

THE MODERNITY OF FÉLIBRIGE MOVEMENT IN THE 19TH CENTURY –FROM A VIEWPOINT OF LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN HUMAN SOCIETY–

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Received August 2019; accepted November 2019

ABSTRACT. *The world is currently facing a dichotomy because of globalization and the need to respect diversity; that is, how can communities preserve their identities and their quality of life? The same dichotomy appeared in the nineteenth-century Europe as countries sought to develop modern nation states. This paper discusses the Félibrige movement as a typical example of the need to maintain identity within nations seeking to unify language and culture. By introducing a notion of “peace and stability” that is closely related to the quality of life, this paper demonstrates that language is a vital factor in ensuring such “peace and stability” within common language communities.*

Keywords: Félibrige movement, Peace and stability, Language, QOL

1. **Introduction.** Even though globalization has resulted in some degree of economic and political cohesion, ideological and religious differences amidst calls for greater diversity have resulted in a rise in friction. In concert with these concerns, the deterioration of the natural environment has become an issue of global concern, with various measures having been introduced, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD, 1992), the Paris Agreement at the Conference of the Parties 21 (COP21) (2015), and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (2015). However, even these serious environmental issues have given rise to political and economic conflicts between the developed countries and developing countries, who wish to maintain their economic development, for which no viable solution has been proffered. After the development of the modern scientific method in the seventeenth century, Europe went through the subsequent industrial revolution, from which the notion of modern nations arose in the nineteenth century, with modern civilization today still being considered an extension of this Eurocentrism. Three “apparatus” are at work in a civilization: a state political system, an economic system that pursues wealth, and science and technology that support the former two. Even within complex globalization and diversity structures, these three apparatus provide the backbone support to modern civilization.

In today’s increasingly globalized environment, how can people find mental and material satisfaction? To discuss this problem, this paper introduces a “peace and stability” notion that is closely related to the Quality of Life (QOL) concept. However, it is not always easy for people to find “peace and stability” in an antagonistic globalization versus diversity environment.

A similar problem was noted during the formation of the modern states in nineteenth-century Europe, primarily because people were being pushed into a standardized “modern” framework to promote uniformity, a belief that also affects society today because

of the continued focus on the nation state and the citizen as modern civilizations are being built. This paper focuses on nineteenth-century France to exemplify the historical development of these types of situations. France at that time was a complex collection of regions that spoke different languages and had different cultural traditions. Revival movements for regional languages and cultures arose to oppose the ideals of the French Revolution and the centralized cultural policies that had existed since the mid-nineteenth century that had affected community and individual identities.

In particular, this paper examines the *Félibrige* movement from Provence in southern France as a typical example of such a revival movement. *Félibrige* was an organization founded in 1854 by Frederic Mistral, the Nobel Prize-winning poet, which was devoted to reviving the Provençal language and culture. France at that time was in the middle of its transition to a modern state, and therefore, a homogenization of the state and its language was being promoted. *Félibrige*, however, was formed to restore and retain the language and culture of Provence as the basis of its own identity. Therefore, this movement was against the unification policies of the modern state and sought to emphasize the identity of the region and bring “peace and stability” to the people.

This paper focuses on the comments by one of the founders of the *Félibrige* movement, Frederic Mistral, and examines concepts such as “race” and “language” as he understood them to elucidate the regional awareness and regional identity at that time. By re-examining these ideas from a modern globalization perspective, we clarify the need to respect language because of its ability to engender “peace and stability” and provide a good QOL for the people.

2. “Peace and Stability” with Language as Its Basis. Based on human satisfaction, here, the notion of “peace and stability” is introduced, which we define as follows.

Definition. “Peace and stability” refers to a state when a person has his or her own place and a mentally and materially assured existence.

Therefore, in this sense, it is synonymous with QOL.

While it is assumed that people are part of a nation state, this context does not ensure that people seek “peace and stability” in what Anderson called “imagined communities” [1] but is more aligned with what Smith referred to as ethnic communities (which he called “ethnie”) [9]. In other words, “peace and stability” can be found in communities that preserve their culture, have historical traditions closely associated with the life of the region and the community, a culture that allows for the formation of one’s own identity, and a language unique to that particular social group.

In contrast to this, globalization seeks political stability and economic efficiency by promoting a type of mutually common framework. However, this “modernization” and attempt at uniformity and standardization is resulting in a decline in global diversity, which is slighting human dignity, diminishing earth’s biological diversity through modern technology-oriented human activities, and even causing climate change. A similar gap between the majority and minority was evident in the rise of the modern nation states in nineteenth-century Europe. To address this problem, Kimlicka claimed that a “societal culture” was needed, which was defined based on communities that shared a common language, and “a culture which provides its member (members of a community) with meaningful ways of life across the full range of human activities, including social, educational, religious, recreational, and economic life, encompassing both public and private spheres” [4]. In a community supported by its societal culture, as people are able to become aware of their own identities, they are able to find “peace and stability”.

What is important here is that human communities have always been supported by “language”, because language has an essential interdependent relationship with culture. Therefore, the two following propositions can be set as hypotheses about human language and culture:

Prop.1: Language and culture are closely dependent on each other.

Prop.2: The language and culture in a community allows the people to maintain their identities.

Language is an expression of the accumulation of the language community's thoughts and actions over the generations, which also includes their treatment of the natural environment. As shown in the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, the language of each culture determines the characteristics of that culture [8,10], and the human thoughts and actions of that specific culture are related to these linguistic habits. Fong also defined culture as "a social system in which the members share common standards of communication, behaving, and evaluating in everyday life" and pointed out that when people have a "common" language as their medium, there is also a "common" culture [2]. Therefore, based on Fong's discussion, in the same cultural community, language allows for the maintenance of both communication and identity, which means that the people's "peace and stability" in that community are strongly related to the community language.

In France, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, an enlightenment thinker in the eighteenth century, believed that language origins were related to human "raison d'être", that is, the most important reason or purpose for someone or something's existence, and that the beginning of language arose from feelings rather than reasoning. Rousseau wrote that "it seems then that need dictated the first gestures, while the passions stimulated the first words" [7] and that "man's first motives for speaking were of the passions" [7]. For Rousseau, "passion" was a key concept in language germination. During the transition from the Enlightenment to Romanticism, while Rousseau did not examine the theoretical formation of languages, because he insisted that languages based on human passions were able to bring people together, he believed that joy in society was closely related to language. Even though Rousseau's beliefs were seen as idealistic and attracted significant criticism, his ideas suggested that people seek to communicate positive emotions and ultimately happiness through their language.

Rousseau's beliefs on the origins of language based on human happiness, Kimlicka's societal culture hypothesis, the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, and Fong's opinions all seem to conclude that "peace and stability" depend on the sense of identity within each community, which was conveyed through their common language. Therefore, we give the propositions:

Prop.3: The maintenance of people's identity preserves their "peace and stability".

Prop.4: People's "peace and stability" depends closely on the maintenance of their language.

3. The Félibrige Movement and Mistral's Discourse.

3.1. The Félibrige movement and Mistral. After the French Revolution, the French government began promoting a language unification policy, which led to celebrated men of letters in some regions starting movements to ensure the revival or continuance of regional languages and cultures. Nineteenth-century Europe was facing a dichotomy; on the one hand, modern nation states were being established and were struggling for supremacy, while at the same time, internal regions were starting cultural revival movements to counter dilution by nation state uniformity.

In the southern region of France, the revival movement had been affected by the "romanticism" movement at that time. One of the most famous examples was the Félibrige movement, which arose in Provence in 1854. Félibrige respected the traditions of the medieval lyric poets, or Troubadours, which had existed since the twelfth century, and wished to maintain the Provençal language, which was in direct opposition to the policies of the central government.

Frederic Mistral (1830-1914), one of the founders of the Félibrige association, strongly emphasized the literature from southern France and in particular was involved in promoting the revival movement for the maintenance of the Provençal language. He served as the first Capoulié, a representative of Félibrige, for 8 years (1876-1884). To maintain Provençal language and culture, he focused on three key areas when leading the association: 1) the animation of Provençal culture, which had been disparaged; 2) the revival of the historical languages in the various regions; and 3) the sublime poets who had written in the Provençal language.

Mistral believed that culture was closely related to literary heritage, lifestyle, and the way of thinking about and expressing things. Therefore, he insisted that cultures had a selfness that could raise spirituality and confirm identity. Based on Mistral's ideals, the Félibrige movement was focused on searching for mental satisfaction, or in other words, "peace and stability".

3.2. Mistral's discourse. Based on Proposition 4 in the second section, in this section, Mistral's conscious focus on "peace and stability" in his discourses is examined. As Capoulié, Mistral gave speeches at the annual official conferences of the Félibrige known as the Ste. Estelle Festival, which celebrated Provençal language and poetry.

In particular, we focus on five words in Provençal that were used in Mistral's speeches between 1868 and 1904 (mainly at the Ste. Estelle Festival and also in other discourses); *raço* (race), *nacioun* (nation), *païs* (pays (Fr.), country), *pople* (people), and *lengo* (language or "lenga" as singular). The word "*raço* (race)" in this context did not refer to the anthropological meaning but referred to a group of people living in the same place and who had the same culture and language. Similarly, the word "*nacioun* (nation)" referred to regional people and their communities, and "*païs*" referred to a region. When Mistral characterized his own native region, he chose this word to distinguish it from others or even from the whole of France. The word "*pople*" was adopted with the same nuance to literally mean the general public; however, in Provence, it was specific to the *paysans* (farmers), shepherds, etc., who were living in the countryside. Mistral applied the word "*lengo*" in various ways associated with Roman, Latin, and regional languages and even with the French language. We analyzed the frequency and use of these five words in Mistral's speeches, from which it was concluded that the more frequently Mistral used each of these key words, the more strongly his speech expressed his feelings and thoughts toward his own native Provence.

Table 1 shows the frequencies of the five words in each of Mistral's speeches between 1868 and 1904 [6].

Generally speaking, Mistral referred to the words "*raço*" and "*lengo*" in almost all his speeches in these years, because after the founding of the Félibrige, he appears to have devoted himself to his region, and especially to the traditional poetry culture in the Provençal language and the people who spoke it. However, there was a distinct turning point in 1882 as in his speech in this year, these five words all appeared several times, with the frequencies being slightly different. For example, after 1882, the word "*lengo*" was used almost a half as much as before 1882, Mistral's references to "*raço*" were less, but the frequencies of "*païs*" and "*pople*" were more than twice as much as before 1882.

The year 1882 was a turning point for Mistral also. After the downfall of Napoléon III in 1870, the 3rd Republic began. By the 1880s, the political regime had settled down, and the social situation had stabilized, which had relieved Mistral because he was, if anything, a republican. He was then able to focus on the position of Provence within France and began to emphasize an economic and political "independency" for this region. Although Mistral thought the culture and language revival movement in Provence was important at the beginning of the movement, his concern became more strongly oriented to preserving the identity of the region. While maintaining his motivation for the revival movement,

TABLE 1. The frequencies of the five words in Mistral's speeches

| | Title | raço | nacioun | païs | pople | lengo |
|-------|--|------|---------|------|-------|-------|
| 1868* | La Coupo felibrenco | 1 | 2 | 1 | — | 1 |
| 1868* | Ço que voulèn | 1 | 2 | — | 2 | 10 |
| 1875* | Li preujat poupulàri | 3 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 19 |
| 1877 | La lengo dòu miejour | 2 | — | 1 | 2 | 9 |
| 1878 | Reneissènço felibrenco | 3 | 4 | — | 1 | 13 |
| 1879 | L'ouganisacioun dòu felibrige | 1 | — | 2 | — | 4 |
| 1880* | L'ilusioun | — | — | 1 | — | — |
| 1882 | L'estacamen au terraire | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 5 |
| 1882* | Lou felibrige e l'Empèri dòu Soulèu | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 29 |
| 1884 | La lengo prouvençalo | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 9 |
| 1886 | La despouplacioun di campagno | 2 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 5 |
| 1886* | Discours is arlaten | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 5 |
| 1887 | La fraternita di pople | 2 | — | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 1887* | Bloge d'aubanel | 1 | — | 2 | 2 | 8 |
| 1888 | Lou Prouvençau a l'escolo | — | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| 1902 | I felibre biarnés | — | — | 1 | 2 | 5 |
| 1904 | Inaguracioun dòu mounument de Roumanille | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 7 |
| 1904* | Discours i chatouno | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | — |

*indicates the speeches addressed outside the Ste. Estelle Festival at other occasions.

he began to believe that the whole region needed stability. Therefore, it was probable that his ideas changed from a “private concern” to a “more public concern”, which was possibly why each of these five words appeared much more in his speeches after 1882 and why there was an even greater increase in the use of “païs” and “pople”.

4. Mistral's Ideas Regarding “Peace and Stability” Based on Language. While Mistral attached great importance to language in all his speeches, the implied meaning of the word appeared to change from language as a base for the people of the region to language and even language education as the base for a regional community. In fact, in 1882 and a little later, Mistral tended to use the word “nacioun,” which for him meant a community with regional characteristics. This word seemed to become more significant, and the words “païs” and “pople” were more frequently used after 1882. As propounded in the propositions in the second section, as language is related to people's behavior, culture, and identity in a region, the people's satisfaction is also dependent on language. For Mistral, language was one of the most important factors in preserving people's identities and their “raison d'être” and, by extension, their satisfaction with or their “joy” in their own hometowns.

When talking about the importance of language, Mistral stated the following in his speech at the festival of Ste. Estelle in 1877:

“It seems to me [Mistral] that the language is something noble and wonderful, because it can receive the sublime light of enlightenment, ... in the depths of a language, all the historical changes, all the feelings, and all the thoughts of ten, twenty, thirty, and a hundred generations are accumulated.

.....

In a word, a language should be the revelation of human life, the manifestation of human thought, the sacrosanct instrument of civilizations and the testament signifying dead or living societies” [6].

Mistral claimed that the essence of language was concerned with human thought and sentiment and that language was a demonstration of people's mental and emotional connections to a region, in French, "l'âme de la region" [5].

Mistral also saw language as being essential to the apparatus of civilization as it could reveal the current social situation and at the same time lead people to find their "joy" in life and maintain it. This was similar to Rousseau's concept that language was related to human satisfaction and joy and the consequent "peace and stability." This was probably why Mistral insisted on the importance of language and "raço" in his speeches because he deeply believed that language was a key indicator for the preservation of societal "peace and stability".

5. Conclusion. The world today is facing a dichotomy: the development of globalization and the need to respect diversity, which has given rise to various conflicts, such as the widening gap between the majority and minority. This dichotomous situation has prevented the resolution of worldwide problems, one of which is the amelioration of the QOL.

However, this type of conflict was also apparent in Europe in the nineteenth century. A typical example was the Félibrige movement in Provence, France, which sought to ensure the continuation/revival of its regional culture and language after the French Revolution under the formation of the modern nation state that aimed to unify the country under one language and one culture, which is similar to the aims of modern globalization, which has tended to disregard the importance of diversity. This structure remains in France today, where there is a "contradictory mix" of unity and diversity [3]. While France does not officially acknowledge any other languages because the Constitution states that "the language of the French Republic is French," various dialects remain in each region. Therefore, a feature of modern France is that it is a complex set of diverse regions.

Faced with a similar situation, Mistral insisted on the importance of his regional language because the maintenance of this language preserved his identity and the identity of his native region. He felt that regional languages were at the heart of people's awareness and feelings about their community. Therefore, while modern civilization contributes to material satisfaction, regional languages provide the mental satisfaction related to "peace and stability". Mistral's ideas to preserve regional languages suggested a way for communities to maintain their "peace and stability" into the future.

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