

GLOBAL PROCESSES: THREAT FOR THE NATIONAL LANGUAGES THE MACEDONIAN CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

This labor makes analyses of the issue regarding global processes and their influence on the national languages. It presents one of the most important issues which dominate in the sociological discourse and through which sociologists make efforts to comprehend and elaborate the social reality. The interest in this issue has been intensified during recent decades, when global processes with enforcing Anglo-Saxon culture and also English language became a threat for the national languages and their cultures. However, considering the complexity of this issue, our efforts will be limited primarily to the changes occurring within Macedonian language under the influence of the global processes. We researched these changes using the interview technique, carried out with certain linguistic experts.

Key words: globalization, language, language identity, language policy.

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1. Introduction

Modern world is characterized by complex processes that have a key role in drafting the contours of the contemporary society and culture. These processes are particularly evident in the cultural sphere.

Anthony Giddens gives good remark that culture, as a dynamic category in the past and today has been passing through certain transformation and emphasizes that the tradition and cultural values are subject of changes (Gidens 2003: 40). In fact, in this sphere profound changes do occur, especially changes that occur within the verbal linguistic symbolical system and the experience that arises from it.

In our analysis the term language is applied as a cultural identifier, which is part of a model of system of values. According to the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinovski, language may be identified even in the most primitive forms and may be studied as a supporting human activity, because it is a mode of human behavior in certain life circumstances (Malinovski 1971). With its help the human being establishes contact with other people, allowing them to get in touch with other people, while the language is not only a function for formulation and expression of thoughts, but also a function for expressing emotions (Jaspersen 1970: 17). Actually, language is a system of characters used by the individuals for expressing their thoughts and effectuating social communication. Therefore, language appears as a medium through which individuals build and interpret the world in which they live and thus language becomes one of the most important elements of individuals' and social groups' identity. Simultaneously, it presents a means of communication between individuals and social groups within a society. Particularly, these ideas are the ideas that arise from the language's functional character.

Accordingly, the language has a number of features among which the most important is the communicative function which can be seen in the role of language as a means of communication. Furthermore, the language has an expressive function, acting as a means to materialize thought, for its formation and constitution, but also a means of expressing feelings, as well as the

accumulative feature, i.e. feature for collection and preservation of social experience and knowledge. Besides these, functions that are often indicated are: the aesthetic function of language, which is expressed in the art and literature, ethnicity function for expressing individual's ethnic or national origin and also the magic feature that is especially expressed in various religious and other rituals (Korubin 2005: 17).

Speaking in the most general sense, the language as an element of culture was generated as a result of necessity for mutual understanding between the individuals, social groups societies and thus all of them, consciously or spontaneously, create for themselves a means for understanding according to their needs. Therefore, we cannot speak about developed, undeveloped, perfect, imperfect, cultivated and primitive languages because for each culture and its members the language by which they do identify is the best one.

Thereby arises the issue of linguistic identity. Speaking of languages, Ranko Bugarski points out several aspects of linguistic identity. The first aspect refers to the structural or typological language identity; the second one, however, is the genetic or genealogical identity and the third aspect is the sociolinguistic or valuable identity of the language (Бугарски 2001: 12).

For us, especially important is the sociolinguistic identity because language refers to speakers' attitudes towards their own language, in fact, what is their opinion about it, depending on its social and cultural role.

In addition, its relation with the national, ethnic, religious and political identity is important, too. Actually, this relation makes clear reference to the exploration of the language in specific social contexts. Edward Sapir makes good remark that language, on one hand, has ability to adapt to particular society and culture, and thus it performs its function efficiently by continuous changing, as a great achievement of the generations (Sapir 1992: 18). However, on the other hand, language is a guide to the social reality which means that it influences culture, sensory perception as well as the established way of thinking and acting (Sapir 1993: 509).

Hence, during language researching and its comprehension, attention has to be paid to various socio-cultural contexts, in our case, the context of the

global and local in general, and especially within the Macedonian culture. For this purpose, we will try to make an external analyzes of the language situation, specifically to analyze the external influences on certain language that are consequences of the locally present globalization processes. .

Speaking about the language, Sociolinguist Ranko Bugarski, distinguishes the following definitions: the language in a general sense (language, language ..), as a human ability for social communication by means of articulated system of signs that allows formatting of speculative contents and their transfer; language as a separate phenomenal shape: 1. each conventional system that belongs to specific social community, satisfying its communicational needs (a language, une language...), for example Macedonian, French, Japanese; set of linguistic means characteristic for special social groups, epochs and professions, such as the language of the young generations, Romanticism, journalism, physicians etc. (Bugarski 2005).

Additionally, this approach is characteristic for other researchers who emphasize the language functionality within the certain reality. This is exactly what Edward Sapir speaks about. According to him, language is a pointer to the social reality, towards adoption of various cultural elements and languages belonging to other cultures which impose worldwide. In this respect, the modern era of human society is characterized by processes that substantially design individual cultures, which further on influence their language. In fact, those are the processes of globalization, presumed to have certain influence on the language in certain cultural space.

Manfred Steger explains the impact of globalization on the language by the following variables: 1. number of languages in different parts of the world depends, above all, on the homogenizing cultural forces; 2. when people migrate and travel around the world they have with them their own languages, but they are forced to use some of the world languages; 3. the language (English) which dominates in the sphere of computer technology and on the Internet has a great advantage over the rest of the languages used in international communication; 4.international scientific publications (Steger 2009: 100-101).

In this context, David Held notes that in a state of globalization, spreading of any language all around the World is evident, but only if it has ability to impose its functionality and hence to have huge number of speakers. Nevertheless, languages become global, mainly due to their increased usage worldwide, outside their language territories. Those are: English, French, Spanish and Portuguese. That's why English has become lingua franca par excellence. It is the language of international business communication, politics, administration, science, advertising and popular culture, and even the language for everyday communication (Held et al. 2000).

Modern sociologist Peter Berger, like Held, emphasizes the expansion of English. He says that English presents a cultural identifier for determining the presence of globalization in certain social context (Berger et al. 2002: 3). Nowadays, it is world's leading language and there from comes the prestige of English over other languages. In fact, according to the language identity, the value of English is defined higher than other languages because of its geographical distribution and its use in many countries around the world.

These trends indicate that all languages are not equal, they do not have the same status in the language reality and all of them don't have a long tradition. It means that some languages vanish when their speakers will disappear, particularly when their culture will vanish. According to some attitudes, language vanishing is a result of rapid physical disappearance of the speaking community due to various natural disasters, wars, conquests, as well as peaceful extinction of languages influenced by social reasons, more precisely speakers of that language may survive, but progressively they traverse to another language. They are forced to do so because their language as a system of communication did disintegrate.

However, some authors, like Scholte (Шолте), emphasizes conflictual sides of the recent processes. He speaks about processes which due to their intense growth led towards gradual disappearance of languages, as well as toward trends for destruction of the world's cultural diversity. These tendencies are manifested by an average vanishing of one language monthly, or even weekly. It means that during "the following few decades, the total number of

languages in the world will be halved" (Шолте 2008: 368), with a tendency to further declination, and simultaneously vanishing of traditions and cultures, while the latter occurs if the members of those cultures feel threatened by the strong processes of globalization.

Therefore, in certain countries and among nations (those that don't to English speaking region), there is a concern and fear for the fate of their languages and at the same time facing the language (neo)colonialism. In fact, concern and fear related to existence don't refer only to languages with low number of speakers, but also to those that have high number of speakers such as, for example, the French case.

These attitudes are not always established on rational basis because there is no country in the world where less than two languages are spoken. In this respect, sociolinguist Ranko Bugarski notes that recently mass migrations, population mixing and other factors contribute to the dissemination of knowledge about the real extent of the societal multilingualism and also indicates the fact that all European countries are multilingual (with the exception of Iceland and Portugal, which are officially considered as monolingual).

In the era of globalization, individuals within their identity, have the opportunity to belong to several language communities. Despite the language by which individuals identify and the global language, they have to establish connections with other languages and cultures, in order to meet modern society challenges. Thus, it is necessary to take into consideration that on one hand language diversity is encouraged by leaving conventional models on societal plan: one nation = one state = one language, and, on the other hand, this diversity for individuals in a society presents a chance to keep their separate identity, enrich it with elements belonging to other cultures and become aware of the common destiny.

2. Methods

In order to determine the changes of the language situation in our context, considered to be directly related to the processes of globalization, the applied researching technique was the interview. This technique was applied within discussions with ten experts in the field of linguistics, who are professionally engaged at the University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" in Skopje.

2. Results

Data that were collected from the discussions with the experts, regarding the influence of globalization on the standard language in the Macedonian society were analyzed through four topics. Those four topics that were discussed with the experts were as follows: 1. the impact of globalization processes on the language and its use; 2. law regulations issue; 3. language policy issue; 4. language awareness issue.

With regard to the first topic experts are very critical. Experts address their criticism generally to the strong influence of the globalization processes on the language. In particular, they emphasize that this influence is an indicator of the public communication. For the second topic, experts state that there is legislation regarding language and language use in our society. Nevertheless, they express regret because in practice it is not respected. For the third issue, the experts also share critical attitudes towards the language policy in our society. Referring to it, experts stated that it is not adequately organized and gave suggestions for its reorganization for the purposes of standard language preservation in all spheres of the social life. Regarding the last topic, experts consider that in our context, linguistic conscience for language fostering and its proper use is very weak. In their opinion, institutions in charge of this issue and also mass media are crucial for strengthening the linguistic conscience.

Here bellow we present segments of the discussions with the experts.

The first expert in linguistics points out that globalization processes are not unification of cultures and languages, but, on the contrary, they are processes that enable joint existence of cultures and languages, with their overall diversity. However, this expert stressed that the presence of these processes in our society and culture, especially in the language have great influence. This influence is particularly distinguishable when the language and alphabet are used in public communication. In this sense, the expert points out that in a survey on Macedonian language in the public communication, they found out that a number of firms and signboards are written in English, or English is present in them.

This is contrary to the Company law. Article 50 of the Company law states: "The signboard of the company reads in Macedonian language and Cyrillic alphabet" (Company law, April 30th, 2004). However, despite this, we are witnesses that this law is disobeyed by naming companies with English names or naming them using Latin alphabet.

This is why in the given situation it is necessary to protect the language with serious language policy based on preventive, and not repressive measures. The target of these preventive measures is to determine who and how the standard language and its alphabet can be protected from foreign influences. As a consequence of this condition, language identity is in question. More precisely, speaker's consciousness and attitude towards his/her own language weakens, it neglects its social role and cultural tradition and hence, there occurs a resistance towards the standard language which is slowly impoverished and impersonalized due to the application of English expressions that are frequently used in everyday conversation, by simultaneous weakening of the awareness about the correct use of standard language. Therefore, it is necessary our language policy to be more organized and focused on language preservation and promotion in the country and abroad, says the expert.

The second expert in linguistics emphasizes standard language protection as well. He says that language is the main cultural characteristic, but at the same time the most ideal means for achieving dominance over the rest of the cultures. Furthermore, he points out that in the Republic of

Macedonia there's no more xenophobia from the model of multilingualism, but from the expansion of the English language and gradual "linguicide" of the Macedonian language, identity and culture. In this situation he recommends that it is necessary Republic of Macedonia to protect its language by exercising an aggressive and deliberate language policy.

In this respect, the fifth expert in linguistics, besides the general language policy issue in the Republic of Macedonia, talks also about the process of globalization as a factor that significantly influences the education. He notes that children are interested in learning English, rather than Macedonian language, which is a fiasco for our society and culture. Specifically, this means that our society lacks linguistic awareness of the standard language. However, in our opinion, studying foreign languages, in this case English, is mainly due to the interaction between individuals and cultures because of the need for a common language. That's exactly the essential reason for penetration of the globalization in the local languages and cultures, which is of great importance for the dominant culture.

The tenth expert in linguistics also refers to the formation and existence of language conscience. He points out that mass media play a key role in the formation of this consciousness. He says that with the introduction of the globalization processes in the mass media, especially the electronic ones, it is difficult to form a linguistic consciousness. It is due to the surge of the English language and its frequent use in all segments of the TV-programme. He points out that it is necessary each mass media to take care of the language expression within the programmes in order to protect ourselves from these occurrences and to protect the standard language and alphabet. However, we are not always in position to do it, because we're institutionally completely unprepared for that.

The seventh expert in linguistics discussed about the non-readiness of the Macedonian institutions and language policy. He points out that institutions which are directly in charge of the language policy and also cultural policy in our country, have to work pursuant criteria that are in compliance with the wider social context. They are necessarily linked to the modern processes and

therefore institutions necessarily have to practice a selective approach that will involve inclusion and exclusion practices. These practices have to stress, above all, the interests of the cultural groups in our society in the language sense. Those interests of the cultural groups in our society are not linked only to the local context, but also to the global context. That's why institutions should aim towards strengthening of the policies focused on correct usage of the Macedonian language and at the same time to take care about finding corresponding expressions that will replace the terms originating from the Anglo-Saxon culture.

4. Discussion

Acquisitions that we obtained from the discussions about the state of the Macedonian language and culture with the experts are very critical. Mainly, they oppose to the globalization processes and their influence on the Macedonian language and alphabet. Generally, according to them, globalization processes, by imposition and domination of the English language and alphabet jeopardize our standard language and alphabet. In our language and alphabet these global trends are evident through the frequent usage of English expressions in public communication and direct substitution of Macedonian words with English words. Therefore, they state that it is necessary modern language policy in our society to be updated, in order to meet the challenges of the globalization processes,

These debates show clearly that Republic of Macedonia has a necessity to develop preventive and contemporary language policy as an adequate respond to the challenges that occur in its interior, and challenges that are happening in the wider context.

These contemporary considerations lead us to a conclusion that, globally, no country, no society should feel excluded from the common civilization that is born. We should work on developing the feeling that in this common civilization it is possible to find the language of personal identity, as

well as some of the personal cultural symbols, so that anyone would be able to identify with the occurrences that appear in the world that surrounds him/her, rather than to seek a refuge in an idealized past.

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ГЛОБАЛНИТЕ ПРОЦЕСИ: ЗАКАНА ЗА НАЦИОНАЛНИТЕ ЈАЗИЦИ МАКЕДОНСКИОТ КОНТЕКСТ

Марија Дракуловска Чукалевска

АПСТРАКТ

Овој труд прави анализа на влијанието на глобалните процеси врз националните јазици. Го претставува едно од најважните прашања кое доминира во социолошкиот дискурс и преку кое социолозите се трудат да ја разберат и елаборираат социјалната реалност.

Интересот за ова прашање беше интензивиран за време на последните декади, кога глобалните процеси со наметнување на англо-саксонската култура и англискиот јазик станаа закана за националните јазици и нивните култури. Но, земајќи ја предвид комплексноста на ова прашање, нашите напори ќе бидат ограничени првенствено на промените кои настанаа во македонскиот јазик под дејство на глобалните процеси. Ние ги истражувавме овие промени користејќи техника на интервјуирање, изведено со одредени експерти по лингвистика.

Клучни зборови: глобализација, јазик, јазичен идентитет, јазична политика.