THE MULTILINGUALISM PHENOMENON IN THE ERA OF GLOBALIZATION

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Abstract: *This paper proposes an overview of the research topic concerned, targeting diverse fields. Term multilingualism has an important role regarded as a unity in diversity, which helps to create links between people and companies, especially in the current context, when (multilingualism) offers a solution to the phenomenon of migration, transmutation or continue mobility. Starting from the effects it has European Union enlargement to the linguistic diversity, and continuing with institutional multilingualism seen in European Context we examined European citizen in this flow of events, found in a continuous intercultural dialogue. So, it is crucial that individuals to know as many languages through which they can contact different cultures, to achieve full social integration at international expansion. To achieve this we see that the teaching and learning of languages in schools from early age is a strategic factor for the development of the country if we want a society based on knowledge. In conclusion, the present paper intends to view multilingualism in the light of the recent overly-debated phenomenon of globalisation and trying to prove how important it is for us to accept this reality.*

Keywords: *multilingualism, globalization, language.*

If you consult any dictionary, you can see that the term *language* is defined as a primary means of communication between members of a community, plus the following functions: tool of knowledge, mode of socialization or affirmation of socialization, progress factor, etc. Although definitions become shorter and more conclusive, around this time, many writers and men of literature have meditated in a sentimental and metaphorical manner, that the true meaning of the term has been defined. For example, Ralph Waldo Emerson sees language as a "historical archive" while Rita Mae Brown says that "language is a map of culture. It teaches us where people are coming from and where they are headed" Both are very close to the current vision of sociolinguistics, trying to study the language through it's strong connections with social life and culture, including "any aspect or use of language that correlates with cultural and social functions" (Lyons, 1971:287) Thus we see that languages become "the instrument through which communication takes place in the political, commercial, defense, the academy, the media, the internet and in most aspects of human life" (Phillipson, 2003:5), occupying "central role to the increasingly internationalized world, and the galloping processes of globalization and European unification" (*Ibidem*)

In 2008, the Commission communication of the European Union, entitled *Multilingualism: an European Value and a Shared Commitment*, we find that European Union now has 500 million citizens, 27 Member States, three types of alphabets and 23 official languages, some spoken worldwide. 60 other languages are also part of the heritage of the EU and are spoken in certain regions or certain groups. In addition, immigrants have brought with them a long string of languages: it is estimated that within the borders of the EU, there are now at least 175 nationalities. "Statistics say that of these approximately 60 communities speaking regional or minority languages, approximately 40 million people currently speak such languages."(Saramandu, Nevaci,

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2009:13)

Languages have gained rights and benefits. Holidays celebrated worldwide include: International Mother Language Day, February 21. "It was first announced by UNESCO on 17 November 1999 and recognized by the United Nations General Assembly in the same resolution which declared 2008 the International Year of Languages" (http://daccess-ddsny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N06/510/33/PDF/N0651033.pdf?OpenEle ment) This is consistent with what Umberto Eco said: "Europe begins with the birth of its vernacular languages and Europe's critical culture starts as a reaction to their flourishing, who face the drama of language fragmentation and beginning to reflect on their own destiny of a multilingual civilization" (Eco, 2002: 21)

Based on the number of members of a community, we can classify languages in majority or minority. In terms of legal status, we can speak about the official language (recognized by the state) and national language (mother tongue, which belongs to a minority, ethno linguistic group). After the degree of standardization, we have literal languages (linguistic community model) and nonstandard (varieties accepted in speech). Regarding the linguistic implications of globalization, there exist several contradictory explanations: "a unifying trend, homogenizing and standardizing" (Radulescu, 2001:72)- which is supported by the strengthening of national domination and especially supranational domination and a tendency to "atomization, amplifying and strengthening the national scale and, particularly, subnational (regional or even narrower local) and also the insulation at this level."(*Ibidem*) the discussion is very broad and has gathered around it many pros and cons especially when discussing cultural identity and linguistic identity in the globalization process. There are cultures to be preserved based on their own specific character but should keep in mind that national culture is fenced space that speaks the language of the state and gets in touch with the other nations and should be allowed through the tongue to be known. Eugen Coseriu says: "The more national character we do not seek, the more we find, the more we will express just because we are dealing with the universe, our perspective and our possibilities, our traditions, in any case, we present an undoubtedly human voice, but at the same time a human voice to be recognized as a Romanian voice, as a voice with a Romanian stamp". (Coşeriu 1994:176)

The phenomenon of globalization is one that facilitates the contact between cultures and requires "integrated, interdependent, interconnected character in economic, social, technological, cultural, political, ecological areas of a growing number of societies". (Şerbănescu, 2007:125)

It is essential for a better overview of the phenomenon of multilingualism to observe the relation between society and language, in the context that both are "organizational structures whose variation is correlative and systematic - the relationships between them are modeled". (Ionescu-Ruxăndoiu, Chiţoran, 1975:7) Therefore, languages, constantly yielding to the phenomenon of change, are increasingly associated to bilingualism / multilingualism. It most often is based on contact between languages, regardless of their nature. By this we understand that the "two or more languages may be considered in contact if they are used interchangeably by the same person. Individuals speakers are the perfect contact" (Weinreich, 1953:1) We identify several types of contact between languages that have intensified the phenomenon of bilingualism. Noted that geographic area is important but also internal factors related to the character of immigrant or indigenous language. Other ways to realize contact between languages is achieved by person-to-person contact, verbal or

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written, by the media or education. For example, we can see that there was a phenomenon of the imposition of languages in countries where there was a territorial occupation. This has been studied in English and French speaking Canada, English speaking Australia and India, and Russian in Romania, along with many other countries that were under the influence of the USSR. There has been a positive development in this regard, and we see that foreign languages, studied in schools, are chosen by non-political criteria: starting from the degree of international circulation. The proposed curriculum is the best known and most commonly used in economics, politics, IT, technical, business, etc.. This mode of learning tends to be increasingly attractive to young people to ensure the durability of the phenomenon in question. Lately, the phenomenon of bilingualism grew due to the understanding of the importance of knowing as many foreign languages as possible; we can now speak of the growing desire to speak at least one foreign language as well as we speak our mother tongue.

Clearly, this is due to globalization so publicized lately, which has led to a rapid increase in cultural diversity. Along with the mentioned phenomenon, we can also add the number of people who choose to study and work in other countries or permanently change their residence. The mentality has changed and people are more permissive regarding immigrants. States often come in their support of government programs that integrate family members who learn the dominant language of society. Thus, the focus in the contemporary world an accent is placed exclusively on integration, starting with intercultural communication. Multilingualism is only instrumental in accessing information, through which it interrelates and where you can affirm at an international level, but it also represents a factor for progress in scientific, cultural, and technical levels etc.. Bringing language into intercultural dialogue by breaking language barriers produces globalization of information and the free flow of ideas. For good communication worldwide, a universal code must be used, though there is diversity. Therefore the English language, as other languages that have a large number of speakers spread over a vast geographical area, has an advantage.

To understand how the multilingualism phenomenon occurs worldwide will start from the semantic meaning of the term in question and we see that a distinction can cover three areas. The first takes into account the national space and the ability of individuals to use the current language, the two or more languages, whether one knows more superficially than the other. Here, we include minority communities in each country, as is the case with ethnic groups in Romania (Hungarian, Turkish, Tatar, German, Ukrainian, Russian Lipoven, Bulgarian, Slovak, etc) who know, both the State language and native language. The second refers to the knowledge of a language in addition to those already provided through curriculum that target only the ability to understand a message. "Eurocom's strategy" **(**Reinheimer, G. Klein, D. Stegmann, 2001:5**)** That can be perceived as a reform that supports language learning at every level. Many say that if a speaker has only the ability to understand the other without sending the message in the other foreign language, it didn't reach a satisfactory level of multilingualism to reach the minimum quota of European linguistic complexity. This does not come in support to encourage the language learning process, because it is important to know at any level. For example, a connoisseur of a Romance languages can learn another language in the same family with minimum effort because he has a rather large base. The third category, most discussed and to which I will conclude this paper, refers advanced communicative competency based on the ability to use more than two languages. Thus, in a multicultural society, we see compulsory encouragement of the acquisition of new skills and the development of existent skills. This is essential in our

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society, one in which social cohesion is achieved through multilingualism and interculturalism, but also provides multiple opportunities for personal development. Each country member of the European Union made a number of recommendations endorsed by institutions to launch a series of projects aimed at emphasizing the relevance of language in society but also helping citizens eager to accumulate new knowledge. These programs have been implemented not only in specific educational policies of the younger generation, but also for people who want to learn a foreign language at any stage of their life. Implementation and cooperation manifested in different countries was uneven, but it is important as the first step was taken and the initiative has been taken in this direction to support multilingualism.

The Commission communication of the European Union has discussed these issues: Endeavor to provide students, from the youngest in their general education and on to students attending universities and vocational schools, with a variety of educational options in language and culture that would ensure their ability to learn foreign languages; Encourage the expansion and development of linguistic skills. Strive to increase the number of available languages taught at different educational levels including those languages that are less widely used; Use distance learning and modern technological tools to promote the spread of European languages; Student assessment based on CoE's CEFRL, Europass Language Passport & other tools such as EILC; Improve training for language teachers & enhance their language competency to "promote the teaching of non-linguistic subjects in foreign languages" (http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1405532624571&uri=CELEX:32008G1216(01)); Promote travel and exchange programs for language teachers, allowing them to spend "time in a country where the language is spoken" (*Ibidem*); Develop learning & teaching materials via the European Language Label and the Lifelong Learning Program to provide travel opportunities for all target groups to improve language skills.

What we notice today is that with cultural and linguistic diversity, multilingualism and multiculturalism are main and default values of the European Union member countries. As I outlined above, multilingualism manages to create strong links between different cultures, which did not happen before. Now we try to prevent languages from being used as battlefields, not leading to conflicts, stemming from cultural, religious or linguistic differences. In that capacity, they try to accept one another, in an embrace of diversity. Although English tends to be the main language in many areas, we see that they do not try to suppress linguistic diversity, but rather, celebrate it. Paul Ricoeur sees a utopian finality of inter linguistic communication by integrating a great number of works into a single united corpus: „dream to create a library that would be complete by accumulation. Paper, that infinitely ramified network and all works consisting of translations in all languages crystallized itself into a sort of universal library where untranslatable books of all kinds will be deleted. This dream would be that of a rationality, completely freed from cultural constraints and communitarian limitations a universally translated dream, and it intends to saturate the space communicating between them and compensate for the lack of a universal language" (Ricoeur, 2005:73-74)

The people of the European Union wanted to support multilingualism which entails achieving social integration through intercultural dialogue and understanding different cultures. Culture cannot be national and should not be national concern. "Undoubtedly we can handle our objects because we know them better, but every object that we consider, even if it is a local object, it must always be viewed in the perspective

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of universality; be seen in every object, every form of popular culture in a particular country, from a particular region, a possible form, a possible determination of art in general, universal art, and not just a form that excludes other forms of art" (Coşeriu 1994:176). As Adrian Marino observes, in terms of national specificity, analyzed in relation to the phenomenon of globalization, it can be seen that "<integration> does not, in any way, threaten the existence of <national specificity> [...] and that this <specificity> evolves, enriches and nuances through all the influences and prolific acquisition of <integration>"(Marino 2005:76)

In the Official Journal of the European Union, the Commission communication of 21 November 2008 entitled European strategy for multilingualism, The Council of the European Union (http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1405532624571& uri=CELEX:32008G1216(01)) has highlighted the main issues that concern the importance of multilingualism in Europe: Diversity, both cultural and linguistic, is intrinsic to European identity and multilingualism is an important issue that traverses social, cultural and educational circles. Advancement of minor European languages would be a major contribution to multilingualism. Great strides should be taken to advance language learning and evaluate cultural aspects of linguistic diversity & knowledge of the variety of European languages and their propagation around the globe. Among other things, multilingualism is especially important in the field of online media and content; translation has a key role in this process due to the links it establishes and the access it provides.Within Europe, linguistic diversity is an advantage for the development of relations among EU member countries & the rest of the world. Multilingualism provides access to alternate modes of thinking, interpretation and expression; contributing to creative development.

Therefore, the phenomenon of multilingualism is closely related to the factors mentioned above and is explained "only in terms of social experience". (Haugen *apud* Ruxăndoiu Ionescu, Chiţoran, 1975:241-242**)** They don't have a tendency to a perfect language to include all, or turn them into dead languages but to a global multilingualism. It is much better to have a multitude of points of view which offer complexity and diversity to Humboldt's interpretations "the same act by which the thread of language stretches, man weaves himself through language. Each language draws a circle around the people who speak it and it is not possible to leave this circle except to enter simultaneously in the circle of another people. Learning a new language should be thus reaching a new point of view of the attitude of the individual" **(**Humboldt, 1988:161-164**)**

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