REGIONAL ASPECT OF MULTILINGUALISM: REVAMPING PROGRESS TOWARDS SDG

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Abstract

The peculiarities of the implementation at the regional level of the pan-European concept of multilingualism take into account the different forms and degree of conjugation of cultures that take shape between nations in a certain territory. The current vector of its development designated by the call “Learn the language of the neighbor” has the goal of taking into account the national specifics and the historical experience of intercultural interaction of peoples living in borderland conditions. This is of particular importance in connection with the ongoing revamping progress towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The author's conclusion on the transformation of the concept of multilingualism is based on an analysis of the Council of Europe's regulatory framework on language policy issues, with an emphasis on the linguo-culturological aspect and features of a cognitive-linguistic approach to the problems of cultural frontier.

Keywords: multilingualism concept, SDG, linguistic repertoire, intercultural communication, cultural frontier

Abstrak

Kekhasan penerapan konsep multibahasa pan-Eropa di tingkat regional memperhatikan perbedaan bentuk dan tingkat konjugasi budaya yang terbentuk antar bangsa di suatu wilayah tertentu. Vektor perkembangannya saat ini yang ditunjuk oleh seruan "Pelajari bahasa tetangga" bertujuan untuk mempertimbangkan kekhasan nasional dan pengalaman sejarah interaksi antar budaya masyarakat yang tinggal di kondisi perbatasan. Hal ini sangat penting sehubungan dengan kemajuan pembenahan yang sedang berlangsung menuju Tujuan Pembangunan Berkelanjutan (SDG). Kesimpulan penulis tentang transformasi konsep multibahasa didasarkan pada analisis kerangka peraturan Dewan Eropa tentang masalah kebijakan bahasa, dengan penekanan pada aspek linguo-kulturalis dan ciri-ciri pendekatan linguistik kognitif terhadap masalah perbatasan budaya.

Kata kunci: *konsep multibahasa, SDG, repertoar linguistik, komunikasi antarbudaya, perbatasan budaya*

INTRODUCTION

Understanding and speaking a neighbor's language is a basic condition for the existence of different ethnic groups, nations and peoples living in neighboring territories. This is the conclusion reached by the experts of the Language Policy Department of the Council of Europe at the next round of transformation of the concept of multilingualism, according to which the peoples living in the European Union develop. This condition is also important for Indonesia, where there are a large number of ethnic groups and each speaks its own language. The search for practical solutions that could be a worthy response to the call "Learn your neighbor's language" is largely due to the development of the very notion of frontier, the increased interest of researchers in the field of intercultural interaction, regional features of cultural frontier, and cognitive frontier studies. The

concept of multilingualism began with the rationality of bilingualism of European citizens even before the official emergence of the European Union. At the conference "Language Learning in Europe; the Challenge of Diversity" (1988, Strasbourg) the Council of Europe justified a need to develop a project that would include the development of bilingual education. The initiative ended up with elaborating the project, entitled "Language Learning for European Citizenship, 1990-1997" (Trim (2005), 34-38). After the Maastricht Treaty entered into force in 1993 (Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union (2012)).

Already in the mid-90s, the recommendations of the European Commission showed a tendency to increase the linguistic possibilities of Europeans. Thus, one of the goals proclaimed in the 1995 White Paper on Education was to master the three languages of the Community (White Paper on Teaching and Training... (1995), 44-46). This meant that, irrespective of the chosen specialty, every European was recommended to know at least two more European languages in addition to his or her native one.

By the beginning of the 21st century, the work of the Council of Europe experts led to the creation of the System of language proficiency levels and, as a consequence, to the development of the Common European educational standards. Along with standards, the Council of Europe considered the "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: learning, teaching, and assessments" (CEFR) as a necessary condition for the successful implementation of the proclaimed policy of linguistic and cultural diversity (Common European Framework... (2001)).

The competitions actualized, on the one hand, the global cultural context of the functioning of languages and, on the other hand, emphasized the communicative-personal component of the common European language policy. It was noted that the concept of multilingualism is aimed at "the positive development of the individual and his/her identity as a result of the acquisition of new linguistic and cultural experiences" (ibid, 1). The developers of the concept explained that multilingualism is not a plurality of languages, which can be understood as knowledge of several languages or the coexistence of several languages in a given society. The goal of language education is not to learn more languages and "keep" them apart from each other, but to form communicative competence on the basis of all knowledge and skills of language experience, where languages are interconnected and interact. The goal of language education is "to develop a linguistic repertoire where there is room for all linguistic skills" (ibid, 4).

In the years that followed, the program's competency framework was developed and teaching kits were produced to help teachers and developers of curricula, courses, and

exam materials that emphasized the intercultural dimension of language learning and proficiency. One of the most popular so far is the 2002 practical guide "Developing the Intercultural Dimension in Language Teaching" (Byram et al. (2002)). A popular example of the translation of the relevant understanding of language education is the training package "Tolerance through Languages (lessons in intercultural communication)" (Tolerance through Languages... (2010)) that was published in 2010 with the support of the Council of Europe and UNESCO.

The completion of this stage of the practical implementation of the concept of multilingualism was the introduction by the Council of Europe of the European Language Portfolio (ELP), consisting of a language passport, a language biography and a dossier, which soon became universally accepted in European countries. Thus, in the first decade of the 21st century, instruments were developed to implement the concept of European multilingualism, a mechanism was launched for Europeans to acquire "practical" multilingualism in the version of compulsory study of two languages and recommended study of three languages, without specifying preferences in the choice of language. The specification of this issue was clarified as the contradictory nature of integration trends in the European Union and the migration crisis of the second decade of this century manifested itself.

METHOD

The implementation at the regional level of the concept of multilingualism is the issue of both the practical need for interaction between multilingual groups and theoretical reflection on the regional specificities of cultural frontiers. The author undertakes the overview on the basis of official documents which enshrine the principles of the concept of multilingualism, textbooks which demonstrate the implementation of these principles, and conclusions of experts and politicians which show the transformation of language policy worldwide in connection with the movement towards the achievement of the SDGs.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In the new century, an area steadily in the focus of the Council of Europe is also the right of minorities to the official use of their native language (a regional or minority language) and, most importantly, the right to receive education in their native language. After the document known today as the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) (adopted in the form of a Convention and opened for signature in November 1992 by the Committee of Ministers) and the adoption in 2005 of the

Declaration by the Council of Europe Ministers of Culture on the Council of Europe Strategy on Intercultural Dialogue, an important step was the publishing of the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue under the motto "Living Together in Equal Dignity" (approved at the 118th session of the Committee of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Council of Europe member states in November 2005). The White Paper was the result of extensive three years of work and extensive consultations with representatives of various local and regional authorities, religious communities, immigrant and cultural communities, and other non-governmental and international organizations.

According to the document, the cultural diversity of contemporary societies should be recognized as a given. At the same time, the White Paper consultations suggested that a transition from multiculturalism to the recognition of the existence of cultural diversity is necessary. Hence, the crucial factor for integration, intercultural communication and social cohesion – the dialogue on the basis of equal dignity and shared values. The paper noted that "ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic traditions cannot be a basis for preventing individuals from exercising fundamental rights or participating in public life (White Paper on Teaching and Training… (1995), 21).

The focus on the question of which languages Europeans should learn and how this relates to respect for regional languages in the context of the changing geopolitical environment of the region became more pronounced between 2007 and 20013 and is linked to the initiatives taken by the European Commissioner for Multilingualism, Leonard Orban.

As a supporter of the large project "Languages without borders" of the Goethe Institut and dealing with the effective functioning of interpretation and translation services in twenty-three official languages in the European Union, he drew attention to the practical functioning of the EU multilingual language policy in the border areas and in the countries that are on the perimeter of the European Union. In particular, every EU citizen is recommended to learn another European language in addition to his or her native language and English. Especially valuable is the observation that learning a second foreign language at school is done in order to get acquainted with the culture of neighbors (Orban (2006), 6-7). The recommendation to learn a second language did not only apply to the languages of the European Union. The Lifelong Learning Program, launched in 2007, also included the languages of "the EU's main trading partners". Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, Turkish, Russian were included among the promising languages for learning (ibid, 7-8).

EU policy, according to L. Orban, must adapt to the national and regional situation and, if it is necessary to "go local" in order to succeed, it must be done (ibid, 8-9). Orban's

call for "going local" has not been concretized in later years in any unified practice, but its main goal – understanding through learning the local language – is recognized as necessary. In particular, it is included in the content of the curricula on "Global understanding" in European universities. In L. Orban's interpretation the European language portfolio, aimed at promoting the learning of foreign languages, in particular a person's native language plus the other two, should also become an effective tool to ensure the mobility of a worker and the competitiveness of business (ibid, 5-6).

With the onset of the migration crisis, the situation in the field of language teaching in Europe has begun to show both its strengths and its weaknesses more vividly. Unfortunately, both the value-cultural and the economic-pragmatic directions of Europe's language policy reforms, begun at the beginning of the century, are being criticized.

Undoubtedly, it is up to states to determine which languages will be supported and to what extent they will be protected. So far, an overwhelming number of states continue to use, in accordance with the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, the wording "historical minorities who have lived on the territory of a state for centuries" (European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1998)). However, under this approach, according to Article 1 of the Charter, the category of regional or minority languages does not include the dialects of the state language of the country and the languages of migrants. Moreover, today, with the growing migration crisis, especially in countries experiencing large and diverse migration flows, this approach already requires certain adjustments and transformations. It has become clear that, against the background of the migration crisis, the situation in the field of language teaching in Europe has shown both its strengths and weaknesses more vividly. Consequently, both areas of European language policy reform – the value-cultural one and the economic-pragmatic one – now require improvement.

In an interview entitled "It is necessary to study the language of your neighbors,"published on the official portal of the Russian World Foundation, the famous German linguist, Professor Jürgen Trabant, using the example of German language policy, outlined the contradictions of the current pan-European trends (Trabant (2012)). The scholar complains that in the prestigious areas of the media environment, even German is losing its position to English, and multinational corporations do not hire people who do not speak English.

Thus, not only purely linguistic considerations, but also philosophical and political factors play a role in this issue. Therefore, according to the prominent European philosopher of the day, Professor Jan Sokol (Mezinárodní conference… (2013)), language

should be seen not only as a means of identity formation, but also as a political tool. In his public speeches, Jan Sokol stresses the exceptional usefulness, rationality and foresight of studying the languages of neighbors. At the same time, he draws attention to the advisability of studying the languages of the Slavic peoples of Europe.

In fact, the superiority of some languages over others, especially when the latter are the languages of peoples who are historically neighboring, is a dangerous syndrome, a reminder of the rapid penetration of extremist ideas. Therefore, specialized agencies of the UN system, in particular UNESCO, are increasingly calling for equal treatment of the cultural and civilizational and practical value of the so-called "main" and "minor" languages (Mother tongue plus two… (2018)). It is no coincidence that the period between 2022 and 2032 proclaimed by the UN General Assembly as the International Decade of Indigenous Languages, and the events held around the world in the framework of this decade show the intention to use the potential of regional and minority languages more actively, to take into account the historical experience of their speakers in preserving their cultural and linguistic identity.

The experience of peoples living in the crossroads of cultural environments is extremely important in this regard. The variants of inter-linguistic interaction of the frontier, which give us examples of regional peculiarities of cultural and linguistic communication of European peoples, can serve as a guide for the further development of the concept of multilingualism. For example, the emphasized ethno-cultural and linguistic dissociation of the Basques in Spain or the Welsh in Great Britain differs from the experience of historical linguistic and ethno-cultural interaction between Slavs (Serbs, Croats, Montenegrins) and Italians (and partly Austrians) in Istria or, on the other hand, Italians and Germans in Tyrol. The first examples characterize the relations of cultural and linguistic interaction between ethnic groups within a single state, the second, the emergence of specific territories of cross-border linguistic and cultural interaction, where regional affiliation sometimes becomes more important than ethnic affiliation. The borders of the states in these areas have shifted quite often throughout history, and the peoples have developed their own cultural "cross-border" code of interaction. This is also reflected in the languages they speak – a kind of "mix and match" against the background of natural multilingualism (Krivenkaya (2018, 362-363).

The experience of Indonesia in this regard is also extremely important. It is known that Indonesia, with about 10% of the world's languages, is the second most linguistically diverse country in the world. Therefore, intercultural interaction between different territorial groups, and even more so in the context of their borderland, is of great interest

for language policy in the country. It is no coincidence that teaching local languages as school subjects is part of the national educational program.

Bilingual or multilingual regional toponymy, which is found in different places around the world, but most often in areas of historical neighborhood, reflects the peculiarities of intercultural interaction of peoples in the conditions of cultural borderland. It may be a variant of the separation of languages when they are used together, or it may be their penetration into each other and the birth of a special frontier language, which cannot be learned without living in these territories.

CONCLUSION

The development of the concept of multilingualism in the 21st century follows, on the one hand, the expansion of the linguistic competencies of the inhabitants of a common global and regional space, and, on the other hand, the emphasis on the urgent need to preserve real cultural and linguistic diversity. The development vectors of both trends are shaped in full accordance with the challenges of the global world – including the pandemic years, the geopolitical changes of the decade under review, and the revision of the pace of achieving the SDGs.

In the context of global turbulence that touches the humanitarian sphere as well, the unique experience of those countries where natural multilingualism is not only the consequence of territorial diversity with a pronounced regional frontier, but also the consequence of centuries of cohabitation, when languages are preserved through mutual enrichment, becomes especially relevant. This experience is certainly worthy to be taken into account in determining the further vector of the transformation of the concept of multilingualism.

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