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LANGUAGE CONTACT AND IMMIGRATION TO GERMANY SINCE THE 19TH CENTURY: LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL ASPECTS

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Abstract: *Migration from one country/language/culture to another one is a frequent reason for language contact, linguistic borrowing, bilingualism, and cultural influence. The paper analyses possible types and reasons for migration. Then different waves of immigration to Germany since the 19th century are described, including linguistic effects and cultural problems of integration.*

Keywords: *immigration, language contact, bilingualism, borrowing.*

1. Introduction

In linguistics lexical borrowing or so called loan words are considered as one of the most important effect of language contact (see e. g. Juhasz 1970). This may be correct, but when we reduce the process only to the lexical result, it means that we do not realize that we have to do with a communicative effect between human beings speaking different languages or dialects. One of the most intensive personal form of language contact is migration.

According to statistics given by the United Nations for 2005, there are more than 191 million migrants in the world (United Nations 2009). Nowadays 'migration' is mostly considered to be due to job activities within a globalized world. In recent years there has been an intense discussion of 'migration' in linguistics, sociology and communication sciences (see e.g.: Bommes 1993, Eberding 1995, Daller 1999, Mattheier 2000, Erfurt 2003, Florio-Hansen 2003, Krefeld 2004, Owens 2005, Maas 2005 and 2008).

As a matter of fact, migration of workers has been for long time an important motivation for changing the domicile and even for changing the country. Here we have to distinguish between seasonal working and definite emigration.

Insofar as seasonal working is concerned, there is a very long tradition in Europe. In Southern France the vintage is done since more than 150 years by workers coming from Spain. In case they originated from the near-by Spanish region of Catalonia, they had even no language problems when working in the Catalan speaking part of France. In the same way up to recent years the vintage and the harvest of asparagus in Germany was

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provided mostly by seasonal workman from Poland. At the end of the season, the workers regularly went back to their native country.

Insofar as emigration is concerned, the people looking for employment abroad, normally left their country without hope of returning home. They left Europe with specialized ships in the direction of North America, Australia, Brazil etc. The most important reason was normally a very bad economic situation in their home country. So already in the 16th century peasants from the poor regions of western France emigrated from their country to settle in Canada. At the beginning of the 20th century, many people from large families in Ireland, Italy, western Russia etc. emigrated for economic reasons to Northern America. After the end of World War I and World War II Germans left their home country to find new jobs in the United States of America, in South America and in Australia. In some European countries this type of emigration was reinforced by the inheritance system in rural regions. After the death of a farmer the farm-house and the land were given either to the oldest son or divided among all his sons. In the first case, the brothers of the oldest son had no chance to earn their money, in the second case, after some generations the peasants were reduced to poverty. The only possible solutions were often entering a monastery, serving in an army, or emigration.

1.1. With all these types of migration, people leaving their home country encountered linguistic and cultural problems. Normally they did not speak the language of the new country. Even if they made progress in learning the other language, by their foreign accent, by code-mixing and code-switching they could easily be identified as a foreigner. So they had problems of integration into their new social environment. In most cases they acquired the new language not in schools, but in communicating in spoken language. And without mastering the written communication their social integration was limited at least in the professional area.

1.2 Another way of overcoming at least the linguistic and cultural problems of immigrating into another country, is to settle together with people coming from the same country. The result are villages, quarters of cities or even entire towns where people from one foreign origin could feel like at home in the new country. Those quarters of former immigrants may often be recognized by an 'Irish Pub', an 'Italian Trattoria' or a 'Deutsche Bierstube' symbolizing a cultural identity of immigrants. There are villages with German names in Brazil, the United States, South Africa, Rumania, Russia etc. There is even nowadays a quarter of Toronto in Canada where more than 400 000 descendants of migrants from Italy are living. And even the well known phenomena of 'Chinatown' in most of the big cities in North America, but also in Great Britain, South Africa, Singapore , Paris and so on may partly be explained by linguistic reasons and the desire to share some cultural traditions like food, restaurants, trade, handicraft etc. The great problem of this solution is the cultural isolation from the welcoming country, the tendency of forming a ghetto and the danger of monolingualism.

2. It is important not to forget that migration can be realized by other motivations than economic ones. Even an incomplete list can reveal entirely different reasons:

2.1 Migration of nations

In Europe and adjacent parts of Africa and Asia the so called 'migration of nations' at the end of the Roman Empire led entire nations to conquer territories even very far from original region. It is to note that during the period of several centuries there have been lots of linguistic

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contacts, cultural exchange processes and genetic mixtures. Even if the reasons of this dynamic displacement are not entirely clear, it may be explained as a strategic migration comprising entire populations.

2.2. Wars, occupation, crusades

To some extent even wars and conquests of other countries may be considered as some type of migration, in any case insofar as there have been linguistic and cultural contacts and that not seldom occupants stayed in the occupied country. In the same way the crusades in medieval Europe encouraged scientific and cultural knowledge and exchange. As crusades took often a very long time, it happened that knights remained on the way to the Holy Land instead of returning to their country.

2.3. Trade points of support

In the Middle Ages the trade cooperation system 'Hanse' established a network of points of support all over Central and Northern Europe (especially at harbour places) and up to Russia. Many times these places of delegated merchants developed and became independent towns. The network served not only the foreign trade but also as points of scientific and cultural exchange. The 'Hanse' probably could be compared with the Chine system of points of trade all over the world, even if the processes of integration and contacts with the foreign culture may be quite different.

2.4. Colonization

A special type of migration took place when European nations started to colonize, for economic and strategic reasons, oversea regions in America, Africa, Asia, Australia and Oceania. Military men, Civil Servants and merchants were often accompanied by missionaries. The colonial countries profited not only of treasures of the soil and agricultural products, but also of knowledge about autochthonous cultures and languages.

2.5. Slave trade

One side effect of colonies was the forced transportation of slaves, often with the collaboration of indigenous authorities, from Africa to America. This type of involuntary migration had an unexpected linguistic effect. When the speakers of African languages worked in linguistic contact with a colonial language (and sometimes with an additional indigenous language), new languages came into being: the Creole languages.
In modern times similar actions of forced deportation took place e. g. in the Stalin period of the Soviet Union.

2.6. Immigration and emigration of religious communities

In European history there have been different migration processes of entire religious groups. It is useful to distinguish between forced and voluntary emigration. At different periods and from different countries Jewish people had to leave the country due to persecutions or due to the prohibition to practise certain professions.

Similar persecutions happened within the Christian religion. In France the Edict of Nantes (1598) guaranteed freedom of conscience and especially civil rights for the French Calvinist protestants (Huguenots). But with the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 persecutions against the protestants started again. The Huguenots, fearing a repetition of the St. Bartholomew's Day of 1572 when thousands of protestants had been killed at Paris, were forced to emigration. 400 000 Huguenots left the country and moved to non-catholic regions like the Dutch Republic, to Great Britain and to German speaking countries. Friedrich Wilhelm I, Elector of Brandenburg-Prussia, with the Edict of Potsdam, allowed and invited Huguenots to settle down in his country.

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The highly qualified Huguenots brought a considerable cultural and intellectual enrichment to their new countries. In Germany even nowadays French family names among university scholars, leading administrators and officers in the army indicate very often descendants of Huguenots. In the linguistic domain there have been French influences upon the German vocabulary and, due to the native speakers, improvements in the teaching of French as a foreign language.

Other religious communities emigrated more or less without being forced. They wished to live independently to worship in their own way, mostly isolated from the rest of the country. The community of the Hutterer (founded in 1528) emigrated to Hungary, to Russia and to Northern America. Today members of some parishes in the United States of America are still speaking an archaic German dialect. Another Anabaptist community, the Mennonites (founded in the 16th century), left Central Europe due to persecutions. Actually they were invited (like other Christian and Jewish communities) by Catherine the Great of Russia in order to farm Russian steppes. A part of this community is still known as the Amish people in North America.

2.7.Emigration for political reasons

Even in the 20th and 21th century many individuals had and have to emigrate from countries without freedom of political opinion and expression. They try to enter countries agreeing to accept them or to accord them political asylum (not to be confounded with the so called 'economic migration' or 'asylum shopping'). For the year 2009 the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees figured the number of asylum claims at 377 200, whereas the number of forcibly displaced persons was estimated at 43,3 million people (UNHCR: http://www.unhcr.org/4bad8239.html).

As a matter of fact there are many different motivations for migration, economic, political, religious reasons. Individuals may emigrate because looking for better working conditions, convenient tax situation, better climate, family reasons or even to escape personal problems in the country of origin. Citizens of the European Union are free to live and to work in any other country of the EU.

3. Insofar as Germany is concerned, linguist have mostly studied emigration from Germany to other countries, in Europe for example (also since the 17th century) to Russia, to Hungary and to Romania, in the overseas region to the United States of America, to Canada, to Brazil, to Australia etc. This emigration has allowed interesting studies about code-switching, acculturation and conservation, in isolated areas, of dialect varieties even when they disappeared in the home country of the migrants.

But as a matter of fact there have been important waves of foreign immigrants to German speaking countries. On behalf of economic migration in the past 150 years, three examples from Germany may shortly be discussed. The choice of Germany may surprise, because this country has never officially considered itself to be a country of immigration. When, after World War II, foreign workers came to work in the partly destroyed industry, it was generally agreed in the public opinion that these foreign workers should return to their country in the near future. Only very recently with upcoming problems of integration the possibility of a definite remaining of these workers and their families has finally been discussed.

3.1 After the immigration to Germany from France (Huguenots in the 17th century and aristocrats after the French revolution) the first wave of modern immigration was realized by Italian workers. It is generally agreed that the first Italian workers came to Germany after the end of World War II.

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But it is not true. The first wave of immigrants from Italy arrived in Germany, when, after 1840 in the Ruhr-region with his new industries, the railway system was established. The Italians arrived normally via Austria to be employed in the construction of the railway connections between the different places where coal and iron were transported. At the end of the 19th century the Italian workers were even organized in trade unions, with connections to the socialist 'Partito Operaio Italiano' (founded in 1882) in Italy. There has even been a trade union periodical in Italian language, but published in Germany at Berlin and Hamburg from 1898 to 1914: 'L'operaio italiano. Organo settimanale in lingua italiana. Commissione Generale dei Sindacati Tedeschi' – in collaboration with German trade unions.

Most of the Italian workers made quickly progress in social integration. In the second generation some of them adopted a German first name, and many of them didn't earn money any more as simple workers, but as skilled workers, selling fruit and vegetables on the market place or preparing Italian food in little restaurants, later on by selling ice cream. Later on also Italian cultural terms entered the German vocabulary: Pizza, Risotto, Lasagne, Prosciutto etc.

One aspect in favour of linguistic integration was the fact that many of them were (and are) speakers of Italian dialects from different regions. So the communication between them was often managed in German. Italians from different phases of immigration are to a high degree integrated to the German social environment but preserve some Italian cultural traditions. In the Ruhr-region there are many Italian restaurants, folklore groups, Italian mandolin orchestra etc. For Christmas many of them gather in catholic churches to listen the mass in Italian language.

3.2 An important wave of Polish workers came to Germany at the end of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century to find employment in the coal mines and in the steel industry. There have been no serious problems of integration, many of them played an important role in local football teams. They brought simple food and cooking recipes from their country like sour soups, plates of cabbage and beet-root, Pirogi etc. Some of them adapted, during the first half of 20th century, difficult family names to German orthography and pronunciation.

3.3. Since about 1960 the German industry which had not enough workers started to recruit persons from Turkey. The idea was that they should work for some years in Germany before going back to their country. The workers originated mostly from poor regions of Anatolia, were not well educated, many of them illiterate, Muslims with a very traditional background. In spite of the very good relations between the two countries in modern history, the migrants had strong difficulties to integrate into the German society. As they did not speak German, they had many problems in communicating even at their place of employment. Due to their rather short contracts, in the first years no German language teaching was provided. The situation changed when they decided to stay for a longer time in Germany and when there families joined them. The children of course were put to German schools. Up to know many husbands do not want their wives to learn German because they are afraid of 'bad' influences from TV and German speaking people. Many families live together in rather poor quarters of the cities, often in some type of ghetto situation. Wives a wearing traditional cloth and Islamic scarves, buying in Turkish shops. The degree of linguistic and social integration

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is very different. A certain portion of former workers of the first generation have made a real social promotion, speak fluently German, are owners of restaurants or shops, directors of banks and trade companies. Other people are hostile to integration. Young people of the second generation often speak fairly good German, some of them (mostly girls) are really successful in studies at the university. Other young people without school diploma, unemployed, sometimes criminal, present a difficult problem for the society. Many of them speak a strange language mixture of Turkish and German with a lot of special expressions of young people, having difficulties as well in Turkish and in German, especially in written communication.

These difficulties of bilingualism in early childhood are well known to linguistic researchers:

> 'Another important Aspect of the reality of bilingual speakers' communicative strategies, often neglected in educational discussions in particular, involves 'code-mixing' and 'code-switching' – moving into and out of more than a single language with the same interlocutors in the same setting.' (Reich/Reid 1992, 137)

Without any doubt, traditional religion, different social conventions, language difficulties, insufficient education, unemployment of the descendants of migrants are a strong obstacle for social live. After long years of non-activity politicians are now openly discussing possible ways of integration and trying to find solutions for living together and for social and linguistic integration.

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