

Language Diversity in Contemporary World

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Historical, social, economic and political factors create and shape a multilingual setting in which every language has its own status and position. The choice of language is always an individual decision, but in a multicultural/multilingual setting this decision is socially or politically determined and reflects the climate in which individuals can or have the right to live in their language. The presence of two or more languages in a given setting necessarily implies **language contact**, which leads to **language choice**. For example, Slovene – as the language spoken by the Slovene national community living in the neighbouring countries – comes into contact with Italian, German, Hungarian and Croatian, and it is thus important to understand and know the linguistic processes resulting from language contact.

The first studies to address language contact were limited to language as a system. It was only with Weinreich (1953) and Haugen (1953) that the discourse on language contact expanded to include psychological and sociological factors. In the past years, much has changed in the study of language contacts. The focus shifted from contact as such to language contact as a process, with particular emphasis on interaction (Clyne 1992). Giles and others (1977) upgraded language contact with the accommodation/adaptation theory, thus adding a socio-psychological aspect. Language contact is not only the contact of two or more languages, two or more abstract systems of linguistic signs, but is much more – it is the contact between people who use these languages. Communicative competence¹ enables an individual to enter into interactions in a multicultural setting and to use one, two or more languages according to existing social norms and rules. The contact between two languages is namely the contact between two groups, usually between the majority and the minority. Such contact also mirrors the relationship between the two groups, i.e. whether they live with or past each other.

Deriving from the assertion that language has more than just a communicative role, language and a bilingual individual's communicative competence in two languages allow us to determine whether the status of a minority community is balanced or not. According to literature (Lambert 1955; Nećak Lük 1998), balanced bilingualism means that the level of linguistic competence in both languages is in a certain balance, meaning that an individual has either a very low or a very high level of linguistic competence in both languages. On the other hand, imbalanced or dominant bilingualism means that a bilingual speaker masters one language better than the other. In such regard, literature does not state how the level of knowledge of the dominant language is defined, nor does it determine the difference in the level of communication.

Various historical, social, political and personal events contribute to accommodation processes in language contact settings, which can lead to language maintenance, language shift, or language loss. The result always depends on whether a society promotes bilingualism through various formal and informal measures, thus motivating individuals to use both languages (the minority and the majority language), or whether state measures only encourage the use of the majority language. In such settings, the status of individual languages is defined

¹ We use the term *communicative competence* as defined by Hymes (1972). This term does not only mean knowledge of the language, but also the ability to use the language in different situations (on communicative competence see also Bešter Turk 2011). Pirih Svetina (2005, 147) defines communicative competence as knowledge and behaviour that enables an individual to appropriately and effectively use the language and the ability (skill) to use this knowledge to communicate in a real situation.

by the **language policy of the state**, whereby the latter seeks to regulate also the relationships between different ethnic groups. Language policy is all about choices (Spolsky 2009). The state's policy towards different communities can build on social goals that enable a more or less equal integration of members of minority communities into the wider society while preserving ethnic diversity, but it can also strive for unification, i.e. to the abolition of ethnic diversity. In this way, language policy influences the content and direction of language processes in language contact settings. Language policy can be defined as “a set of rational and institutionalised procedures whereby the society influences the language forms of public communication as well as the awareness of the participants in communication about such forms” (Škiljan 1988, 8). Language planning is subordinated to the language policy of the state and embraces the planning of both language corpus and language status, mainly the decision which language or language variant will appear in a specific form of communication and the planning of prestige. In multilingual settings, language policy and language planning are ideologically coloured, which reflects in the role individual languages play and, consequently, in the power relations between different groups as well as different socio-political and economic interests (Ricento 2006).

As many language contact settings in the world differ from each other, it is difficult to develop a single type. For that reason, scholars have developed many typologies, all of them including the minority language as the role and position of the minority language reveal a society's or state's attitude towards linguistic diversity and thus towards the minority community. The difference between the majority and the minority, or between majority and minority languages, is usually reflected not only in the number of speakers, but above all in the scope of their rights, privileges, and power.

Among the most important variables present in each typology are the type and degree of autonomy of the minority community. Typologies most often build on similar concepts and deal with similar elements, complementing and upgrading each other. Typologies help to understand the different language processes that develop in areas cohabitated by members of different ethnic groups.

In addition to the geographic-demographic component (space, settlement, compactness, boundaries, etc.), Foster (Edwards 1992) highlights the three most important factors influencing the formation of typologies: historical, subjective, and economic. The historical dimension includes the historical development of the area inhabited by the minority. The subjective component comprises a psychological dimension and relates to the emotions of members of a minority (especially emotions related to language) and to language or its use. It is the subjective feelings of individuals that influence their perceptions of linguistic, economic, or any other reality. The economic dimension or economic factors are also related to language, as demonstrated by the results of our research. The connection between economy and language primarily refers to the economic motivation of an individual to use the minority language (Novak Lukanovič 2016).

When dealing with languages in contact, scholars also speak of **boundaries**. Giles (1979, 275) considers ethnically mixed areas and boundaries as a two-dimensional space and distinguishes between hard and soft linguistic and non-linguistic boundaries, which allows the members of ethnic groups to move from one side to the other, depending on how they perceive such boundaries.² The model, which can also be applied to border areas, is dynamic and allows individual groups to soften the border by language accommodation.

² In such regard, Giles (1979) indicates the following types:

In her works on ethnically mixed environments, Tabouret-Keller (1997) emphasised the strong **linkage between language and identity**. Language reflects not only individual identity but also the social identity of an individual. She linked the linguistically determined identity of an individual in a multilingual setting to Giles and Smith's (1979) theory of language accommodation. When an individual is motivated for language accommodation, he also expresses his attitude towards the other. The shift to the language of the other is a form of social integration. Giles and Byrn (1982) upgraded the theory of accommodation and pointed out that an individual in a multilingual environment has numerous opportunities to learn a new language, "almost" at the level of a native speaker, and thus identify therewith. Especially in cases where identification with his community and language is weak, when he does not see that language knowledge contributes to better intergroup relationships, when he believes that the ethnolinguistic vitality of his ethnic community is weak, when he perceives his community as irrelevant, and when he more strongly identifies with another (even professional) group than his own.

Language acquisition and the level of communicative competence in a language also have a significant impact on the formation of identity. Language and identity can thus be linked to theories on bilingualism, namely Lambert's model of second language acquisition (Lambert 1977) and Cummins' theory (1979, 1984) concerning the relationship between cognitive and linguistic processes with respect to surface and deep knowledge of a language. An individual's linguistic actions are not just the characteristics of an individual or a community but are the means by which individuals identify with themselves and with others.

Language also represents a silent dimension of ethnicity and is not necessarily related to an individual's ethnic identity. Various examples around the world show that ethnic and linguistic boundaries do not always overlap, that one ethnic group can use several languages (for example, Switzerland), and that a specific language is not necessarily a permanent feature of an ethnic group. Members of a community can abandon their language and accept the language of the environment, but still preserve their identity. Hybrid, non-polar and fluid identities, symbolically related to language, are gaining ground (Kosic and Pertot 2014).

Language can be symbolically associated with identity when, for example, individuals identify themselves as members of an ethnic group but do not know the language of that group, for example, the Welsh, the Bretons, etc.³ A similar thesis on language and ethnicity is suggested by Smolicz (1984), who derives from the Australian case where the basis for preserving a minority language must be sought within the theory of core values. Moreover, different ethnic groups give different emphasis on the role and importance of their language (i.e. what place and role language has in the core values), which reflects in the use and

A – environment where ethnic groups perceive a hard linguistic boundary and a hard non-linguistic boundary (e.g. the Pakistani and Chinese communities in the UK),

B – environment where ethnic groups perceive a hard non-linguistic boundary and a soft linguistic boundary (e.g. the Asian communities in the US: they have assimilated the English language but preserved specific distinctive features, such as culture, skin, food, etc.),

C – environment where ethnic groups perceive a soft non-linguistic boundary and a hard linguistic boundary (e.g. the French Canadians, who distinguish themselves from English Canadians only in terms of language),

D – environment characterised by a soft linguistic boundary and a soft non-linguistic boundary (e.g. the Bretons in France, the Welsh, etc.).

³ This also applies to Slovenes in the US or Canada (third or fourth generation of Slovene emigrants), who neither speak nor understand Slovene and have a modest knowledge of Slovene culture, but still feel and define themselves as Slovenes (Klemenčič 2002).

knowledge of the mother tongue, as well as in the evaluation or importance of language knowledge.

The relationship between language and ethnic identity from a multidisciplinary perspective is explored by Edwards (1985). Many authors derive from the thesis that ethnic differentiation in mixed communities is a special type of social differentiation, which is often associated also with linguistic differentiation. Based on the above, Trudgill (1986) lists the following two types of community:

- the type where language, being the most important characteristic, defines an ethnic group. In most of these cases, individuals identify with a particular ethnic group based on their mother tongue although they are all bilingual or even multilingual. By doing so, ethnic groups preserve their identity and distinguish themselves from others based on language. This is typical of many ethnically mixed settings around the world;
- the type where individual community identities are not distinguished by language, but by different types of the same language. Differences of this kind may arise from or be associated with the same mechanisms as those related to sociolects.

However, assuming that language is related to ethnicity, we need to ask ourselves what is the relationship between language and ethnicity. According to some authors (e.g., Fishman 1977; Ryan and Giles 1982), such relationship is indirect, perceived through the way language is used as an indicator of ethnic identity. Yet, even different uses of a language can also be a sign of ethnic differentiation.

Ethnicity is always understood as something original, authentic, and as Fishman (1985, 71) points out, in defining ethnicity, the phenomenon of originality is most often linked to language, even to such an extent that originality and language are interdependent.

Fishman analysed the above linkages while also pointing out the contradictions of the language–culture/ethnicity relationship. In sum, this means (Fishman 1991):

1. that language is linked to culture based on specific indices or criteria. It is because of this linkage (as long as it is intact) that language can always best express or formulate the interests, values, and views of a particular culture. However, it is not any language, but only the one that is historically and intimately associated with this culture – a language traditionally associated with a particular culture can reflect and transmit such culture much more concisely and simply than any other language;
2. that language is symbolically associated with culture. Language is the most important symbol (system) of a culture;⁴
3. that there is a specific aspect in the linkage between language and behaviour, in the sense of a partial/complete linkage that reflects a partial/complete identification between a particular language and culture. A part of every culture is verbally constituted, composed, expressed, and implemented through the language with which this culture is also closely linked.

⁴ In such regard, we can cite and complement May who argues that language does not “fall or rise” based on linguistic merits alone. All languages are basically equal in linguistic terms. Social and political factors, however, greatly influence the symbolic and communicative position of a language. These peculiarities are simply attached to the language. This is especially true where there are differences between majority and minority languages (May, 2000).

In his analysis, Fishman focuses on the aspect of language in relation to culture and the impact it has on identity formation. Identity in itself cannot be inviolable and stored in some sterile and enclosed space. Language is visible, traditionally associated with identity and regarded as an important source of an individual's ethnic identity, both at the level of social integration and social identification. Fishman's emphasis on the linkage between language and ethnic identity, however, is in some ways at odds with those scholars who state that language is not necessarily a permanent feature of an individual's ethnic identity (Smolicz 1984). According to some authors, Fishman is not always consistent in his interpretations (Atkinson 2000).

According to Fishman (1991, 7) in the process of individual and group self-determination and self-realisation, the preferred and historically associated mother tongue plays a role not only as a myth (that is, as a fact whose objective truth is less important than the subjective one) but also as a genuine identification and motivational desire in the ethnic/cultural sphere or domain

The use or presence of a language in an environment is an important sign of community identity – when subjective factors, such as perception, are added to it, the already existing linkage between ethnic loyalty and language preservation is further strengthened. Although preserving language as a means of communication is not the most important means for strengthening ethnic identity, this may change in certain circumstances. Language maintenance is also closely linked to language promotion.

Language vitality

By setting up different theoretical models (Fishman 1972; Giles et al. 1977; Fishman 1991), scholars seek answers to the question as to which factors at the level of the individual and the society affect language vitality, an indeed complex and dynamic phenomenon.

In an attempt to place socio-psychological processes in interethnic relations into a sociocultural context, Giles, Bourish and Taylor (1977) developed the concept of ethnolinguistic vitality. The conceptual framework of this theory is based on the theory of language accommodation and the theory of intergroup relations (Tajfel 1978). The theory of language accommodation does not only refer to a multicultural/multilingual setting but also derives from the fact that speakers accommodate their interlocutors by choosing a specific language or type of language, adapting their language behaviour accordingly. There are, of course, many objective and subjective motives or reasons for accommodation. Most often, it is an unconscious phenomenon running in the direction of divergence and convergence. In multilingual settings, accommodation also reflects the perception of relationships between different ethnic groups in contact, which is seen in the case of any multilingual setting in the world.

The theoretical model of the ethnolinguistic vitality of Giles et al. (1977) includes both group and language and is based on a three-factor objective model including demography (A), status (B) and institutional support (C) as the basic and most important factors contributing to the vitality and development of an ethnolinguistic group. The concept of ethnolinguistic vitality thus builds on the functions and importance of the language of an ethnic group. Each of these three factors, however, contains several variables. Status (B) contains economic, social and

linguistic categories, demography (A) reflects the absolute number, distribution and concentration of population, while institutional support (C) contains formal and informal subcategories, such as mass media, education, government services, religion, culture, etc.

Each of these factors – status, demography, and institutional support – affects the vitality of a community and thus its linguistic vitality, which is reflected in the functional use of each language at the individual and institutional levels.

A subjective dimension can be added to the mentioned objective model of ethnolinguistic vitality to consider the typology also from a psychological perspective (Bourhis, Giles and Rosenthal 1991). Integrating the subjective assessment of group members with objective information about vitality is undoubtedly a complex process. Allard and Landry (1992) argue that the perceptions identified by Giles et al. in the model of ethnolinguistic vitality are in some ways too narrow or “too quiet”. According to them, a much broader framework of individual beliefs about all the elements that shape the ethnolinguistic vitality of an individual community should be set. In this way, it would be possible to explain the attitude of minority members towards the use of their mother tongue as well as their motivation for learning and using their mother tongue and second language in a more complex and comprehensive way. They considered such a set of beliefs to be a good predictor of language behaviour where two language communities live in the same social environment. They thus classified the concept of beliefs as a psychological variable of the additive and subtractive model of bilingualism.

For a true understanding of specific language situations in the environment and the specifics of a multilingual society in border areas, it is also important how people respond to different languages or different language variants spoken in their environment, how they accept linguistic diversity, and what kind of attitude they have towards individual languages in a multilingual environment. An individual's perception of language and his linguistic or communicative competence influence the language choice in a certain moment and environment. In bilingual/multilingual settings, the attitude towards language is more complex and “it is not uncommon for there to be different degrees of discrepancy between language attitude and an individual's linguistic behaviour”, but there may also be potential conflict even within one's attitude towards one language or the other (Lewis 1980, 264).

The political situation at the state or local level also has a strong influence on the formation of an individual's or a community's attitude towards language. According to Bourhis (1983), for example, the changed political situation in Quebec was associated with changed attitudes towards the French and English languages. It was similar in Wales when interest in the Welsh language among the population increased in parallel with the growing affiliation to the Welsh identity, and the population's attitude towards bilingual speakers changed accordingly.

In multicultural societies, the prestige of the language is also important for the equal use of the languages of the majority and the minority. A minority that speaks a language that is considered international or high-status language is thus better off than a minority that speaks a language of low prestige. On the other hand, even within a certain territory, the prestige of a language can change for various reasons (most often due to economic motives) (Liebkind 1982, 368).

Capacity, opportunity and desire as requirements for language vitality

The sociolinguistic studies on the role and position of minority language in ethnically heterogeneous societies most often address such in relation to language policy. They mainly focus on the analysis of policy decisions and measures and on the results that such policy is expected to bring about for the language and the minority community. In connection with language policy, the studies also address the processes of language maintenance and loss, looking for theoretical models that could be used to revive a particular language, most often a minority language. One such model is the Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS) developed by Fishman (1991). The model has an eight-point scale or eight stages. Although individual stages do not provide an adequate description of all language statuses, the model highlights the importance of intergenerational language transmission, stressing that intergenerational transmission is not only an individual decision of the parents, as the parents' choice of language in the language behaviour towards children is significantly affected by the social environment and institutional policy measures. The GIDS takes into account the intergenerational transmission of language in all domains – in home and community. Each stage indicates the priorities to be implemented to reverse the process of language loss. In this model, the minority language is always in some kind of a competition with the dominant language. Based on Fishman's scale, UNESCO (2003) developed the factors of language vitality and endangerment. Among the most important factors is intergenerational language transmission.

According to Grin and Moring (2002), language vitality is seen as requiring three conditions: the capacity to use the language; opportunities to use it; and the desire to do so. The COD model (Capacity – Opportunity – Desire), which includes capacity development, opportunity creation, and desire/attitude and can be upgraded with data on intergenerational language transmission (Grin and Vaillancourt 1999), is also useful for our research among young Slovenes in the neighbouring countries concerning the use of Slovene language and the vitality of the Slovene national community.

Each condition of the COD model is important for individuals belonging to a minority, but the interaction of all three is necessary if the goal of the set policy is the use of a minority language in all domains of public life, i.e. the preservation of the minority language. A policy that takes into account all the conditions of the COD model ensures the vitality of the minority community, and if the policy is to be effective, it must implement various measures ranging from education, public offices, mass media to language promotion. All of these have effects that are reflected in three parameters: capacity, opportunity, desire, which can be described as follows:

- an individual must have the (legal and social) *opportunities* to use the language;
- an individual must have the relevant language skills and be able to use the language (*capacity*);
- an individual must have the *desire* to use the language.

“Opportunity” relates to the socio-political aspect of language processes in contact settings. It means that there are conditions for an individual to use his mother tongue/first language in various domains of social life. The attitude of the state towards languages or ethnic communities in contact is important, as is the position of the minority community, how the state supports cultural activity, what are the relations between the majority and the minority, what is the socio-political support. The instruments or mechanisms adopted by society create the conditions or the opportunity to ensure ethnic/linguistic equality. The position of the minority language reflects the attitude of society or the state towards ethnic diversity and thus towards the minority community, which theory systematically integrates into various

typologies presented in the previous chapter. It is the policy of the state, however, that takes into account, highlights, or disregards certain elements. Typologies help us understand the different language processes and relationships between groups that evolve in specific environments. Demography, status and institutional support create the conditions for opportunities. Opportunity in the broadest sense affects capacity and desire, which ultimately build the vitality of the minority community. The vitality of a minority community is the result or success of the set and implemented policy of an individual country. Opportunity also means that the language is not discriminated against and that the state – with its constitution, laws, and legal acts – provides the basis for the use of the minority language.

“Capacity” is primarily related to an individual’s communicative competence. According to Hymes (1972), communicative competence is not only knowledge of the language (linguistic potential of the individual), but also the ability to use the language in different circumstances and is related to the meaning of “communicating in language”. Communicative competence thus includes the assessment of language skills, which can be determined by objective and subjective indicators. Our communication is only successful if we have developed language competence. This does not directly define the level of communication and can range from the minimum to the maximum complexity of language skills. Moreover, language competence is determined at different levels – comprehension, reading, writing, speaking. The level of language competence is particularly important in the use of language at the institutional level.

Normally, an individual’s language skills differ. Cummins (1979) recognises two levels of competence:

- basic interpersonal communication skills, which he calls surface proficiency;
- cognitive/academic language proficiency, i.e. the capacity to use the language as a cognitive tool.

When determining communicative competence in two languages, one needs to take into account that language is also an element of identity or community identification. An individual can identify with one or the other language community or with both. In such context, an individual’s attitude towards both the minority language and the majority language is also important.

“Desire” or attitude is a complex psychological whole that includes knowledge as well as an individual’s feelings and behaviour. Attitude is highly sensitive to situational factors – political events, political decisions, economic measures and situations, etc.

There are many aspects of attitude. Thus, for example, Gardner (1985) considers attitude only in connection with the attitude towards second language acquisition and emphasises that the attitude towards language also determines an individual's success in the acquisition thereof, especially in case of second language (L2). Cooper and Fishman (1974) point out that the attitude towards a language and different language variants influences the presence thereof in the official language policy and the use of language in official places. This approach neglects the psychological factors of the individual that are linked to his language attitude. Some authors highlight the difference between language attitude in terms of ethnicity (i.e. attitude towards a specific language) and “pragmatic” attitude, which means that the attitude towards language and its use is dominated by usefulness. Of course, such a clearly defined distinction is sometimes difficult to translate into everyday life. Such distinction is also too simple, especially when one considers what language means in relation to ethnicity, as the relationship between language and ethnicity is always the subject of interdisciplinary study.

Language attitude should always be viewed from the broadest perspective, taking into account all visible and invisible assessments of language and its variants, its speakers, language promotion, preservation or planning, and even language acquisition (Baker 1992). Thus, language attitude can be visible, covert or both at the same time, momentary or long-term, superficial or deeply rooted. Numerous studies (Bourish 1983) report that language attitude of an individual or a group is also very sensitive to the local situation and political and historical developments in the local environment.

The COD model not only shows the vitality of the language (in our case the vitality of the Slovene language) but also indicates the possibility for the state to take various language policy measures intended to:

- improve the language proficiency of minority language speakers (capacity);
- create new opportunities for language use (opportunity);
- influence the attitude of the speakers to increase their desire to use the language (desire).

In the COD model, the implementation of systematic language policy measures in all three aspects simultaneously translates into increased use of the minority language, in our case increased use of Slovene in various situations, and consequently its greater vitality.

The use of a minority language in (private and public) domains as defined by Fishman (1972) is the result of a properly implemented policy (not just language policy) that is reflected in all three parameters and shows the linguistic behaviour of an individual. The analysis thereof gives us the answer to the questions of where and to what extent the minority language (in our case the Slovene language) is used in specific individual and social situations.

For minority language maintenance or its vitality, it is very important that any stakeholder (not only a member of the minority, but also a member of the majority population) has the desire or is motivated to prevent or reject language shift and to accept or reject any activities that could lead to language loss (specifically of the minority language). This, in turn, means that language policy has value for both the individual and the community. That is why it is necessary, on one hand, for individuals – especially members of minorities – to understand the measures of the language policy of the state and recognised therein the opportunities and threats for the vitality of their language, while on the other hand research also delivers an important message by empirically proving the appropriateness, advantage, and efficiency of theoretical models.

Among the main policy measures implemented with the aim of preserving the minority language are education and the role/position of the minority language therein. School is, simply put, one of the most important areas where minority language can be taught in a planned and targeted way. The position of the minority language in the education system varies from country to country, which means that:

- the minority language is the language of instruction;
- the minority language is one of the subjects taught;
- the minority language is optional subject.

Although there are many models/types of education involving members of minorities (Skutnabb - Kangas 1981), there are many covert ways of limiting minority language in education (e.g. number of hours, age of students, number of students in a group, etc.), and the question arises as to whether the limited right to language in education can be considered a

violation of human rights (Kontra et al. 1999). That is why it is important for the Slovene national community what type of education is provided, what role and place the Slovene language has in the curriculum, whether continuous education is provided in the minority language, for whom the education is intended (only for the minority or also for the majority population), what is the content of education, and what are the educational goals.

Education is indeed a very important area, but it is not sufficient to guarantee the long-term vitality of a minority community. It is important that the language is also used in public institutions, such as the courts or in public administration, as well as in the mass media and at cultural events. We often forget or neglect a very important fact that strongly affects the vitality of a minority, namely that minority members actually wish to use their language, pass it on to the next generation, and strive for its broadest use – not only at home, in the family, but also in public. We also witness a phenomenon where ideologically coloured education achieves exactly the opposite effect among parents, when for social or economic reasons they do not want their children to learn the minority language.

In the border area, in a multilingual setting, language or language competence is an important element of integration in the shared communication field – in communication with the neighbours, with the members of language communities in contact (Bernjak 2003).

When dealing with language competence, the motivation for learning and using the minority language in the areas of language contact must be taken into account and is significantly influenced by economic factors. Researchers have only been more thoroughly involved in language market theory in recent decades, and the first empirical studies on the subject have begun to emerge in the last decade.

When considering the economics of language and the policy of plurality, one of the leading scholars (Grin 1996) suggests the following parameters:

1. the value of linguistic diversity (the language of the majority, the language of the traditional autochthonous minority, the language of the immigrant group) and the extent of financial and institutional support,
2. the value of adequate intergroup communication, which also includes adequate language teaching,
3. the value of language vitality, which also includes the effect of language on trade flows.

The economic aspect of language in a multicultural setting is most often mentioned only as one of the variables appearing in connection with motivation, namely in cases where an individual is economically motivated to learn the language and to use it in specific situations. In many cases, the economic variable influences the individual's attitude towards a specific language. The economic power of a minority characterises the multifaceted ethnic identity of an individual, influences the positive attitude towards one's group, and reflects in participation, i.e. integration into cultural, social, societal organisations, and communication, and hence in language activity and language capacity. In short, this means that the economic factor is directly or indirectly linked to all aspects affecting language processes, from language maintenance and loss to language accommodation strategies, i.e. convergent and divergent language processes (Novak - Lukanović 2016).

Mutual acceptance and coexistence of different language groups in mixed settings is possible also with due account of the intertwined economic and linguistic processes. In environments

where two languages are present, the majority and the minority language, the economic argument can indeed promote the minority language, but only if it also has some “instrumental” value. In cases where the minority language does not have such value, even the economic argument is worthless. At the same time, the increased instrumental value of a language and its exclusivism can rearrange/re-rank the society and link it to the economic and social well-being of the speakers. In this case, language plays the role of the regulator of unequal access to power (Rannut 1999, 100).

Conclusion

When exploring a language, we always start by asking ourselves what is the status of the language, where it is used, which language variant prevails where and when, why standard language and not dialect, why some communities are able to pass their language on to younger generations, why in other communities the language is lost across generations, and what is its role in society. The question also arises as to who is responsible for preserving the minority language – the state or the individual speakers. The answers are manifold. Language has numerous multifaceted functions, statuses, and it is almost impossible to capture or predict just one relationship between a language or language variant and its role in the local, national, or international environment. Examples involving speakers of minority languages point to a shift to the majority language, language accommodation, lack of intergenerational transmission of the minority language, and restricted use of the minority language to certain domains only. Such evolution of language contacts can be explained by or grounded on empirical research applying theories that involve social factors, especially those related to equality and justice.

This view of a language implies or suggests the setting/conceptualisation of the status of the language, which is always linked to language policy and language planning. In multilingual settings, language policy and language planning are ideologically coloured, which reflects in the role of individual languages and consequently in the power relations between different groups as well as different socio-political and economic interests (Ricento 2006). The linguistic behaviour of individuals or communities and the politics of a society are always influenced by ideology. Yet the measures and forms dictated by ideology are not enough to justify the orientations and goals of a particular policy. We must also be aware that any language policy is successful and effective only if individuals, members of minorities, and the society as a whole wish to preserve the language and support any activities aimed at language vitality in all domains. They must accept language as a value in the broadest sense.

The discourse on language also touches on the concepts of equality/inequality and linguistic human rights. In connection with language, we always talk about non-discrimination. The definition of non-discrimination is broad, but it always refers to equality between speakers rather than equality between languages. Non-discrimination is a position rather than a precise rule (Coulmas 1991, 49) and requires that any form of coercion be avoided: there should be no aggressive attitude towards minority languages nor an aggressive policy in favour of minority languages. The outcome is always linguistic injustice.

International organisations have adopted numerous documents to encourage the development of language policies enabling each language community to use its first language or mother tongue to the greatest extent possible, while at the same time encouraging the acquisition of another national or regional language and one international language. Only conscious multilingualism can enable all languages to find their place in a globalised world.

Multilingualism as a policy and as a value of the individual and the community leans on the principles of equality and recognition of language and cultural diversity as an important source of knowledge and wisdom. Furthermore, mutual understanding and communication are the preconditions for a peaceful coexistence of different speakers in the global world. Irrespective of international documents, such as the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992), each country has the responsibility to choose its policy on ethnic equality, which also includes language.

Finally, we witness a mutual influence or interaction between multilingualism on the one hand and the dynamics of transnationalism, globalism, and Europeanism on the other. An important result thereof is a significant/major change in the function and position of languages compared to one another or compared to contact languages, which is reflected at national, regional and global levels, influencing national language policies and language practices in multicultural settings. All of this opens up new challenges for modern societies characterised by diversity and calls for institutional responses by contemporary language and multilingualism policies.

A review of the literature shows that there are not many works dealing with multilingualism in today's Europe or works identifying and integrating the key social and political dimensions and their impact on language policies and language practices, which in a way marked the "new type of multilingualism" and even undermined the old, traditional linkage between language and the nation-state. Questions are raised as to how to establish an appropriate and equitable language framework for transnational policies.

As the internationally acclaimed scientist on bilingualism and bilingual/multilingual education and language rights activist Tove Skutnabb Kangas puts it, linguistic and cultural diversity are as necessary for the existence of our planet as biodiversity. The loss of biodiversity has had massive attention all over the world, but few people talk of loss of linguistic diversity – languages are being lost, but the world does not seem to care (Skutnabb - Kangas 1999, 188).

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