383	138 292 387	86 009 580	7%	50 536 832	35 472 748

Table 4 – Bilingualism and trilingualism (2011 Census)

Source: elaborated by the author. Data from the Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner (2011b) was retrieved on November 28, 2020.

Despite British colonization (1757-1947) and private schools, English is the mother tongue of only 0.02% of the population, the first subsidiary language of 7%, and the second subsidiary language of 4% (Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, 2011a, 2011c). Nevertheless, English is India's primary official language for Justice, official documents, and government forums (Department of Official Language, 2020).

Educational level		Total population				Number of speakers of second language				Number of speakers of third language			
		Persons		M	F	Persons		M	F	Persons		M	F
Illiterate	Rural	350.955.017	29%	12%	17%	30.204.008	2%	1%	1%	2.234.076	0%	0%	0%
	Urban	96.261.148	8%	3%	4%	12.062.260	1%	0%	1%	1.645.782	0%	0%	0%
	Total	447.216.165	37%	16%	21%	42.266.268	3%	1%	2%	3.879.858	0%	0%	0%
Literate	Rural	482.793.835	40%	23%	17%	132.437.477	11%	7%	4%	33.149.913	3%	2%	1%
	Urban	280.844.977	23%	13%	11%	140.285.025	12%	6%	5%	48.979.809	4%	2%	2%
	Total	763.638.812	63%	36%	27%	272.722.502	23%	13%	9%	82.129.722	7%	4%	3%
Total	Rural	833.748.852	69%	35%	34%	162.641.485	13%	8%	6%	35.383.989	3%	2%	1%
	Urban	377.106.125	31%	16%	15%	152.347.285	13%	7%	6%	50.625.591	4%	2%	2%
	Total	1.210.854.977	100%	51%	49%	314.988.770	26%	15%	11%	86.009.580	7%	4%	3%

Table 5 - Bilingualism and trilingualism by gender, literacy, and area (2011 Census)

Source: elaborated for this research. The Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner (2011a, 2011c), retrieved on November 29, 2020.

Note: M – male; F – female.

English is the "aspirational language" for Indians because it improves learning and job opportunities in civil service or tech businesses. The traditional languages are "affective", related to culture, family, and household (Ledgard, 2013a, 2013b). Nevertheless, Indian-English has its personality thanks to the assimilation of native languages and local culture, the less rigorous grammar of oral communication, and self-learning, among other possible reasons (Hashmi, 2015; Ledgard, 2013a; Taseer, 2015).

Hindi and English suffer resistance from certain groups. The protests against the enforcement of the Hindi language started before independence, and they are particularly apparent in the South (Nair, 2019). Madras, West Bengal, and Tamil Nadu are prominent opponents to Hindi (BBC News, 2019; Gusain, 2012: 46–47). The South fears that "Hindi imperialism" will replace "British imperialism" and claims that the Southern population has an unfair disadvantage over the Hindi Belt by using an estranged language. Part XVII of the Constitution has followed the Three Language Formula (Hindi, English, and regional languages) since 1967 (Gusain, 2012: 47) in an attempt to reconcile these groups.

Various groups, including the pro-Hindi movement and politicians, support the resistance against English by accusing it of being a foreign language, colonial, spoken by small groups, elitist, classicist, the language of people in power, and it restricts job opportunities in civil service for most Indians.

For antagonistic reasons, the enforcement of Hindi or English as a *lingua franca* is tyrannic. Hindi would be the majority's tyranny since it is the majority's mother tongue, representing 44% of the population (see Table 4). On the other hand, English is the mother tongue of less than 1% of the population (see Table 4), and any demand to use it is a minority's tyranny because it leaves the massive population at a linguistic disadvantage. The situation does not improve when considering the bilingual and trilingual population, since Hindi- and English-speakers make up 57% and 11%, respectively (see Table 4).

This debate would benefit from further investigation on the interconnection among this battle of languages and religion, ethnic groups and tribes, caste system, gender, and other social, economic, and anthropological aspects. Unfortunately, my paper's scope limits the possibilities of analyzing these matters further. Nevertheless, the following section provides a few reflections on violence and languages.

Violence and languages

The claim that Hindu unifies our country is absurd. That language is not the mother tongue of a majority of Indians. The move to impose Hindi on them amounts to enslaving them. The Union Minister's statement is a war cry against the mother tongues of non-Hindi speaking people - Pinarayi Vijayan, Kerala Chief Minister (Onmanorama, 2019)

This reaction is one example of the linguistic battle in India. The disputes around official and scheduled languages mean a fight for privileges in a postcolonial democracy, worsened by socioeconomics and infra-structure in such a populated country. When available, the information may not be accessible due to other limitations, like languages or illiteracy. Despite its neutral position in the dispute among the native languages, English is elitist and restricted to well-educated and influential groups. Independence had failed to resolve inequalities in India, and the violence of the languages embodied the situation very well.

	Violator	Target	Means	Intention	Description	Motives	Examples in India
	(check notes underneath)						
Linguistic	I	L	L	N	Transformation of the language, distancing it from the norms	Non-formal learning Forced use of the language Subordinated languages Oral experience rather than cognitive experience	Local features of the colloquial Hindi and English, inclusive in their official use
Des-subjectification	L	I	L	N	Enforcement to use a language that is not the person's mother tongue	Colonialism and post-colonialism Regulation and Oppression Social apartheid Elitism and classicism	English is the single official language at Supreme and High Courts English skills mandatory for applications to civil service jobs
Re-subjectification	I	L	L,A,O	Y	Transformation of the language to better express oneself or as an act of the resistance against the linguistic oppression	Activism Aesthetics/poetry Claim individual rights over the language, especially the mother tongue Express subjectivisms and culture beyond the resources of inherited language	Post-colonial poetry and literature
Institutional	G&I	I	L	Y	Selection official language in detriment of the plethora of mother tongues. Political representativeness in certain decisions are restricted to certain linguistic groups	Simplification of the language possibilities for official purposes when it is not possible to have a single national language	Eighth Schedule Hindi and English as official languages Three Languages Formula
		L	L	Y	Assimilation of influences of other native languages by Hindi to express all the elements of the composite culture of India	Make Hindi acceptable as unification language and the expression of Indian culture	Article 351 Part XVII of the Constitution - Directive for Development of the Hindi Language

Notes: I - Individuals, L - Language, A - Arts, G&I - Government and Institutions, O - Others, Y - Yes, N - No

Table 6 - The violence of the language in India

Sources: elaborated based on the analysis of data under the perspective of Lecerle (1990), Agamben (2008, 2009), and Santos (2007).

People continuously and unintentionally break the language by distorting its rules and meanings and creating new words and variants (Lecerle, 1990). On the other hand, language limits individual (or collective) subjectivisms and deprives citizens of their rights. The language's intentional transgression may attempt to rescue the subjectivity and identity within the language barriers but not only. My research approaches the violence of the language in India under a broader meaning by assuming the role of victim, violator, or means of violence. Table 6 synthesizes the observed categories of violence and languages from my analysis, whose explanation follows in this section.

i. Linguistic

Hindi and English have suffered unintentional violence that moved them away from linguistic manuals. The language is appropriated, owned, and shaped by who uses it. The solecism, the local color, the dialect, the neologisms, and other variations cited by Lecercle (1990: 12) result from official uses of the languages in India, primarily when they have been enforced under harsh historical, political, and socioeconomic circumstances over time. The low willingness and motivation to use the language, the lack of self-identification or ability to express themselves in these mediums make the speaker less committed to following the language standards.

		Reference	Subject	Official languages	Other languages	Provisions for English
Supreme, High and other Courts of Justice	Language of Justice	Part XVII, Chapter III, Article 348 1.a	Supreme and High Courts	i) English	The Governor, with the approval of the President, may authorize the use of Hindi or any other official language of that State for specific matter in the High Courts of that specific State	Not applicable
		Part XVII, Chapter III, Article 348 1.b.i	Authoritative texts: Bills or Amendments		If some reason, in a specific State, the authoritative text is made in another languages other than English, it shall be published in the Official Gazette of that State the respective translation to English	Not applicable
		Part XVII, Chapter III, Article 348 1.b.ii	Authoritative texts: Acts and Ordinances			Not applicable
		Part XVII, Chapter III, Article 348 1.b.iii	Authoritative texts: orders, rules, regulations and bye-laws			Not applicable
	Laws relating to language	Part XVII, Chapter III, Article 349	Special procedure for enactment of certain laws relating to language	In the next 15 years from the commencement of the Constitution, any proposal of change of languages ruled by Article 348.1 shall be sanctioned by the President after he takes in consideration the recommendations of the Commission ruled by Article 344 above mentioned.	Not applicable	Not applicable

Table 7 - Official languages according to the Indian Constitution: Supreme, High, and other Courts of Justice

Source: elaborated by the author based on the data retrieved from the Department of Official Language (2020) on January 2, 2020.

ii. Des-subjectification

The linguistic or not-linguistic elements enable subjectification, but when the language serves the power hierarchy, it becomes a means of oppression and violence. In India, the inheritance from colonialism and the further disputes among native languages has caused a "des-subjectification" instead (Agamben, 2009: 46–47). The enforced use of a language that is not the mother tongue harms the entire exercise of subjectivity, especially when the individual (or group) does not have the skills to use that means properly. The institutionalization of a single official language for the High

Courts, as presented in Table 7, is one of the cases where the fortune of the “docile and fragile” people (Agamben, 2009: 49–50) relies on the goodwill of those who run the institutions in English.

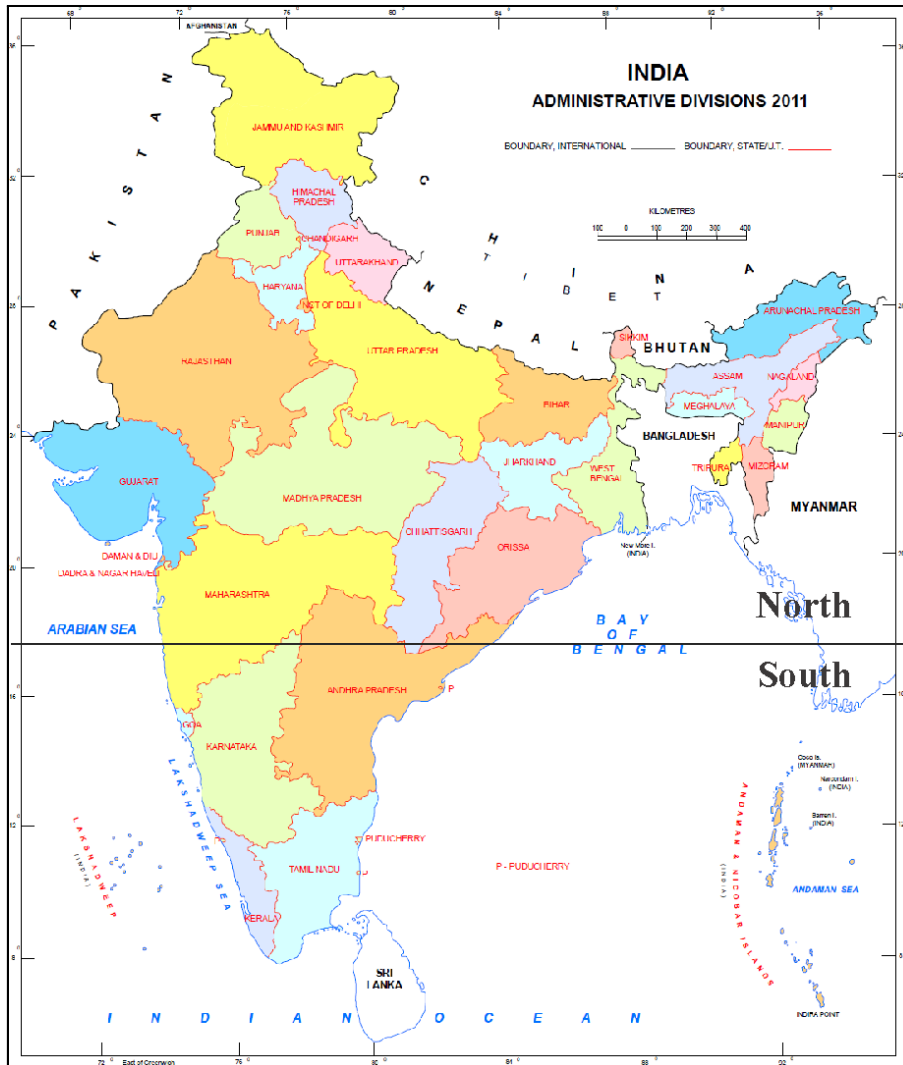


Figure 1 - Imaginary North-South division of India

Source: elaborated based on a map published by the Government of India (2011), retrieved on January 3, 2021

Figure 1 represents an imaginary line dividing the North-South parts of India that repeats the concentration of power experienced worldwide during the colonial and postcolonial periods. Santos (2007: 80-81) acknowledges three apartheids related to postcolonial fascism: social, contractual, and territorial. The elements presented in this paper have shown that the language issues in India strengthen the social apartheid, make abyssal the distance between institutions and docile bodies and cause alienation within the created identity (Bhabha, 2004: 62; Santos, 2007: 80-81). The appropriation

and regulation within the national borders in postcolonial democracies are not better than in the times of overseas colony states.

Agamben (2008) discussed how fundamental rights connect to citizenship in modern societies, leaving non-citizens vulnerable. Human rights are a relevant debate in modern India that justifies further research beyond the scope of my work. However, the relationship between languages and citizenship is relevant to reach egalitarian rights that respect individualities, collectivities, and differences (Santos, 2009).

In India, it does not seem that rights are widely available to all citizens because many groups do not speak the language politicians have chosen to represent that culture and society. The resulting privation of rights and individual liberties involves many aspects, such as i) the communication in a language not mastered by the subject, ii) the deprivation of the subject to choose his/her language of education, iii) the lack of schools to fulfill the language needs of the student during his/her whole education, iv) the unequal job opportunities at the civil service according to the language skills of the person, v) the hardship to learn more than one language, vi) the efforts and time demanded to learn languages instead of doing or learning other things, among others.

With the lack of means to access, read, or understand the news, part of the population might not be aware of their rights, obligations, and existing public policies. The exclusion of linguistic minorities from any democratic debate limits political and civil rights.

iii. Re-subjectification

The intentional violence against the language may be a conscious response to its violence (and symbolism) against the person. Dismantling or torturing the language are forms of protest used in poetry. Bhabha (1994: 85) was fierce by saying, "it is by placing the violence of the poetic sign within the threat of political violation that we can understand the powers of language". Other authors, such as Rothenberg (1990: 13) and his ethno-poetics and criticism of the existing languages, wish to take poetry beyond the language. The language may no longer represent the individuals when the political context and hierarchies contaminate it and the sensorial language poetry, for example, would contribute to their re-subjectification.

Re-subjectification motivated by activism or aesthetics can help individuals to claim their rights over the language, especially the mother tongue, and express subjectivisms and culture beyond the resources of the inherited languages.

iv. Institutional

Santos' (2007: 18) description of politically democratic and socially fascist societies fits India under the Constitution's aval. The selected languages of the Eighth Schedule and their specific rights (Department of Official Language, 2020), to the detriment of other linguistic minorities, is an intentional and institutionalized use of the language to limit the individuals' rights. The three languages education (Three Languages Formula) or the mandatory Hindi-medium education are further examples of this institutional violence. Such policies resemble the efforts of the colonizers to civilize and modernize the natives with the help of political psychic violence of civic virtue and the alienation of the identity described by Franz Fanon, as mentioned by Bhabha (2004: 62).

Article 351, Part XVII of the Constitution may be seen as another intentional and institutionalized violence against the language by expressing the government ambition on the choice of Hindi as a “medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture” (Department of Official Language, 2020) of a diverse country like India. It assumes that language and culture are compartmentalized, and they can be objectively and deliberately assimilated at the will of the politicians. This political effort aims to build the identity of Indians on the expectation that people will embody that image (Bhabha, 2004: 64).

Santos (2009: 18) has said people have the right to be equal when differences make them inferior and the right to be different when equality de-characterizes them. India must face the importance of respecting the rights and promoting the transcultural dialog based on the collective, collaborative, respectful, reciprocal among its national groups, cultures, and identities. The legal and social emancipation will come from counter-hegemonic alternatives that enable inter-subjectivisms (Santos, 2000: 30), and the Indian minor literature in English, analyzed in the following section, may contribute to that.

An Indian minor literature

The minor literature of Deleuze & Guattari represents a minority group through a major language (Deleuze & Guattari, 2003: 16–17). This literature aims to: deterritorialize the language, approach political context that outclasses individual conflicts and give voice to a minority as a collectivity. This section analyzes if it is possible to have Indian minor literature in English and how that can be an act of re-subjectification of minorities. The work of two internationally recognized Indian writers, the poet Adil Jussawalla and the novelist Salman Rushdie, is the starting point to search the elements of this minor literature.

From the elements presented in this paper, what makes English eligible for Indian minor literature? English is not the mother tongue of a majority¹² nor is it originally from India. However, its status guarantees its role as a major language for being inherited from colonizers, one of the official languages after independence, the aspirational language used by educated people, the gateway to better job opportunities, and the *lingua franca* of a globalized world.

This research has selected two writers from Bombay who left India to complete their high education and work abroad. Both have experienced conflicts and subjectivisms as immigrants present in their work through their views of identities, criticism of Indian society and politics, and testimonials of their own experiences as aliens in English-speaking countries. Under the Indian lenses, they belong to the intellectual elite, but from the perspective of the foreign country, they belong to the immigrant minorities¹³. Jussawalla and Rushdie's works may be analyzed under the concept of minor literature because they represent the Indian diaspora and use the deterritorialization of a language that is not their mother tongue. The following paragraphs explain how that worked.

¹² Less than 1% of the Indians declare English as their mother tongue, and the percentage increases to 11% when including the declarations of second and third auxiliary languages.

¹³ In Rushdie's words: "I've been in a minority group all my life – a member of an Indian Muslim family in Bombay, then of a *mohajir* – migrant – family in Pakistan, and now as a British Asian" (Rushdie, 1991: 04).

i. Adil Jussawalla (Bombay, 1940)

Jussawalla has long lived in England in his adulthood. After returning to India and being influenced by Marxism, Fanonism, and postcolonial debate, the author published his *Missing Person's* poetry book in 1976.

In his analysis of inter-identity, Bhabha (2004: 77, 82–86) seeks the context and the understanding of who was the Missing Person and its conflicts in two selected verses from Jussawalla's book. Bhabha also appointed the presence of deterritorialization in the linguistic resources utilized (or distorted) by the poet.

The relevance of the political causes and the collective distress (of immigrants) confirms the minor literature features in the verses. The alienation and cultural hybridity are expressed by the narrator: a postcolonial middle-class person marginalized abroad who no longer feels his/her place in modern India (Bird, 2014: 11). The postcolonial bourgeoisie conflicts and the psych, cultural and territorial hostility faced by Indian immigrants abroad are all represented in the verses (Bhabha, 2004: 64–65, 77, 82–86).

Homi Bhabha has a solid standpoint to analyze Jussawalla's *Missing Person* since he is also an Indian intellectual who immigrated and had a career at the best English-speaking universities in the world. However, the conflicts of the narrator may also be related to Jussawalla's experiences as a member of the Indian diaspora and English teacher.

Jussawalla's poem has subtle meanings thanks to the use of a few language resources. Tables 8 and 9 bring a few selected lines of verse I.3 of *Missing Person* to illustrate the re-subjectification (or the deterritorialization of the language) that characterizes the minor literature. The mix of English and Hindi sounds and letters is one example (#3). The first vowel from the Devanagari alphabet अ is the equivalent to "a" in the Roman alphabet, pronounced as "er".

#ORIGINAL – MISSING PERSON I.3	#EFFECTS
¹ A—'s a giggle now	¹ AAAA IS a GIGGLE now
² but on it Osiris, Ra.	² but on it OSIRIS, RA.
³ An अ's an er... a cough,	³ An ER IS an ER... a COUGH,

⁴ once spoking your valleys with light.	⁴ ONCE spoking your valleys with LIGHT.
⁵ But the a's here to stay.	⁵ But the A IS here to STAY.
⁶ On it St. Pancras station,	⁶ On it SAINT PANCRAS STATION,
⁷ the Indian and African railways.	⁷ the INDIAN and AFRICAN railways.
⁸ That's why you learn it today.	⁸ That IS why you learn it TODAY.
[...]	[...]

Table 8 – Selected lines from verse Part I.3 from Missing Person (1976) - 1/2

Source: Mehrotra (1992: 131)

The poem indicates that something has changed over time. The reference to Osiris (Lord of the Underworld) and Ra (God of Sun), from African (Egyptian) mythology, shows melancholia for being somewhere else now (#5) and no longer in the valley (#4) where the sun (Ra) once was shining. In reference to the diaspora, the mention of Indian and African railways and the international train station in London St. Pancras tells the audience that the narrator is an immigrant who came to stay. During the research, it was not possible to identify any train connection from London to India or Africa until the publishing year of the poem. The railways may be an allusion to the flow of immigrants from former British colonies in the Southern Hemisphere to England after independence and a hint about the narrator's origins.

The giggle (#1) is the bitter sarcasm towards the Hindi speaker (graphics in #3) and the cough (#3) is his/her embarrassment in making mistakes (i. solecism - the first vowel of Roman "a" was confused by the first in Devanagari "er", ii. repetition of "er", and iii. "a" or prolonged "a" in hesitation) when (s)he is speaking English).

#ORIGINAL – MISSING PERSON I.3	#EFFECTS
[...]	[...]
¹⁵ expansive as in 'air',	¹⁵ Expansive as in 'Er',
¹⁶ black as in the 'dark',	¹⁶ blaCK as in the 'darCK',
¹⁷ thin as in 'scream'.	¹⁷ thIN as in 'scrIM'.
¹⁸ It will happen again and again—	¹⁸ It will happen AGAIN AND AGAIN—
¹⁹ in a library in Boston,	¹⁹ in a library in Boston,
²⁰ a death-cell in Patna.	²⁰ a death-cell in Patna.
²¹ And so the other twenty-five letters	²¹ And so the other twenty-five letters

²² you try to master now – 'cat', 'rat', 'mat' ²³ swelling to 'Duty', 'Patience', 'Car'.	²² you try to master now – 'CKEt', 'rEt', 'mEt' ²³ swelling to 'Duty', 'Patience', 'Car'.
²⁴ Curled in cortical lobe (department of languages), ²⁵ an unspeakable family gibbered. ²⁶ 'Where is the tape?' abroad, at a loss, ²⁷ he asks. 'What does it say?' ²⁸ 'Wiped out', they say. ²⁹ 'Turn left or right, ³⁰ There's millions like you up here, ³¹ Picking their way through refuse, ³² looking for words they lost. ³³ You are your country's lost property ³⁴ with no office to claim you back. ³⁵ You're polluting our sounds. You're so rude. ³⁶ 'Get back to your language', they say.	²⁴ Curled in cortical lobe (department of languages), ²⁵ an unspeakable family gibbered. ²⁶ 'Where is the tape?' abroad, at a loss, ²⁷ he asks. 'What does it say?' ²⁸ 'Wiped out', they say. ²⁹ 'Turn left or right, ³⁰ There'S millions like you up here, ³¹ Picking their way through REFUSE, ³² LOOKING for words they LOST. ³³ You are your country's LOST property ³⁴ with NO office to CLAIM you back. ³⁵ You're POLLUTING OUR SOUNDS. You're so RUDE. ³⁶ 'Get back to your language', THEY say.

Table 9 – Selected lines from verse Part I.3 from Missing Person (1976) - 2/2

Source: Mehrotra (1992: 131–132)

The narrator has his pieces of advice to memorize the English pronunciation (#15, #16, #17, and #23), but (s)he makes mistakes (#30) and acknowledges that it will be a long and tiring process (repetitions in #18).

(S)he is lost in that land, in denial, and unable to speak the language correctly. There is a continuous conflict between the other and the self. The last lines bring the harassment (#30 until #35) because (s)he is not one of the locals (others versus self), (s)he is called rude savage¹⁴ (#35) by others. Nevertheless, not even his/her country or nationals (selves or others?) care about or miss him/her (#33 and #34). The immigrant does not belong to that land and must go back to his/her place (country, culture, language). Thus, in the last line, the poet uses direct speech attributing the words to an undefined third person, but the reader knows that “they” means “the Britishers”.

So, who is the *poetic persona*? The verses are the voice of the soul of the immigrant (Hindi-speaker) mourning his/her (failed) experience to fit in that country (England),

¹⁴ Poem's Part II.1 is not reviewed here, but the missing person (or one of its doubles) identifies her/himself as a savage again in there.

culture, and language (English). The linguistic resources have enabled the poetic persona to share (with the reader) the conflicts, shame, and violence experienced by someone who must learn the oppressor's language. The poem empathizes with the experiences of a linguistic minority abroad, which is not so different from the struggles that linguistic minorities face at home in India, discussed in previous sections.

ii. Salman Rushdie (Bombay, 1947)

Bhabha's (2004: 3, 7–8, 26, 239–243) analysis of *Satanic Verses* presents elements that confirm Rushdie's minor literature. However, in this section, I focus on “Imaginary Homelands” (1991: 9–21), “Errata” (Rushdie, 1991: 22–25), and “The Riddle of Midnight” (Rushdie, 1991: 26–33) and “Introduction” (Rushdie, 1991: 1–6) essays from Rushdie's book *Imaginary Homelands* (Rushdie, 1991) to reconfirm other elements of deterritorialization, political centrality, and collective representativeness.

“Imaginary Homelands” (Rushdie, 1991: 9–21)

Rushdie talks about his and other Indian writers living in England's intercultural condition in this intimist essay. I have selected five relevant aspects of minor literature present in the text to present here.

Firstly, the author speaks about the conflict of the memories from India and how the reality haunts the immigrant writers. The reconstruction of a fair image and facts about India are impaired by physical distance and time abroad. The author finds only fragments, fractured perceptions, fantasies, and there is no precision in his attempts to remember what he has left in his home country. The picture of his father's house (lost home) and the telephone catalog of Bombay (lost city) represent frozen moments and static memories from the past, but they do not tell him what has happened in between that time and his present life or about the person that he became (Rushdie, 1991: 10, 12). The picture and the catalog symbolize fragments of given moments in the past (lost time) without any context, which makes the author and his characters' memories unreliable. They can only recreate an invisible and imaginary homeland.

Secondly, the author feels guilty for exchanging India with another country. Nevertheless, he defends his and other immigrant writers whom he represents' rights

over his roots, regardless of the time abroad (Rushdie, 1991: 14). Rushdie considers the literature self-validating, and the only reason to delegitimize the immigrant's opinion about India is the writing quality. Furthermore, the distance may provide a more exempted view to these writers.

“Many have referred to the argument about the appropriateness of this language (English) to Indian themes. And I hope all of us share the view that we can't simply use the language in the way the British did; that it needs remarking for our own purposes. Those of us who do not use English do so in spite of our ambiguity towards it, or perhaps because of that, perhaps because we can find in that linguistic struggle a reflection of other struggles taking place in the real world, struggles between the cultures within ourselves and the influences at work upon our societies. To conquer English may be to complete the process of making ourselves free.” (Rushdie, 1991: 17)

Thirdly, in the above, Rushdie advises his fellow Indian writers to appropriate themselves to the English language and use it in their ways. “Having been borne across the world, we [the immigrant writers] are translated men” (Rushdie, 1991: 17) that should free themselves from ambiguous influences from India and England and act as insiders and outsiders at once (Rushdie, 1991: 17, 19). Rushdie is defending the deterritorialization of the language as a way out from the translation trap that captures the people in the liminal space and the hybridity of identity (Bhabha, 2004: 5; Deleuze & Guattari, 2003: 16).

Fourthly, Rushdie advises Indian writers to escape from the *ghetto mentality* (Rushdie, 1991: 19) and expand their literature to whatever their art and creativity lead. Their work should not be limited by their experiences related to India, England, and the *in-betweenness* condition.

Lastly, Rushdie recognizes his privileges when he acknowledges how his skin tone, his “English accent,” and his social class favored his acceptance by British society. Nevertheless, unfortunately, the same does not happen to all Indians, and he expresses his disappointment writing that “the dream-England is no more than a dream” (Rushdie, 1991: 18).

““Errata”: or, *unreliable narration in Midnight's Children*” (Rushdie, 1991: 22–25)

Rushdie writes the errata to fix the mistakes in describing places, facts, and traditions of India made by Saleem, the narrator of the book *Midnight's Children*, and

the author takes the opportunity to genuinely present his views on the memories subject. However, his tone is different in this chapter. The author justifies the mistakes as the writer's resource and creative decision without analyzing the motives for the lapses.

Saleem represents the Indian people, their syncretism, and their self-regenerating capacity, but he is not reliable. His narratives are imprecise, and the relevance of things does not necessarily reflect reality (Rushdie, 1991: 12-16). The character is an interested party in the narrated events, and he intentionally manipulates the information to convince the reader to trust him, although some imprecisions were not his fault, but recreations of fragmented, fractured, and imagined memories of Rushdie (Rushdie, 1991: 23-24). There are no apologies for these imprecisions and errors because they are memories from another space and time: the memories of the Indian immigrants. The narrator's truth is more important than any other version of the facts because they are "memory's truth".

The imprecision and imagined memories are commonplaces among writers and immigrants. The deterritorialization of Saleem's narratives was the re-subjectification of the author's relationship with India.

"The Riddle of Midnight: India, August 1987" (Rushdie, 1991: 26–33)

This essay brings complex questions about the formation of his country and the first is "Does India exist?", which names my article. Rushdie knows that it is difficult to answer these questions, and it seems he has no intention to do so. Nevertheless, he is concerned about how communalism, fundamentalism, and extremism persist in modern India.

Despite the secular letter of the Constitution, India's religious dispute has been growing together with nationalism. The main conflicts are related to the imposition of a few groups over minorities, like my research object, and the author is pessimistic about the future or solution to these issues in India.

In another essay, Rushdie (1991: 10) said that "by quitting Bombay [he] never became what perhaps I [he] was meant to be". In *The Riddle of Midnight*, the author seems to pursue the other Rushdie who stayed in Bombay years ago and he tries to

find the answer to his existential questions by interviewing people who were born in India in the same year as him (1947) and the country's independence (Rushdie, 1991: 26).

"Introduction" (Rushdie, 1991: 1–6)

Purposely, the book introduction is my last subject of analysis. In this essay, the author questions the (and his) Indian identity on a few occasions. Firstly, Rushdie shared his discomfort when, in a conference of Indian writers, a poet recited in Sanskrit and addressed the audience by saying: "every educated Indian will understand what I've just said" (Rushdie, 1991: 2). Many, including Rushdie, did not understand that language. Thus, Rushdie has questioned himself that maybe he was not truly "Indian"¹⁵ for not speaking Sanskrit. A second catharsis happened at the same event when another fellow scholar referred to Indian Muslims as Mughals, suggesting that foreign Muslims were intruders in India (Rushdie, 1991: 2). Raised in a Muslim family, Rushdie's Indian roots were challenged twice that day.

Nevertheless, later in that essay, Rushdie (1991: 5) said he was, "of course, by no means *the only British writer* to have come under fire in these past years". The British nationality may be motivated by at least three possibilities: to confirm the author's inter-identity condition as an Indian immigrant in England, to prove that the author's doubts about his origin are not rhetoric but honest, or to differentiate something in his path from the collective that he represents¹⁶.

These four essays have been selected for my research because they address the common interests of Rushdie's fellow Indian writers in England, the inter-identity (or in-betweenness), the imagined homelands, the memory's truth, and the Indo-English literature's role, among others. Moreover, the English's deterritorialization, the political responsibility of the diaspora writers, and the collective spirit that bound them in the same fate are all present in Rushdie's writing. Based on those essays, my conclusion is that Rushdie is indeed a representative of Indian minor literature.

¹⁵ Rushdie's comas (Rushdie, 1991: 2).

¹⁶ In another sentence, Rushdie addresses the subject of inter-identity as a collective that includes himself by saying that "sometimes we [immigrated Indian writers] feel that we straddle two cultures; at other times, that we fall between two stools". (Rushdie, 1991: 15)

In 1997, Rushdie's opinion published in *The New Yorker* magazine had been considered an affront to Indian non-English writing literature.

"The prose writing -- both fiction and non-fiction -- created in this period by Indian writers working in English is proving to be a stronger and more important body of work than most of what has been produced in the eighteen "recognized" languages of India, the so-called "vernacular languages," during the same time; and, indeed, this new, and still burgeoning, "Indo-Anglian" literature represents perhaps the most valuable contribution India has yet made to the world of books. The true Indian literature of the first postcolonial half-century has been made in the language the British left behind." (Rushdie, 1997: 50)¹⁷

The opinion is controversial because it gives the impression that i. language is a metric for the quality of Indian literature, ii. a "true Indian" literature exists, and iii. it is written in the mother tongue of fewer than 1% of the population. The relevance of his opinion could be challenged by questioning whether his knowledge, readings, and understanding of non-English Indian literature are robust and comprehensive enough to have a seminal opinion on the topic.

Rushdie's article has not passed unnoticed among the Indian elites, and possibly that was his intention. Potentially, it was a try to recognize the production of the oppressed minority that he represents by self-proclaiming its value among all the significant Indian literature. Alternatively, one can say Rushdie was trying to use his international reputation to invert the roles and assume the oppressor's position at least once and fire against the traditional writers. One way or another, Rushdie has confirmed how sensitive the disputes involving languages are, even for high-profile personalities like him.

Final remarks

My primary interest in this research was the institutional status of languages in India and the resulting limitation of political and civil participation of linguistic minorities. Data were analyzed to identify how current legislation may affect language minorities, aggravated by illiteracy and difficulties in accessing information. The relationship between violence and languages was synthesized from different perspectives and

¹⁷ In 1997, the scheduled languages were only 18. In 2004, the number increased to 22 (see Table 1).

theories and four categories have been presented: linguistic, des-subjectification, re-subjectification, and institutional.

Among the great challenges of modern India, one of them is the equalization of rights and the observance of the coexistence of the diversity of languages in the country, balancing equal rights and respect for collective and individual differences. Although my scope did not allow me to explore aspects such as intersectionality and social economics or the potential solutions that respect the diversities, I hope to have demonstrated the relevance of this discussion of the rights of linguistics minorities in India. This is a debate about subjectivism, arising from and impacted by languages, that may be harmed when people are not able to manifest themselves in their mother tongues. These are complex issues, rooted in a worsening political, social, economic, and cultural context and the lack of policies to address the lingering legacies of the colonial past in India.

Meanwhile, minority groups try to resist and persist in legitimizing their political existence. In my research, I have looked at the Indian minor literature as one way to use the language and the literature to express the collective frustration over language oppression and inter-identity. My research also showed that even authors, like Jussawalla and Rushdie, who are members of the Indian intellectual elite have experienced the belonging conflicts and language tyrannies and expressed them in their work. English is a colonial inheritance, but the authors have proved that it is possible to deterritorialize the language to re-subjectify their own existence represented by their personas (narrators/self) and characters.

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