

The Road to Multilingualism or the Life of People and Languages: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow

Jean-Luc Moreau¹, Tamara Ivanovna Zelenina^{2*}, Irina Aleksandrovna Federova²

¹National Institute for Oriental Languages and Civilizations, Paris 75013, France

²Udmurt State University, Izhevsk 426034, Russia

**Corresponding author:* Tamara Ivanovna Zelenina, zeleninatamara2@yandex.ru

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Abstract: With rapid globalization, local languages give way to English as the only international language. Despite the principles of multilingualism and multiculturalism declared by all members of the European Union, the number of people speaking minority languages is decreasing. National languages also become affected. This applies fully to what is happening in Russia, including Udmurtia. The section of the paper “Journey to multilingualism (from the Udmurt language to multilingual education at Udmurt State University)” describes how research in network interaction associated with the promotion of multilingualism in the education system developed. Long practical experience shows that a serious problem for teaching native and foreign languages is the lack of integration, which serves as the basis for multilingual education. With integration, it takes less time to learn a new language compared to the previous one. Researchers believe linguistics to be the weakest link in the resource provision of multilingual education (co-learning of languages and related cultures). To resolve this issue, Udmurt State University conducts innovative practice-oriented typological studies of multi-system languages: local (Udmurt, Tatar and Russian) and foreign (English, German, French, Spanish, Italian, Finnish, Hungarian, Chinese, Serbian, Polish and Czech). The research resulted in theses and monographs investigating ancient and modern languages, as well as multilingual dictionaries and textbooks focused on multilingualism, which are used to teach languages and cultures. Journey to multilingualism involves reflection about the life of people and languages in different eras. What does “mother tongue” mean? Which language to choose? Why learn languages? Should we purify languages? And so on. Many questions do not have the right answer. Nowadays, it is especially important to be aware of the rapidly changing language situation in the world. Not only the future of minority languages in Russia, but also the future of the Russian language itself, the language that unites both different ethnic groups living the country and the peoples of the neighboring states is giving serious cause for concern. One thing is definitely clear: the diversity of languages and cultures is the only way for the intellectual and emotional development of humanity.

Keywords: Native and foreign languages; Multilingualism; Multilingual education; Linguistic situation in diachrony

Online publication: July 25, 2023

1. Journey to multilingualism (from Udmurt language to multilingual education at Udmurt State University)

The French Finno-Ugric scholar Jean-Luc Moreau is an iconic figure for Udmurtia. His heartfelt attitude towards the Udmurt language has had a noticeable impact on the self-awareness of many representatives of the Udmurt people. During meetings with youth, the professor often emphasizes the idea that one can truly feel and understand their native language and culture only when one studying foreign languages.

Perhaps that is why he has been drawn to languages of other peoples throughout his life. Thanks to this, his native language, French, sounds elegant and beautiful when spoken and written ^[1]. For many years, he has captivated the teachers and students of Udmurt State University who study the French language. He is also known for his inexhaustible interest in languages, both widely spoken in the world and those with limited distribution. Almost 30 years of interaction with this polyglot, an exceptionally educated person, a tactful communicator, and someone willing to share his knowledge, have become a stimulus for the pedagogical team at the Institute of Language and Literature at Udmurt State University to develop scientific directions in philology, linguistics, and language didactics related to multilingualism in the educational space.

The cooperation started with the Udmurt language. It is known that many words of foreign origin were borrowed into the languages of the peoples of Russia and neighboring countries through the Russian language. This is fully applicable to the Udmurt language as well. An attempt to identify and study French words in the Udmurt language was made by TI Zelenina, a teacher at the Udmurt State University (UdSU), in the 1980s. The first results of their study were publicly presented at the VII International Congress of Finno-Ugric Studies in 1990, in Debrecen, Hungary. The presentation aroused considerable interest among the audience ^[2]. A pivotal moment for the development of this topic was the meeting between Zelenina and the French Finno-Ugrist, Professor Jean-Luc Moreau, in Paris in the spring of 1994. Moreau, during his student years in the late 1950s, had undertaken an internship at Moscow State University, where he improved his knowledge of the Russian language. There, he got acquainted with Udmurts who were students at MSU – Petr Chernov, who later became a well-known Udmurt writer, and Vasily Vanyushev, who is now a doctor of philological sciences and a professor. A friendship developed with Petr Chernov. Throughout the academic year, his friend taught Moreau his native language, despite the lack of a textbook or teaching experience. Since then, the Udmurt language and literature, among other Finno-Ugric languages, have become subjects of scientific interest for Professor Moreau.

In the same year, the first meeting between Zelenina and Moreau had a follow-up. In the autumn of 1994, an International Scientific and Practical Conference titled “Youth and the Finno-Ugric World” took place in Izhevsk, organized by the Youth Association of Finno-Ugric Peoples and the Udmurt Youth Socio-Political Organization “Shundy.” Professor Moreau gladly accepted the invitation to participate in the publication of an article on this topic. The article, dedicated to the Finno-Ugric peoples and languages, was submitted and published in two languages, which marked the first experience of joint translation from French to Russian (translated by VA Kozueva), contributing to the development of intercultural communication ^[3].

The meeting with Moreau in France largely determined the further scientific path of Zelenina. The Udmurtian, a Finno-Ugric language, was added to the Romance languages that she had studied during her postgraduate studies. She started researching the etymology of French words borrowed by the Udmurt language through Russian. Moreau who was at that time head of the Department of Finno-Ugric Languages at the *Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales* (INALCO, Paris), was the inspirer and scientific adviser. The Etymological dictionary included over 1400 words: from the first record of the French word in the Udmurt language, with an indication of the time when the word appeared in Russian, to the first record in the French language itself. The etymological survey reveals whether a word is native French or was once borrowed by the French itself from other languages. The international character of words is confirmed by examples from modern languages: English, German and Spanish.

The preparation of the first edition of the dictionary, which appeared in 2000, was a joint project of the Udmurt State University Department of Romance Philology and the INALCO Department of Finno-Ugric Languages ^[4]. Contributing to this was Moreau’s visit to Udmurtia in 1998, where he came upon the invitation of Udmurt State University to deliver lectures on French and Finno-Ugric literature to the university’s students. During his visit, he had a meeting with the rector of Udmurt State University, VA

Zhuravlev, and the director of the Institute of Foreign Languages and Literature, Zelenina. In 1999, they met with the rector of INALCO during their visit to Paris to participate in the international conference “Cooperation between Russia and France in Higher and Professional Education,” organized by the Ministries of Education of France and Russia. These interactions further facilitated cooperation and strengthened the ties between the academic institutions and scholars from both countries.

Working on this etymological dictionary and analyzing language material allowed Zelenina to complete her doctoral dissertation, which aimed to identify the typology of interactions between different language systems (Udmurt–Finno-Ugric, Russian–Slavic, French–Romance) and establish a methodology for comparing languages ^[5]. This methodology is currently being developed within the framework of the scientific school “Methodology of Language and Linguocultural Comparison in Diachrony and Synchrony,” in collaboration with colleagues and students. Many years later, Zelenina dedicated her monograph “National and International Lexicon in European Languages” (2012) to her teacher and friend: “Dedicated to Professor Jean-Luc Moreau, French scholar, Finno-Ugrist, translator, and poet, thanks to whom I, a native of Udmurtia, discovered the language and culture of the Udmurt people.” This shows the profound impact and gratitude she has towards Professor Moreau for his influence on her academic journey and the exploration of Udmurt language and culture.

Another joint project was a textbook in French for the Udmurt language. For several years Moreau taught the Udmurt language to French students at his university. For his first visit to Udmurtia, he prepared the manuscript of the textbook, while having the opportunity to consult Udmurt scientists and native speakers of the Udmurt language, which he did with great pleasure. The first version of the text was read by BS Zagulyaeva, associate professor at Udmurt State University, who introduced, in the author’s opinion, valuable clarifications. The book, which represents the result of many years of work, is dedicated to an Udmurt friend of his student years: “*A la mémoire de Piotr Tchernov, qui le premier me fit sentir la beauté de sa langue*” (In memory of Pyotr Tchernov, who first gave me the opportunity to feel the beauty of his language) ^[6].

In the review of the Udmurt language textbook by Moreau, published at Udmurt State University, it is particularly noted that the scholar shows concern for the fate of the Udmurt nation (“The Udmurt nation has begun to return to its past. Will it be able to forge its future?”) while expressing confidence that the Udmurt language has matured (“This is a true national language, used for writing and teaching, officially recognized, and standardized by many generations, with its unique literature”). The textbook contributes to understanding the way of life of the Udmurt people, their culture, and fosters a respectful attitude towards people of other nationalities. It is of interest to any linguist, especially specialists in Finno-Ugric languages, as it provides an opportunity to see Udmurt language phenomena in the context of other languages ^[7].

Professor Moreau has a special love for the Udmurt language. Addressing his friends from Udmurtia in a jubilee collection dedicated to his 75th birthday, he writes: “The Udmurt language... I don't know it as well as you sometimes pretend to believe. I only have theoretical and bookish knowledge of it. But it's a language that I love for its melodiousness, the potential of its vocabulary, the subtlety of its morphology, and the flexibility of its syntax. For its beauty. For its poetry” ^[8].

This anniversary edition deals with the selected works of Prof. Moreau, published over the years and translated on the eve of his anniversary by professors and students of the Institute of Language and Literature. The works, which are based on many languages of different systems, ancient and modern, are presented in their original and translated versions. In 2012, during his second visit to Izhevsk, Moreau consulted on the translation of his articles and then continued online correspondence for a year, consisting of numerous reflections and clarifications by the author and the coordinator of the translation project, docent IA Fedorova. Her extensive experience of translating from Finnish, Estonian, Hungarian, Russian and Udmurtian into her native language, French, enabled her and her colleagues to grasp the subtleties of the

Russian language. According to the participants in the project, the joint activities contributed to everyone's professional growth.

The second section of the anniversary collection included articles by Udmurt scholars paying tribute to the French Finno-Ugric scholar. Student friendship has led to the fact that the French scholar throughout his professional career has directed the gaze of Europeans towards Udmurtia, the Udmurt people and their culture. This is confirmed by the publications, particularly on Udmurt literature, published in French and translated later into Russian ^[9,10]. Therefore, the famous Udmurt scholar MG Atamanov, translator of the Bible into the Udmurt language, wrote on the title page of one of his donation books: "To Professor Jean-Luc Moreau with gratitude for bringing Udmurt literature and folklore to the European reader."

Moreau attracts the attention of researchers not only with his scholarly works, but also with his poetry. During her first visit to Udmurtia, Moreau became personally acquainted with NP Kralina, folklorist, translator from Udmurt and literature expert; she was awarded the Udmurt State Prize for her book "Myths, Legends and Tales of the Udmurt People." For many years she worked at the philological faculty of Udmurt State University. Their professional interests and worldview coincided. Soon, a joint book by the two scholars, united by their interest in the Udmurt language, emerged. The appearance of this book was made possible by chance. NP Dolgina, a teacher at the Department of French Philology, who had made interlinear translations of Moreau's poems, introduced them to her friends – the family of NP Kralina. From that day on, an exciting work on artistic translation began. This resulted in a poetic collection published at Udmurt State University, containing Moreau's original poems in French and NP Kralina's artistic translations into Russian ^[11].

The teachers in the department enjoyed using the collection of poems in their teaching. Not surprisingly, a few years later an unusual textbook appeared, dedicated to the 205th anniversary of AS Pushkin's birth "Yes, so inspiration commands me..." ^[12]. The book in French and Russian includes the best student and school works from the 2004 international project Bridges of Friendship "France–Russia–Udmurtia"(supervised by TI Zelenina, AN Miftakhudinova).

Project activities are an integral part of promoting multilingualism in the educational space. In this regard, the institute implements various projects in networking at international, Russian and national levels. Professor Moreau has been or continues to be involved in some of them, including academic ones ^[13]. The professor pays special attention to the promotion of the French language in Udmurtia in the framework of the French Resource Centre of UdSU (headed by IA Fedorova). Convinced that early learning of another language is the first step towards multilingualism, he assists teachers of Izh-Logos Lingua (UdSU's early language development school) in preparing language material, for instance for the textbooks "Merry French" (TI Zelenina, LI Maratcanova, 2013, 2nd ed. 2017) and "French. Christmas Meetings" (play scenarios for younger pupils – a joint theatrical project with Linguistic Lyceum No. 25 in Izhevsk; ed. B Vartanova, TI Zelenina, 2019). Moreau willingly participates in educational projects of the Institute. Thus, in the framework of the international project "Tale of the Five Continents" under the auspices of the International Methodological Council for Multilingualism and Intercultural Communication (Gutow, Germany), he translated the songs for the Russian fairy tale "Teremok" into French. He was among the first to respond to the request to prepare a translation from Russian into French of "A Child from Votkinsk: Tchaikovsky" as part of the Institute's 2015 outreach project to mark the 175th anniversary of the great Russian composer PI Tchaikovsky, a native of Udmurtia whose early childhood years were spent in Votkinsk. The text in French, as well as in many other languages, can be found on the Izh-Logos NMO website in the section "Our Projects". There you can also see the project "Multilingualism in Udmurtia: To the 75th Anniversary of Jean-Luc Moreau." – a film featuring the anniversary speaker ^[14].

The long-standing interaction with the French polyglot scholar had a great influence on the establishment and development of the research area related to multilingualism of the Department of

Romance Philology, Second Foreign Language and Linguistics of the Institute of Language and Literature. In order to see the dynamics of the development of the idea of multilingualism, we will present the results of the scientific activities of the teaching staff over the years within the framework of the Scientific and Educational Centre “Innovative Design of Multilingual Educational Space” of the Institute.

- I. The “Concept of Designing a Multilingual Educational Space in a Multi-ethnic Region: Program” (TI Zelenina, AN Utekhina, L Malykh, AN Miftakhutdinova, 2010) and “Model of Multilingual Education in a Multi-ethnic Region based on a General Education Institution: A Collective Monograph” (LM Malykh, AV Zhukova, 2016).
- II. Doctoral theses on the material of different-system languages, ancient and modern: “Linguistic Representation of the Concept ‘Prohibition’ in Public Signs” (DI Medvedeva, 2008); “Names of Sciences and their Derivatives in Diachrony and Synchrony (on the Material of Romance, Germanic and Russian Languages)” (NV Butorina, 2009); “Internationalisms of French Origin in Diachrony and Synchronicity” (YN Kochurova (Irina), 2010); “Graphic Markers of Foreign Language Vocabulary in Synchronic and Diachronic Aspects (on the Material of French, Italian, Spanish and Latin)” (IA Fedorova, 2011); “Linguocultural Aspects of Institutional Business Discourse in CV Genre” (OV Toikina, 2015).
- III. Monographs aimed at comparing the vocabulary of European languages have been published: “International Vocabulary in the Udmurt Language” (TI Zelenina, 1996); “Mediated Borrowings in the Udmurt Language. French Stratum” (TI Zelenina, 2002); “Key Concepts of German Linguoculture” (TS Medvedeva, MV Oparin, DI Medvedeva, 2012); “Language Comparison in Synchronicity: Theoretical and Applied Aspects” (LM Malykh, 2013); “Comparison of the Lexicon of European Languages in Diachrony and Synchronicity” (TI Zelenina, L Malykh, NV Butorina, YN Kochurova, IA Fedorova, 2014).
- IV. The following etymological and multilingual dictionaries were published: “From Proper Names to Nominatives: An Etymological Dictionary” (TI Zelenina, 1997); “International Personal Names: An Etymological Dictionary” (TI Zelenina, 1998); “Multilingual Dictionary based on the French Words Borrowed from the Russian and Udmurt languages” (TI Zelenina, BS Zelenina, S Zagulyaeva, NV Butorina, 2003); “Young Polyglot: Multi-lingual Dictionary” (TI Zelenina, NV Butorina, 2005); “Russian–Tatar–English Dictionary: Young Polyglot” (LM Malykh, RF Shitova, 2007).
- V. Teaching aids have been created in the context of multilingualism: “Foreign and Indigenous Vocabulary in the Udmurt Language. Mediated Borrowings in Separate Lexical Subsystems” (TI Zelenina, 2001); “Contrastive Country Studies” (EV Marishkina, EA Prokopyeva, DI Medvedeva, 2010); “Introduction to Multilingual Education. Principles of Language Comparison” (LM Malykh, 2011); “Latin in the Context of European Languages” (DI Medvedeva, IA Fedorova, 2015); “Serbian in the Context of European Languages” (DI Medvedeva, 2017); “Concepts of Russian and German Linguocultures in the Mirror of Language” (TS Medvedeva, DI Medvedeva, 2021).

The results of innovative practice-oriented research are applied in the practice of teaching different languages and cultures: national (Udmurtian, Tatar, Russian) and foreign (English, German, French, Spanish, Italian, Finnish, Hungarian, Chinese, Serbian, Polish, Czech) at UdSU and beyond. In recent years, multilingual learning technologies (co-teaching languages) in different age groups have been actively developed and tested at Bachelor’s and Master’s levels and in the system of supplementary education.

Thus, the first seeds of multilingualism, sown by the French scholar on Udmurtian land, have gained strength and give encouraging results, namely the desire to develop mother tongues and support the idea of multilingualism in the educational space of Udmurtia, Russia and abroad. The rapid development of globalization has led to a widespread narrowing of the habitat of national languages in favor of a single international language – English. Despite the principles of multilingualism and multiculturalism proclaimed

in the countries of the European Union, the number of speakers of minority languages is decreasing. These processes are gradually affecting the state national languages as well. This is fully applicable to Russia, including Udmurtia.

The continuation of the text is based on the article by Moreau, “A Small Lake and a Huge Ocean,” published in French in the proceedings of the colloquium “Prisoner of One’s Language, Free in One’s Language” in Budapest in 2006, in which various episodes from the life of people related to the development of languages in different times are presented [15]. The text was translated by IA Fedorova for the first time. The authors of the collective article have made cuts, additions, changes and reflections to the Russian version, taking into account the interest in the present theme. These reflections reflect our journey towards multilingualism over the years.

2. Reflections on the life of people and languages

2.1. What does “mother tongue” mean?

Most of us did not choose our “native” language, there was no need to do so. Everyone continues to learn the language they have been endowed with since the cradle by a fairy named Culture. They learn their native language. But what do these words actually mean? Is the native language for everyone the language of their mother, the language of their country, the language of the nursery school, which is called “maternal school” (*école maternelle*) in France? The language of the university, their alma mater (Latin for “nourishing, beneficent mother”), the language of the nanny or the television in families where it substitutes for a nanny? Is this language native to us because it nurtures us like a mother, or because it brings us into this world as soon as we start uttering our first words?

In French and in German we can easily use this characterization, because French *langue* “language” and German *Sprache* “language” are feminine words. The Hungarian word *anyanyelv* “mother tongue” is a derivation of the German *Muttersprache* “mother tongue,” which is virtually the same as the Finnish *äidinkieli*, literally meaning “language of the mother.” However, Cicero said *patrius sermo* “the language of the father” in Latin, and in Polish *język ojczysty* means both “the language of the father” and rather “of the fathers,” i.e., the language of the motherland. In English along with “mother tongue” one readily uses “native language” (cf. Latin *nativus*, lit. “innate, natural, native”). In Russian, *родной язык* “native language” means the language of the family, the language of one’s lineage and family.

All languages are equal in their worth; they are all capable of development. However, a language spoken by only a handful of people cannot develop to the same extent as a language spoken by millions. And if those speakers know only one language, then that language seems to confine and imprison them. Today, there are approximately 7,000 representatives of the Mansi people, and only half of them consider the Mansi language as their native tongue. But then, what language are we talking about in regards to Mansi? The four dialects of this language are not mutually intelligible. In fact, can’t significantly different dialects of one language be considered as separate languages? To refer to the Mansi language in the singular is a distortion of reality. The Mansi language is not the native language of the Mansi; one of its dialects is their true native language.

Certainly, a child primarily learns to communicate with their mother, but their speech apparatus is not yet fully formed, and the language is not yet mastered. Their vocabulary is limited, and the child is not yet capable of constructing complex sentences; they use simple words. What they learn in early childhood is not so much the language itself but rather language skills. The native language of a young child is their childish, infantile language. However, a child is capable of learning not only their native language but also many other languages.

If a mother sings a lullaby to her child in Mansi, Sidamo, Nahuatl, or Gurage in cities like Paris, London, Berlin, or Budapest, does that mean that learning that language will become a priority for the child?

Will it help them become more free? Typically, parents who have settled in Europe want their child to feel comfortable in the environment they will live in. However, if their native language is not considered a priority, does that mean it should be ignored?

Since language is a powerful factor of self-identity, no one will voluntarily give up their mother tongue, and every parent will be concerned to learn that their children no longer know their language. Sometimes feelings trump reason. In some immigrant families, children experience a restriction imposed by their parents: the child must speak a language that their peers do not speak. Otherwise, for some teenagers, breaking away from their parents' language will be tantamount to cutting the umbilical cord.

In modern times it is no longer possible to list the writers who have found success in non-native languages. St Paul, communicating with his compatriots in Aramaic, left behind his Epistles in Greek. St. Augustine, as the first Maghribian writer, wrote very well in Latin. Conrad and Nabokov became great English stylists, and the list of writers of foreign origin who produced splendid works in French would be really long: Casanova, Beckett, Ionesco, etc. It also includes some poets: Jean Moreas, Anne de Noailles, Milos and others.

Indeed, "defectors" who give up their native language often choose a more prestigious language. Didn't one young man, whose parents were Slovaks and whose mother spoke Hungarian, do the same? He changed his Slovak name and surname, Alexander Petrovich, to Sandor Petőfi. Today, this name belongs to the famous national poet and liberal revolutionary of Hungary in the 19th century.

What makes a writer change his or her language? Did Conrad, Köstler and Nabokov feel freer in English than in Polish, Hungarian or Russian? The Hungarian writer Kostolanyi, referring to a collection of French poems by Rilke, the Austrian poet, wrote: "A travelling friend of mine, who has lived in three or four different countries, once told me that each country became for him a new childhood: with the same vague discoveries and the same shivers. A foreign language can give a creator a new childhood."

2.2. Which language should I choose?

To be useful, a language must provide access to knowledge, whether in the fields of education, law, or commerce. Speaking abstractly, wouldn't an ideal language be a universal language? Esperanto? Volapük?

It should be noted that literary language is more useful than spoken language; that Greek or Latin has opened more doors than Ligurian or Sicilian, and that French, English, Spanish, Russian are more useful than Sami, Rhetoroman or Mohican. But Chinese is more widespread than English or French. Does that mean we should all speak Chinese? And what about the languages of the great cultures whose use is local and limited? What about German, Polish, Hungarian, Persian, Japanese?

So, which language - or languages - should we prioritize? Which first language should we give our children? And what second language(s)? Which language(s) should we choose for the nation, for the state, for the federation?

In many countries, disparate tribal dialects and economic backwardness do not allow for the intellectual and financial investment necessary to turn any mother tongue into a language of civilization. Natural languages are one thing; cultural languages are another. As a matter of fact, it is dialects that are natural. Any language is a language of culture, any language is the result of coercion, hence the limitation of freedom. It can be an authority political, religious (sometimes both), supported by the authority of writers, often in the service of the state. In the Middle Ages France had Picardian, Champagne, Anglo-Norman dialects; French was only a rant among the others. King Francis the First, having signed in 1539 the Ordonnance Viller-Cotré, the writers du Bellay, Ronsard, who defended and which enriched the French language, Cardinal Richelieu, who founded the Académie française, the Jules Ferry School, and compulsory military service introduced a common language for all. Luther's Bible in Germany, Agricola's Bible in Finland, Mohammed's Koran in Arabia set a common written standard for a variety of dialects.

The centuries-long experience of humanity shows that we need both a common language with modern terminology and a local language that we prefer, standardize, and develop. Additionally, we need foreign languages that we adopt for convenience or due to their prestige, just like Latin in the Middle Ages or the European languages today, known as “colonial” but serving as official and unifying languages in many overseas countries.

Before the break-up of Yugoslavia, Serbo-Croatian dominated the federation along with Slovenian and Macedonian, also official languages, while Hungarian and Albanian had minority language status. Serbian and Croatian are mutually intelligible, the linguistic system is the same, dialectal variations concern the smallest details, and the alphabetic difference is also not as great as it might seem. Before the break-up of Yugoslavia, the Latin alphabet, mainly for commercial reasons, was often used on the Serbian side, especially in Bosnia. At the same time, the Bosnian Franciscans used the Cyrillic alphabet until the 19th century, and many books, works and articles were published in the Cyrillic alphabet in Croatia during the Yugoslav period. Then the federation collapsed and war broke out. Ethnic cleansing turned into linguistic cleansing. Prohibitions and restrictions began. Words used everywhere became unacceptable to some and recommended to others. If the term *Balkanism* denotes areal typological features common in South-Eastern Europe to genetically very different languages, the term *Balkanisation* is a process of division into several independent parts of one state, whose speakers for extra-linguistic reasons refuse its unity.

Another example, but on the scale of the subcontinent, is India. After 1857 the language, long called Hindustani, an Indo-Iranian language strongly influenced by ancient Persian, became both the lingua franca of North India and the literary language of the Muslim elite. Later, M Gandhi, the ideological mastermind of the independence movement, would try to preserve its unity, inseparable, in his view, from the unity of the subcontinent. But while the Muslim elite claimed an Arab-Persian heritage, the Hindus chose to Sanskritize their language and, abandoning the Arab-Persian script, adopted the Devanagari alphabet, lit. “divine, urban (writing).” This alphabet, in use since the seventh to eighth centuries A.D., became established in the late 19th century. As a result of the “two-nation theory,” Hindustani became Urdu on the one hand, and Hindi on the other. Today India has two official languages (Hindi and English), 18 national constitutional languages and some 1,500 “mother tongues,” sometimes called “tribal.” With which language does an Indian feel most at ease with?

The difference between the standard German language and dialect, or between the Old French “*oïl*” (yes) and Occitan “*oc*” (yes), or between Sardinian and Venetian languages, is much greater than the difference between Serbian and Croatian. Germany, France, and Italy, despite their regional peculiarities, have managed to create their unique and undisputed national languages. In the United States, despite linguistic diversity, the dominance of the American variant of the English language, which is not enshrined in the Constitution, is unquestioned and accepted by all.

Kostolányi, the great defender of the Hungarian language, loved to say that no language can replace one’s native language. A Hungarian will never understand the taste and aroma encapsulated in the word “*ratatouille*” for a young French girl. No foreigner, no matter how proficient they are in Hungarian, will comprehend the difference between “*gezemice*” and “*pempö*” (two types of porridge), between “*lepke*,” “*pillang*” (butterfly), and “*pill*” (butterfly) and “*lep*” – “*s hogy az éjjeli lepke egyáltalán nem azonos az éjjeli pillangóval*” (and that what is called night butterflies, we call not only moths).

But Kostolanyi himself explained that using a foreign language gives him “a certain freedom” that is not available in his mother tongue: “I have the impression that I can say pleasant things in my mother tongue, but unpleasant things – sending an old loyal employee on leave, discussing controversial contract issues, humiliating a waiter in a café, saying what I really think about another person – all these would be easier to say in a foreign language. I want to declare my love in my mother tongue, while I want to break up in a foreign language. To write poetry in Hungarian and critiques in Portuguese.”

2.3. Can a mother tongue become a foreign language?

This is the story of the Hungarian man described by Kostolányi (“*Anyanyelv*” – “Native Language”), who spent 12 years in Argentina, learned to think in Spanish, married a woman from Buenos Aires, and became Spanish to the core. Upon returning to Hungary due to circumstances, he anxiously pondered what he would say “at home to people in the language his mother taught him.” He had everything planned out: he would get off the train, go to a pub, and buy a pack of cigarettes. He had gone through his entire remaining vocabulary in his head and prepared in advance the phrase “I would like a cigarette” (“*kérek egy cigarettát*”). He repeated this phrase to himself: “I would like a cigarette ... I would like a cigarette.” His mouth was puckered like that of an infant reaching for a pacifier. The man approached the waiter, nervously, finally looked up at him, opened his mouth, and with a stutter, uttered German words: “*Ich ... bitte ... eine Zigarette!*”

2.4. Can an artificially created language become a mother tongue?

Here is the story of a young man for whom Esperanto was, as he himself claimed, his mother tongue. His parents, Esperantists who had no other language in common, met at an Esperantist congress. Love did the rest... When Hungarian and Finnish citizens living in Paris have no other language in common than French, doesn't French have every chance of becoming their children's mother tongue? If it is possible to live in a French-speaking society, then it is also possible to live in an Esperanto-speaking society, based on the choice of communication partners.

2.5. Can a dead language be the mother tongue of a living person?

Such an experiment is well known in history. Let us imagine an European, rather idealistic, who imposed Latin on his family, expecting to be supported by all his fellow citizens across the continent. Michel de Montaigne, a 16th century French writer and philosopher, wrote that as a child his father entrusted him to the care of a German doctor who knew no French at all but was very good at Latin. He had two subordinates who helped him teach the child Latin. There was one irrefutable rule in the house: both father, mother, valet and maid, in the presence of the child, spoke only the Latin words that each had learned to speak to the child. By the age of six, before the child had heard of French, Perigordian, Arabic, he had already mastered Latin, without books, without grammar, as well as the teacher himself.

2.6. Can an endangered language be revived?

In the eighteenth century, the Jewish Enlightenment, which became the intellectual movement of the Jews of Central and Eastern Europe, valued the study of the Hebrew language. But Hebrew was to Jews what Latin was to Catholics, and Yiddish was considered “jargon.” Had it not been for anti-Semitism, persecution and pogroms, history might have taken a different path. But the nineteenth century was the century of nationalism. Jews, forming a nation and a state, wondered what their language should be. There were two options: Hebrew and Yiddish, the languages of one Jewish people, both based on the same set of letters. There is a stereotype that Hebrew and Yiddish are one and the same. But they are two different languages. Hebrew is one of the oldest languages belonging to the Semitic group, along with Arabic. Yiddish is a language of the Germanic group, strongly resembling German. It was spoken by about 11 million Jews around the world at the beginning of the 20th century.

The proponent of the German version, Herzl, the father of Zionism, did not believe in the resurrection of the Hebrew language. Others, however, believed in it. Emigrating to Jerusalem in 1881, Eliezer Ben Yehuda imposed Hebrew as the language of communication on his wife and children. They alone spoke it, but what difference did it make! Others followed their example, only to retain their ancestral language, the language of identity and “return.” In doing so, they were locked into a linguistic ghetto. But Hebrew for an Israeli is *his* language. He feels at home here. He can say as a Hungarian: *Erős várunk a nyelv. Nyelvében*

él a nemzet (Language is our fortress, people live in their language). At a time when the European Union is expanding, when national languages are in danger of becoming regional languages, the example of Hebrew proves that the implausible can become possible.

2.7. Can we preserve endangered languages?

The repentant activist and university professor of French and Breton, Françoise Morvan, drew a lesson from her experience (and her daughter's experience) that makes one think. She was invited to teach Breton language at a Breton school that opened in early 1997 in Brittany. She writes: "Out of the twelve students I meet, ten began learning the Breton language two or three years ago. They are full of energy and enthusiasm. What will they do? Learn a language that is as foreign to them as English, in order to teach it to their children, who, in turn, will have to teach it to their parents, who speak 90% of the time in French at home. ... How many times have I seen parents speak Breton with great difficulty just to communicate with their children? How many times have I seen children pushed to schizophrenia by being forced to speak French at home but Breton at school?"

Is it worth saving something that is doomed to collapse? Does such unreasonable stubbornness not have its limits? The Perigordian dialect spoken by Montaigne belongs to the French heritage, but its usefulness in the age of globalization is nil and its cultural contribution is much lower than that of Latin, which was refused to be widely taught, but whose knowledge would at any rate have been useful to French schoolchildren to perceive their language and history.

Let us give space to regional languages; let them be taught in lyceums and offered as optional subjects at the bachelor's level. We can only rejoice in this without forcing children to speak dialects exclusively at home.

2.8. Why learn other languages?

To free ourselves from the prison of our own language, obviously the first thing to do is to learn other languages. Not only to use them, but also not to allow ourselves prejudices, wrong ideas, invented concepts imposed on us by our language. "He who does not know other languages knows nothing of his own," said Goethe. To study other languages is to learn to think outside one's own. To translate into one's own language is to put it to the test, but also to enrich it by making it express what it does not normally express.

2.9. Should we purify language?

The unity of the Hungarian vocabulary is impressive, possibly due to a more motivated language renewal process, which is more transparent for the language speakers compared to, for example, French. Thus, the connection between "*hal*" meaning "fish" and "*halászati*" meaning "fishing" is evident, while the link between "*poisson*" meaning "fish" and "*halieutique*" meaning "fishing" is much less apparent. This consistency in the Hungarian language is particularly admired in poetry. At the same time, the Russian language is abundant with borrowed words, and Pushkin's exclamations in "Eugene Onegin" – "*pantaloni, frak, zhilet / vsekh etikh slov na russkom net*" (pants, tailcoat, waistcoat / all these words are not in Russian) – also provoke admiration. Language, like the sea, ultimately swallows everything. If English were to be stripped of all words borrowed from French, what would be left? Isn't linguistic purism a danger, especially when it comes to asserting the priority of one group's linguistic norms over those of others?

In the South Slavic region, the linguistic boundaries are so blurred that Macedonian may be considered a Bulgarian dialect by one side and an extension of Serbian by another. Three Scandinavian speakers of Danish, Norwegian and Swedish understand each other without speaking any language other than their own. A closer and closer understanding is developing between Turkic languages, but it is almost impossible between related languages that are far apart.

In the past, the dispersal of people inevitably led to a fragmentation of the language, its division into parts. French in Canada and French in the Antilles are very different. After a few generations, relatives, if they happen to meet, are no longer able to understand each other.

2.10. Nationality or citizenship?

In the Constitution of France, it is stated that the French language is the language of the Republic. In Hungary, the Constitution does not specify that the Hungarian language is the official language. Does what is good for some not also apply to others?

France has many regional languages, some of which are bordering, but none of them are recognized as official languages in the country. Regional languages are particularly numerous in overseas departments and territories; for example, New Caledonia has 28 of them. French is spoken on five continents. It is no longer exclusively the language of the French people. However, France itself rightly or wrongly believes that within the country, it protects not only its language but also its unity, which may be threatened by excessive promotion of dialects and their local characteristics.

In Hungary, there is a Law on the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities, which officially recognizes 14 ethnic groups in the country. For a French citizen, it may be difficult to understand why, for example, the 600,000 Roma people living in Hungary, like other ethnic minorities, are not considered Hungarians. To a French person, it would not occur to assert that someone living in Belgium or Switzerland, even if their native language is French, is a French person. In their view, that person can only be a citizen of France. There is a significant difference in the perception of nationality and citizenship between France and Hungary.

In Central Europe, for historical reasons, the nation has been formed around language. In France, language has been imposed on the nation, which, at least since 1789, is a community of destiny rather than an ethnic community, thanks to the school.

2.11. Isn't the "Babylonian curve" a gift from heaven?

A monolingual world would be tiresome and stagnant, as if populated by clones. Diversity of languages is necessary for the viability of speech, just as genetic diversity is necessary for life. Languages are constantly evolving. Some die without offspring, others disappear because they are transformed beyond recognition, their useless parts atrophy, their cells are renewed by regeneration; but they are also transformed by mixing, by interbreeding. This is a development we can slow down. These days, the media unite and maintain languages somewhere across oceans that would otherwise be doomed to faster creolization and diversification. But the idea that we can stop this development is doubtful. At best, we can guide it in a certain direction for a while, organize it. But in what sense? Should we purify the language and enforce its laws? Should we allow development to occur? Do we want to see a neatly ordered and boring French garden? Do we want to see jungles... or wastelands?

3. Conclusion

The rapid development of globalization is leading to a widespread shrinking of the range of national languages in favor of a single international language, English. As a consequence, the number of speakers of minority languages is decreasing in all countries. These processes are gradually spreading to the state national languages as well.

The current situation with the English language is such that it is widely used not only for communication but also as a medium of instruction in higher education in various countries, primarily to attract international students. Research by scholars and our own experience indicate that in the process of learning theoretical disciplines, there is a simplification of the foreign language. It is doubtful that

simplified English in education and science fosters creative thinking and intellectual development. Language, by imposing its own concepts on us, can either hinder or stimulate, thus directing our thinking. Scientific thought typically thrives on a language that a person masters fluently.

The article raises many questions related to historical facts about people and languages, and there is no definitive answer to these questions. These facts confirm one of the laws: language development is probabilistic in nature. Understanding the history of a specific language provides a relative possibility to anticipate its future. Currently, more than ever, it is crucial to be aware of the rapidly changing language situation in the world. The fate of not only national languages, like Russian in Russia, but also the Russian language itself, which unites the people of the country and the nations of neighboring states, is cause for concern. One thing is evident: the diversity of languages and cultures is the only path to intellectual and emotional development of humanity.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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