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PEDAGOGICAL ISSUES OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE IN THE SOCIOCULTURAL CONTEXTS: LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY

Philosophers and scientists have been examining the connection between thought and language for three thousand years, whether language evolved from thought or vice versa. Whatever the truth, all theories agree that our language, our culture and our identity are inextricably linked. In the paper, the questions of how language influences our way of thinking, our culture and our identity, how our language develops under the influence of constant changes in our environment will be answered.

Key words: *language policy, linguistic anthropology, sociocultural education, monolingual society, multilingual society, language identity, language ideology*

Introduction. Until now, there have been many studies based on different populations and many relevant theories explaining the formation or change of various types of identities.

It is often argued that the symbolic value of language, the historical and cultural associations it has accumulated and its natural semantics of remembrance “provide a rich underplay for every communicative interaction, a powerful underpinning of shared connotations” [6, p. 55].

Identity (from the Latin “*idem*,” meaning “the same”) was first used in ancient times, later by medieval theologians and philosophers; then at the time of Romanticism it

was “rooted not in genetics but in heritable cultural forms, especially language” [5, p.374]. It has been recently applied by psychologists, sociologists, and linguists. Simply put from the sociological perspective, *identity* is the social positioning of self and other, literally “refers to sameness” [5, p. 370].

It is true that in a mixed culture formed by people from a variety of language groups, the issue of language and identity is linked with the concept of *language contact* (the prolonged association between speakers of different languages)[9]. Ukraine, as a mixed community formed by people from a variety of cultures, is a suitable case for studying issues about socio-cultural interactions, language contact, and identity. Of particular interest in our paper will be those processes and mechanisms that political leaders and governmental authorities usually use to control and manage national identity through language policy.

Theoretical background. Brubaker & Cooper [4] have analysed a number of ideas in the literature discussing the nature of identity and found two contrasting conclusions: at one end there is an idea that identity is a fixed asset and, at the other – in social-constructivist conceptions, identity is a fluctuating, contingent and sometimes quite unstable phenomenon: process, rather than an entity. Both conclusions seem to be quite declarative, since the studies at the background of those conclusions lack empirical data.

Associating identity with language, Bucholtz & Hall believe it to be deeply rooted in ideologies, cultural beliefs, values of speakers who produce those particular sorts of language [5], claiming that “since language is central to the production of identity, linguistic anthropology has a vital role to play in the development of new research frameworks” [5, p. 370]. Identity has also been defined as the linguistic concept of membership in one or more social groups or categories [3].

The association between language and identity can be viewed in two mutually related dimensions. On the one hand, one of the functions fulfilled by language is to express identity, that is from a speaker’s dialect, accent, pronunciation and other features it is possible to tell the speaker’s place of origin, gender, social status, educational background, occupational activity etc. [7]. On the other hand, the speakers’ choice to use specific features of language and linguistic resources contribute to the formation of identity [5, p. 385]. At the same time, “the possibility that ethnic identities may be eliminated altogether under nationalism suggests that such identities do not coexist in the kind of multicultural harmony marketed in the mass media and promoted by liberal education, in which physical, cultural, and linguistic specificities become interchangeable and equivalent differences. In reality, in situations of cultural contact, equal status is won, if at all, through bitter struggle. This fact is illustrated by ongoing efforts around the world to gain some form of official state recognition for the languages of people who have experienced subordination and oppression under colonial rule, nationalism, and global capitalism” [5, p. 371].

Smith [9] suggests that where national identity in relation to an individual is “viewed as having three functions: (i) providing a satisfying answer to the fear of oblivion through identification with a nation, (ii) offering personal renewal and dignity by becoming part of a political “super-family,” and (iii) enabling the realization of feelings of fraternity, through the use of symbols and ceremonies” [9, p. 160-161]. The author claims that weak or divided sense of national identity may affect the functioning of the state, thus linking two concepts of state and nation, with the state being an objective, political entity, and the nation being a subjective, psychological construct. If

the two are linked, this brings identity, when they are disconnected or the connection is violated, such a situation can be the cause of great tension and conflict.

The idea expressed by Smith is vividly proved by the language problem in Ukraine, with Ukrainian to be the state approved language, but Russian associated as national by the majority of the population in the eastern and southern parts of the country, where Russian domination has been the result of the so called “russification” language policy. “As a result of the Russian language dominating over the Post-Soviet area for almost a century, many Soviet Union member countries were on the verge of losing their national identity and languages as well. The case was conditioned by the powerful nation – Russian – which displayed its dominance by prioritizing its national culture and language over the other ones. In the Soviet Union, non-Russians were limited in personal language rights whereas this wasn’t applied to the Russian population. This means that if you were ethnically a non-Russian, you could speak the Russian language everywhere whereas the use of your native language was territorially limited” [1, p. 274]. This changed the people’s mentality dramatically, purposefully weakening the sense of national identity of many nations, including Ukrainians.

The contemplations expressed above seem to be true for equally strong contact languages, but then John Edwards describes the situation which is very typical for the Ukrainian and Russian languages relations: “When ‘big’ languages threaten smaller ones (as is the case with Russian – big, and Ukrainian – small – *our comment*), and when cultural identities are seen to be at risk of being swamped or assimilated into larger units, a number of entirely predictable linguistic reactions occur – or would, if resources and circumstances permitted. Indeed, the awareness of language and cultural issues is part of any definition of ‘minority group’. At the same time, any consideration of minority groups in isolation from the larger communities in whose shadows they must exist can obviously tell only half the story, at best. ... The conditions under which a language begins to suffer, the conditions under which people begin to think about such things as language shift, maintenance, decline, death and revival, always involve a stronger linguistic neighbour. All of these phenomena have implications for identity and attempts to shore it up in the face of danger” [6, p. 246].

The ideas expressed above force us to believe that artificially created freedom for bilingualism with dominant and minority languages will always trigger “language conflicts” for the society and the state (which is the case in Ukraine) unless the latter carries out appropriate educational campaigns with an attempt to consolidate rather than scatter the multilingual communities, with consolidation process to be grounded on the idea of national identity, singling out one’s national identity among many on a global scale, bringing about the colour of uniqueness and thus survival, rather than dissolution and disappearance. We strongly believe that such campaigns should be deprived of any political flavor.

Language and identity: implications for the Ukrainian society. Ukraine was part of the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) and as such subject to Soviet occupation. The increasing influence of the Russian language during this period is frequently interpreted nowadays as an oppressive policy of Russification [8]. Since its independence in 1991, Ukraine has reversed this tendency and has implemented the opposite policy of de-Russification. Ukrainian is now the sole official language, and there is increasing social pressure to use Ukrainian not only in informal but also formal settings. It means that the ideology of language hierarchy is being successfully at use in modern Ukrainian society.

There have been a few consequences of such deliberate shift from Russian to Ukrainian: 1) a tendency on the part of many speakers to mix the two linguistically related languages which has led to the appearance of the so called “surzhyk”; 2) such language mixing is often stigmatized, and there is an insistence on standard Ukrainian and linguistic correctness as a way of differentiating Ukrainian from Russian in the ongoing process of nation building [2] – the example of the standard language ideology; 3) such “doing good” to the Ukrainian language by the authorities confronted and split the society trying to distract the public attention from on-going topical economic and social problems (corruption, poverty, health care issues etc).

Even though Russian is still widely used, especially in eastern parts of the country and the Crimea, the new language policy means that Ukraine has become, officially speaking, a more monolingual country in Ukrainian only. Russian is perceived more and more as a ‘foreign’ language and is even being demoted to the status of the second foreign language after English, which has been pushing in strongly as the language of modernity and globalization. Because of the demand for English, many schools have reduced or even stopped their teaching of Russian and recruited large numbers of English teachers. As a result, many young Ukrainians nowadays tend to be bilingual in Ukrainian and English rather than Ukrainian and Russian.

As a result of language planning policy in Ukraine, the majority of governmental endeavours are still being met with hostility by numerous citizens of eastern and southern regions of Ukraine, where Soviet Union reign (and thus Russification process) lasted longer than in the western part of the country (where Ukrainian is the dominant language). This seems to prove the idea that language (the ideology of mother tongue) has a strong bond and affects the formation of identity (ethnic and cultural identity in particular): eastern Ukrainians still lack the identification of themselves with Ukrainian culture (when travelling to the west of the country, they are excited by Ukrainian national cultural traditions which seem everyday practice for the Ukrainians in the west of Ukraine). As a result, the reluctance to speak Ukrainian in everyday life (at home, with peers) or shift to Ukrainian (which is encouraged by governmental endeavours) is very much common in most urban areas in the east and south of the country. No wonder, exactly in those regions, the pro-Russian political parties gained such numerous supports at the recent (2019) presidential and parliamentary elections in Ukraine.

At the same time, from the pedagogical perspective, some shifts for the conscious use of Ukrainian by former Russian speakers has been noticed among the western Ukrainian communities where the refugees from the east of Ukraine settle (caused by the military conflict with Russia in the east of Ukraine), Lviv, Ternopil, Ivano-Frankivsk regions in particular. With Ukrainian dominant language and national educational settings, such communities provide the environment of national identity expression without being oppressed or punished (which has been the case for eastern Ukrainian territories for many centuries up to the present day). This encourages the newly settled Russian speaking Ukrainians identify themselves with Ukrainian identity and thus manifest it by the choice to switch to Ukrainian.

Conclusion. Whether Ukraine will become a monolingual or bilingual country, and whether the language aspect will stop being a conflict raising issue depends much on the language planning and educational policy of present and future Ukrainian authorities who should remember the important and crucial implication discussed in the paper: the bond between language and identity is powerful, in certain situations even decisive.

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**РОЛЬ ІНДИВІДУАЛЬНИХ ОСВІТНІХ ТРАЄКТОРІЙ У СУЧАСНОМУ
«ЦИФРОВОМУ СУСПІЛЬСТВІ»**

Досліджено визначення індивідуальної освітньої траєкторії та її місце в структурі сучасного освітнього процесу. Висвітлено етапи створення індивідуальної освітньої траєкторії в цифровому просторі. Розглянуто роль цифрових засобів навчання в процесі побудови індивідуальної освітньої траєкторії здобувача освіти закладу вищої освіти. Проаналізовано основні особливості використання інформаційних систем та цифрових платформ навчання (Moodle, iSpringOnline LMS, Edmodo тощо) у контексті побудови індивідуальної освітньої траєкторії здобувача освіти. Виокремлено основні функції інформаційних систем: опрацювання та збереження інформації, подання оброблених даних у зручному для користувача вигляді; експортування даних в інші програмні комплекси. Акцентовано увагу на індивідуалізації навчального процесу як запоруки успішної побудови індивідуальної освітньої траєкторії.

Ключові слова: *індивідуальної освітньої траєкторії, цифрове суспільство, здобувачі освіти, особистісно орієнтоване навчання, цифрові платформи навчання.*

Исследовано определение индивидуальной образовательной траектории и ее место в структуре современного образовательного процесса. Освещены этапы создания индивидуальной образовательной траектории в цифровом пространстве. Рассмотрена роль цифровых средств обучения в процессе построения индивидуальной образовательной траектории учащегося учреждения высшего образования. Проанализированы основные особенности использования информационных систем и цифровых платформ обучения (Moodle, iSpringOnline LMS, Edmodo т.п.) в контексте построения индивидуальной образовательной траектории учащегося. Выделены основные функции информационных систем: разработка и сохранение информации, представление обработанных данных в удобном для пользователя виде; экспорт данных в другие программные комплексы.