The understanding of English as lingua franca and its involvement in language education policies in Europe

Qatip Arifi﹡

Abstract

This material addresses a topic that has long been relevant in scientific circles. It is about the meaning or understanding of the use of English as Lingua Franca (ELF) and its role in the formation of language education policies in Europe, which in fact is creation of a multi-lingual individualism and a multilingual environment characterized by tolerance and respect for the different. The first part deals with the spread of English at a global level as a result of globalization, the development of information technologies and the need for lifelong learning and advancement. This concept speaks of Europe's educational language policies, where English domination is present. The purpose of the work is to present, based on a survey of relevant resources, the understanding of English as Lingua Franca in the formation of language education policies in Europe. Some authors believe that ELF's knowledge enables the largest movement of European citizens and participation in all public spheres, and that ELF can serve to promote other languages and cultures. However, in the Council of Europe it is thought that there is a lot of linguistic dominance. English language can jeopardize the desire of European language policies to create a multilingual society, where all languages are equally and equally valid.

Keywords: *English language as Lingua Franca (ELF), educational language policy, diversity.*

﹡ *Prof. Asst. Dr. Qatip Arifi, , Faculty of English Language, AAB College, Pristina. Email: qatip.arifi@aab-edu.net*

Introduction

The desire for progress, knowledge exchange, familiarity with different peoples and cultures, going abroad for further education or work impose a need to know at least one foreign language. The need to find a global means of communication for the further improvement or achievement of a goal, the English Language Concept as Lingua Franca and its role in the formation of educational language libraries in Europe, as well as the emergence of the Internet, which connected people from different parts of the world, has led to the for the first time in history, a single language - English - has emerged as a global Lingua Franca , used by people across the globe to communicate and make some progress on a personal or global scale. The enormous distribution of English, or an increasing number of its speakers, influences the creation of language policies in Europe, where English dominates as the second and foreign languages. The era of globalization is characterized by, among other things, the rise of English language, therefore "the beginning of the third millennium will remain recorded as the beginning of the linguistic, perhaps also cultural, imperialism of the English language, which is unstoppably spreading through the whole world and entering into all spheres, as well as the living space of each individual inhabitants of our planet ". Such linguistic imperialism carries with it different questions and problems that need to be solved within the framework of education policy. There is a need for change in the field of organization and teaching, both English and non-native, as well as other foreign languages.

The English language as the Lingua Franca

The author[1] explains the term Lingua Franca (Lingua Franca) - originated from the Arabic lisan-al-farang and means the language mediator who used Arabic speakers in communicating with travelers from Western Europe, and later its meaning has expanded and marked the language of trade. English as the Lingua Franca (ELF) can be defined as "a language used as a means of communication among members of different linguistic groups whose language is not first language. It draws attention to the fact that for the first time in history one language is used globally, and its structure and content are equally affected by the original speakers and those to whom it's a page or another language. Famous linguist David Crystal in many of his articles deals with this phenomenon, or with English as a planetary language, and how speakers of this language influence its changing. He,[2] criticizes the use of the "Trojan horse" metaphor, which some authors use, which refers to the spread of English and the imposition of its culture around the world. Crystal states that three-quarters of English vocabulary are borrowed and have entered English for over a thousand years from hundred of twenty different languages. If you adhere to the mentioned metaphor, then there is a large number (one hundred and twenty) "Trojan horses" within English. Also, this author explains that the link between culture and language is complex, emphasizing that we must always be cautious about the potential dangers of "linguistic imperialism," but that it does not need to be exaggerated. He disagrees with the claims of certain authors that along with the teaching of English, they always impose anglo-saxson cultural and social values. English can also

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[1] House, Julian, English as a lingua franca: A threat to multilingualism 2003, 2003. Journal of sociolinguistics. 7 (4), (557)

[2] David Crystal, English as a Global Language, Second edition, 2003. Cambridge University Press, New York

serve as an intermediary in learning other cultures, developing tolerance and creating awareness of cultural diversity. Crystal[3] in his article "*The Future of English as a World Language*" makes a parallel between English and Latin, emphasizing the similarities and differences of these two languages whose domination occurs in different periods. The proliferation of the Latin language resulted in fragmentation, the creation of new languages that still live on account of its disappearance. When the language spreads, culture, flora and fauna change which different parts of the world are different, so the need for expanding vocabulary of the English language is imposed, new speakers modify it and adapt it to their environment and their needs. Brumfit [4] says that the enormous distribution of English has led to the fact that it does not belong only to speakers who are native speakers or the first language. "The language is actually owned by all those who use it, and this implied the power to adjust and change language".[5] However, although the elements of fragmentation are recognized in the expansion of English, Crystal suspects that it will experience the same fate as Latin, that is, in the future, English language family will be created at the expense of Standard English. He explains that in the Middle Ages it was easy to be isolated from the rest of the world, and today, with the existence of the Internet, it is almost impossible and that this connection of people enables the maintenance of English as a global language. Crystal [6] states in his papers that, in addition to allowing the Internet to maintain English as a Lingua Franca, it

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[3] David Crystal, *Language Death*, Cambridge University Press, 2002

[4] Chistopher Bumfrit, *English for International Communication*, Oxford: New York Pergamon, First ed. C 2001

[6] Barbara Seidlhofer, *Understanding English as Lingua Franca*, Oxford University Press 2011,

[7] David Crystal, *Crossing the Great Divide: Language Endangerment and Public Awareness*, Keynote Speech to the International Expert Meeting on Endangered Languages, UNESCO, Paris, 10 March, 2003)

also enables multilingualism. Through examples of the Japanese, South African, American and British English, this author illustrates the assertion is not the only the linguistic dimension is sufficient, but it is also necessary to know the different cultures of speakers. He points out that internet display and information technology development have made it possible for all the languages of the world to quickly and easily find their place online and use it for promotion and expansion. Also, Crystal adds the third - electronic medium - to two that exist for centuries - spoken and written language. Promoting minority languages and cultures through the Internet is easy and accessible wherever there is electricity, computers and the Internet; and the benefits offered by the internet could be used to strengthen languages with fewer speakers in relation to the dominant languages, primarily English. This author[7], speaking about vulnerable languages and what is needed to revitalize the language, points out that the biggest problem is the underdeveloped public awareness that some languages are threatened with extinction and that it is necessary to take certain steps to prevent this from happening. He offers a model of solving this problem by describing four ways for the public to get acquainted with this problem - through *media, art, Internet* and *school curriculum*. This last paragraph indicates that educational language policies can greatly contribute to the beginning of solving this problem. It is also stressed that besides developing awareness, enthusiasm is necessary in order to solve the problem.

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[7] David Crystal, *Crossing the Great Divide: Language Endangerment and Public Awareness*. Keynote Speech to the International Expert Meeting on Endangered Languages, UNESCO, Paris, 10 March, 2003.

The role of English in the formation of educational language policies in Europe

Educational language policies and planning deal with selecting languages that will be used as education languages, or additional / foreign / other languages in a given education system. When it comes to Europe, the author Breidbach [8] deals with the issue of English in Europe, where plurilinguism is set as the principle and goal of educational language policies. It should enable each individual to become plurilingual for the social and political inclusion and the formation of European identity, and thereby to preserve and promote cultural diversity. He confirms that the Guide for the Development of Educational Language Policies in Europe emphasize that "educational language policy should promote learning several languages during the life so every European to become a citizen characterized by plurilingualism and non-culturality, capable of interacting in all spheres of life".[9] The right that every individual uses, learn and cultivate its language / languages is considered to be a "cultural law" as an apprenticeship of human rights because "learning a language also implies learning about a culture, another way to categorize and qualify the world, expressing and building an individual's thoughts and emotions". [10]

Bridbach considers that the Council of Europe is aware that through the teaching of a foreign language, where English is dominant as a foreign language, it is difficult to promote linguistic diversity. Scientists warn that it is not enough to strive for multilingualism, but it requires political will and economic

[8] Stephan Breidbach, *Plurilingualism, democratic citizenship in Europe and the role of English Language Policy Division*, DG IV – Directorate of School, Out-of-School and Higher Education, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 2003.
[9] *Conference on Languages, diversity, citizenship: policies for plurilingualism in Europe*, Strasbourg, 13-15, November, 2002. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
[10] François Audigier, *Basic Concepts and core competencies for education for democratic citizenship*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg 26 June 2000.

power to break down prejudices about the sufficiency of the absolute value of English as a foreign language. However, some authors consider that limiting the learning of English as a foreign language may have more damage than good, because "the competent use of English ensures the dominance of the speakers in any type of communication between speakers of European countries".[11] Knowledge of English today is comparable to the art of reading and writing in the era of industrialization. English as a Lingua Franca is considered part of general education, and some doubt that many global problems could be solved without the knowledge of English

House,[12] exploring English and its role as Lingua Franca in Europe, points out that it does not pose a threat to L1 and multilingualism, as it is necessary to distinguish between the languages of communication (such as today, for example, ELF) and the language of identification (for example, mother tongue). In his paper he mentions a new trend of today - the introduction of ELF as a language of instruction at faculties. As a model, he presents the ELF model in higher education in Germany, and such new introduction is explained by the author as an attempt by German universities to gain an international epitheme and attract as many foreign students as possible, and therefore an infusion of financial resources as studies are paid. It turned out that this practice in Germany did not jeopardize the national language of that country, but the ELF served as a mediator in the spread of German language and culture. Namely, according to their educational policy, ELF is used only at the beginning and serves as helping language until foreign students do not master German. According to this author, ELF is the only hybrid

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[11] Cathie Carmichael, *Conclusions: Language and National Identity in Europe*. 2000. In: Barbour, S. & Carmichael, C. (Eds.) *Language and Nationalism in Europe* (280-289). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[12] Julian House, *English as a lingua franca: A threat to multilingualism*, 2003. Journal of sociolinguistics. 7 (4), 556-578.

language; she reminds us that Fishman[13] twenty-five years ago named the ELF as an "extra language" that works in conjunction with local languages, not as opposed to them. House believes that if we look at ELF in this way, there is no fear that it will endanger our mother tongue, but it can mediate in its promotion and expansion.

Neuner[14] also deals with the concept of English as a planetary language (Lingua Franca) and its role in various educational policies, relying on the Guide to the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe. He states three aspects that have contributed to popularity and motivation for learning English around the world: *market value* (it is worth studying it), *simple grammatical structures* that learn with ease (at least in the beginning) and *status given by people*. It is in relation to wealth and progress. However, Neuner draws attention to some important aspects of learning a foreign language, stressing out that a man by learning a foreign language extends aspects and experiences, both about the outside world and about his inner world; contributes to the formation of attitudes about other people and their culture, which leads to openness and tolerance or prejudice and aversion. He states that Europe's educational language policies are based on maintaining and promoting diversity.

The basic characteristic of Europe as a whole, as well as individual Member States of the European Council, is that they are multicultural and multilingual. The triple objective of European language policy, when it comes to learning foreign languages, means: *a pragmatic goal* (learning foreign languages for easier mobility of citizens and sharing ideas), inter*cultural*

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[13] Joshua A Fishman, *English in the context of international societal bilingualism*, 1997, The Spread of English (329-336). Rowley, Massachusette: Newsbury House.
[14] Gerhard Neuner, *Policy approaches to English. Language Policy Division*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg: 2002.

goal (overcoming prejudices and developing tolerance among European citizens) and the *socio-political goal* (providing protection and support for rich linguistic and cultural heritage for the mutual enrichment). Based on this, the author makes several conclusions regarding the principles of foreign language learning within European language policy: the teaching of a foreign language needs to develop an interest in other to develop openness and tolerance towards different, in addition to pragmatic skills; learning more foreign languages should be set as a central element of formal education; every Europeans should be given the chance to learn more than one foreign language during schooling; to offer different languages (spoken in and out of Europe); goals, motivation, the intensity, methods and contexts of learning different languages can vary, so accordingly, the achievements in different languages are also different. This author then points out that English vis-à-vis other languages has a dual role in the European context. There is an obvious need for one language that can be used in everyday communication of Europeans, and English as Lingua Franca fulfills this function. English also takes first place as a foreign language in curricula throughout Europe, except in countries where it is native. This author says that the dominance of English could jeopardize the concept of a European language policy that is based on linguistic diversity and proposes two ways to solve this problem. If it comes to the fact that there is a strong motivation for learning the English language and that it is learned with ease, then within the school curriculum it is necessary to limit the time of learning the English language and reserve it for learning other foreign languages.

English as the first foreign language should be used as a basis for learning other foreign languages on the basis of similarity. He also states that while learning a foreign language, besides linguistic elements, you will also learn how to learn a foreign language, which can be applied to the learning of each

subsequent foreign language, and for easier and faster overcoming.

Conclusion

Globalization, the development of information technologies and the need for lifelong education have contributed to the importance of language competence as a key professional qualification. Although the languages of Europe's educational policies tend to create a multilingual society characterized by tolerance and respect for a different, the choice of another or foreign language is often under the influence of a wider sociopolitical context and, generally, within formal education, languages are dominant on the basis of political and economic power as compulsory subjects. The author House[15] states that ELF, due to its enormous communicative value, gained a special status in the EU and distinguished itself from other European languages. Knowing the ELF enables both the inhabitants of the world and the inhabitants of Europe greater mobility and knowledge of different cultures and languages. The Guide of the Development of Educational Language Policies in Europe requires that Europe's educational language policies should give every citizen the opportunity to learn more languages, nurturing mother tongue and culture, respecting the cultures of other Europeans and serving another European language, primarily English, for better integration and participation in public spheres in a multilingual environment such as Europe. House points out that language education policies should be open and flexible and should recognize the best ways how to set the goals successfully in practice, relying on models that have yielded good results. Germany is a good example of how to attract foreign students to study and get acquainted with a different culture and language,

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[15] Julian House, "English as a lingua franca: A threat to multilingualism", *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 2003, 7 (4), 556-578.

serving ELF as the language of instruction in the initial stage of study.

In addition to this, you should be careful about the potential dangers of linguistic imperialism, many researchers find no reason to fear for the use of ELF at the planetary level, because minority languages can take advantage of the knowledge of the ELF for their own promotion and expansion. However, although the dominance of English in the world does not always mean the breakdown of the Anglo-Saxon cultural model, shown by various English-language varieties around the world (World Englishes), whose speakers influence its change, and examples are given of English language adaptation to different cultures. The Council of Europe and some researchers are aware that such domination can endanger the development of multilingualism. They emphasize the need for enthusiasm as well as political will and financial resources to bring learning of different foreign languages into action and to overcome preconceptions about learning English as a foreign language, where it is perceived as sufficient and more valuable than language a smaller number of speakers.

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