

II. ТИПЫ ДИСКУРСИВНЫХ ПРАКТИК В СОВРЕМЕННОМ СОЦИУМЕ

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SOCIO-CULTURAL ASPECTS OF THE IRISH LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION

The present paper is devoted to the socio-cultural aspects of the Irish language revitalization. The author analyzes the reasons of Irish language protection. The language acquisition and use of the minority language are considered to be the key elements.

Keywords: the Irish language, language revitalization, culture, language, identity

This article reflects the significant position of the Irish language not only in Irish society, but also from the worldwide perspective, taking into account added value generated by all languages, not omitting minority and lesser-used languages which create an inherent part of world's cultural heritage.

The Irish language is the first national and official language in the Republic of Ireland, whereas the English language is defined as the second official language according to the Irish Constitution. Although, majority of people in the Republic of Ireland speak the English language, Irish (Irish Gaelic) is considered to be one of the most important elements of Irish national and cultural identity despite its minority position in public sphere and real life.

Currently, the Irish language is being revitalized as a unique cultural element. There are many organizations which support language revitalization (*Conradh na Gaelige, Foras na Gaelige, Údarás na Gaeltachta, National University of Ireland Galway*). We assume that the more people are

exposed to the Irish language through the medium of various Irish language services and cultural activities, the more viable and vivid will be their participation in the Gaelic ethnoculture.

In the Republic of Ireland, Irish-speaking area is called the *Gaeltacht*. There are many of such areas in the country. Most of them are located in the western part, although, nowadays the number of Irish speakers in predominantly English-speaking areas has increased significantly, too. The economic support of Gaeltacht plays crucial role in language revitalization. In addition to this, attention should be also paid to the dissemination of information about benefits of bilingualism. Families should be more supported in bringing up their children through the medium of Irish arising out of the fact that they can play a huge role in language maintenance and reversing the process language shift.

In many Irish-speaking communities there is a tendency to prefer English as the language of communication nowadays. Thus, the role of family as well as education institutions is of utmost importance in order to achieve intergenerational transmission of Irish (Pecníková 2014). Successful transfer of language depends, however, on the positive attitude and more enthusiastic approach to establishment of the Irish language and more bilingual households.

The Irish language was declared as one of the official and working languages of the European Union in 2007 generating new working positions for the prospective translators, interpreters and teachers. Currently, there are many students studying the Irish language, Irish or Celtic studies at universities in Ireland and abroad which is also a sign of interest in the language. The language itself has gained popularity and prestige in comparison with the past. External interest (from other countries) is also very important in the case of minority languages revitalization.

The Irish Language and Identity

It is of utmost importance to view the key attributes of the Irish national identity in reflection with contemporary Irish national identity which is a mosaic of traditional attributes of identity. Therefore, it is crucial to understand coexistence between the past and the present and to perceive contemporary Irish identity through the repertoire of those specific attributes.

We view the Irish language as an important marker in the context of Irish cultural identity. The Irish language nowadays performs more in a symbolical than instrumental way. Although, official language policy is focused on the Irish language revitalization, the fact is that viewing the language as a symbol prevails among predominantly Anglophone inhabitants.

Language can be perceived as a key aspect of cultural and national identity. In the words of Schröder (1995), language creates fertile ground for identification of the individual with the community. Identity expressed through language can be manifested through the means of language communication which anticipates social interaction, maintains interpersonal relationships and creates the feeling of togetherness, solidarity and belonging. In the words of Ripka (2000: 44), *“national language plays invaluable part in preservation and creation of national and cultural identity.”*

Nowadays, the issue of language and identity is very topical. One of the reasons may be the negative prognosis about the possible extinction of the majority of world's languages in the future: *“It is estimated that until 2050 there will be approximately 1000 living languages in the world. More than 80% of languages are threatened with extinction”* (Šatava 2013: 38).

In connection with the process of language death prevention we should also be more aware of minority languages revitalization. Languages are conceived as a part of spiritual cultural heritage of mankind which is also perceived by Bitušíková (2007) as a fundamental element supporting and enriching cultural identity. In the similar way, the Irish language is also viewed as one of the key aspects of cultural and national identity of the Irish. It is a unique element which can be used very productively in the future in the sphere of cultural tourism. There are many students nowadays studying the Irish language and having very clear ambitions linked to their future employability through the medium of the Irish language. This gives any minority language a hope in better future and is a prerequisite to its preservation. For many people it is a challenge to learn the Irish language and to use it within the family. Therefore, enthusiasm and effort to protect and use the language in daily life are needed in order to maintain the language for future generations.

Saving the Irish Language

The national renaissance of the Irish language in the Republic of Ireland has become of crucial importance for the national and cultural identification of the Irish. The Irish language can be perceived as an important element in terms of cultural identity enhancement. It means that the language is intended to be transmitted to all parts of Ireland in order not to be confined only to western coastal areas known as Gaeltachts (Schröder 1995).

In the Republic of Ireland there are many significant institutions and organizations which play a pivotal role in Irish language revitalization and normalization, just to mention some of them: *Údarás na Gaeltachta* (Gaeltacht Authority), *Ealáin na Gaeltachta Teoranta*, *Conradh Gaelige* (Conradh League), *Gaillimh le Gaelige* (Galway with Irish), *National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG)*, *Foras na Gaelige*, *National Irish Language Theatre (An Taibhdhearc)*, etc. The mentioned institutions play a pivotal role in making Irish people more aware about the significance of the Irish language as an invaluable part of cultural identity and history of the Irish nation. This is done through the medium of different activities ranging from the Irish language courses, cultural events and festivals organization (*Seachtain na Gaelige*, *Fleadh na Gaillimhe*, *sean-nós*, etc.), translation of international theatre plays into Irish and counselling services offered to all firms and companies that wish to include Irish into their agenda creating an added value to their business. In this way all the subjects participate actively in promotion of the Irish language as a unique element, part of national, European and world's heritage in the context of distinctive identity creation.

Furthermore, the media in minority language situation play another important role in language maintenance. In the Republic of Ireland there is TV channel called *TG4* and *Raidió na Gaeltachta* which try to make the language more popular among the people. Their support is therefore crucial in saving the language for future generations.

Conclusion

It is more than evident that the majority of languages will be threatened, to a greater or lesser extent, by extinction in the period of several

decades. Therefore, the success of revitalization efforts is directly dependent on the particular position of the Irish in the value system of the given community. Furthermore, the question of language selection is clearly multifactorial and it also depends on personal choice of an individual to use the specific language. For the majority of inhabitants residing in Ireland, the Irish language is important as a symbol, while for the minority of active Irish language users, it represents an element important for identification performing demonstrative and instrumental function. The usage of any minority, regional or lesser-used language is connected hugely with the material benefits (in terms of utilitarian point of view) provided to individuals on the basis of minority language acquisition.

The unambiguous relationship between the Irish language and ethnicity is not absolute in the case of the Irish. However, the Irish language still fulfills the role of significant economic and cultural capital, which is used by different organizations and institutions. Regarding the data analyzed, the language as a cultural construct generates the potential to create new working places. However, in order to make this possible, real support and implementation of all officially accepted provisions for the Irish language revitalization are crucially needed.

In spite of the fact that total societal bilingualism is not achievable in Irish society in the long-term horizon, exposing people to Irish and reminding them of its importance within the education system as well as in the form of extracurricular activities and development of new Gaeltacht areas and the Irish language services, can create reasonable conditions for appreciation of Irish culture and history. We have in mind distinctive culture and history expressed through the medium of the Irish language, thus creating the pillars for understanding the past and heading towards the future. That is why the decision to use certain languages is of utmost importance for the conditions of existence.

The Irish language is supported more than any other minority language spoken in the Republic of Ireland. Despite this fact, the very existence of the Irish language speaking communities is still foggy. The case of the Irish language is very peculiar as it is the autochthonous language in the Republic of Ireland which was spoken widely until the second half of

the 19th century by the majority of inhabitants. We hope that this data will spark the interest in the issues such as linguistic ecology and preservation of the huge linguistic heritage not only in European (e.g. Scottish Gaelic, Manx, Welsh, Cornish, Breton, Saami, Basque, Catalan, Flemish languages, etc.) but also in worldwide context (e.g. Maori language in New Zealand, Hawaiian language).

According to Šatava (2013: 23) “those who describe the language revitalization efforts as a mere waste of time for something that counts only to a few thousands or hundreds people, they reduce the human existence to only one aspect”. The given statement reflects really well the importance and significance of any minority language in the context of cultural identity of the given community. All languages spoken in the world generate immense national wealth and add value making the community distinctive and peculiar. Thus, all languages are crucial and invaluable parts of cultural and linguistic diversity, at the same time being the unique elements of spiritual heritage of mankind.

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СОЦИОКУЛЬТУРНЫЕ АСПЕКТЫ ВОЗРОЖДЕНИЯ ИРЛАНДСКОГО ЯЗЫКА

В статье представлены социокультурные аспекты возрождения ирландского языка. Автор анализирует причины, по которым необходимо сохранить ирландский язык. Обновление и активное использование языка считаются ключевыми элементами для его сохранения.

Ключевые слова: ирландский язык, обновление языка, культура, язык, идентичность

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ВЗАИМОДЕЙСТВИЕ ДИСКУРСА И СОЦИУМА: СОЦИОФОНЕТИЧЕСКИЙ ПОДХОД

В статье исследуется, как проявляется вариативность при восприятии носителями и неносителями языка акцентной речи. Дается описание фонетического эксперимента, выявившего различия в оценке английскими и русскими аудиторами степени акцента билингвов. Полученные данные трактуются с применением социофонетического подхода к анализу взаимодействия дискурса и общества.

Ключевые слова: социальная перцепция, стереотипы, фонетический акцент, носители языка, билингвы

Современные подходы к исследованию дискурса весьма разнообразны. При изучении дискурса с социолингвистической точки зрения коммуникация и ее результат оцениваются в их соотнесенности с той