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MULTILINGUAL AND COSMOPOLITAN ENCOUNTERS IN THE TRANSLEITHANIAN PART OF THE HABSBURG EMPIRE (1867–1918)

Abstract

The Transleithanian part, i.e. the Hungarian kingdom of the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy recognized a multilingual language regime in which fourteen languages were used. The Law on the Equality of the Nationalities XLIV/1868 guaranteed that all the nationality languages had a formal status, although Hungarian was implemented as the official language of the state. The introduction of a transnational, cosmopolitan lingua franca, like German and Hungarian shaped the identity of nationality groups, especially of those who had enjoyed bi- or multilingual education. In order to understand what the role of these mediation elites, i.e. cosmopolitan nationalists were in the struggle for power in the Hungarian kingdom a flower figuration model provides more insight than a bipolar model that has been used in the traditional historiography of the region.

Key words: Transleithania, Austro-Hungarian Empire, multilingual language regime, flower figuration model, lingua franca, cosmopolitan encounters, cosmopolitan nationalists

Аннотация

Трансильванская часть, т.е. Венгерское королевство в Австро-Венгерской дуальной монархии признавалось мультилингвистическим режимом, в котором использовалось 14 языков. Закон равенства национальностей XLIV/1868 гарантировал, что все национальные языки имеют формальный статус, хотя венгерский язык выполнял роль официального государственного языка. Введение транснациональных, космополитических общих языков («лингва франка»), таких как немецкий и венгерский языки, очерчивало идентичность национальных групп, особенно тех, кто приветствовал би- и мультилингвистическое образование. Для того чтобы понять, какую роль эти промежуточные элиты, а именно космополитические националисты, играли в борьбе за власть в Венгерском королевстве, используется модель, подобная по конфигурации цветку, в отличие от биполярной модели, которая использовалась в традиционной историографии региона.

Ключевые слова: Трансильвания, Австро-венгерская империя, мультилингвистический режим, цветочная фигуративная модель, лингва франка, космополитические столкновения, космополитические национальности.

Аңдатпа

Трансильвания бөлігі, яғни Австрия-Венгрия дуалдық монархиядағы Венгрия корольдігінде мультилингвистикалық режим мойындалды, онда 14 тіл қолданылған. XLIV/1868 ұлттар теңдегі заңы барлық ұлттық тілдердің формалды мәртебесі болатынына көпідік береді, дегенмен венгер тілі ресми мемлекеттік тіл ретін атқарды. Неміс және венгер тілдері сияқты трансұлттық, космополитикалық жалпы тілдерді («лингва франка») енгізу ұлттық топтардың, әсіресе би- және мультилингвистикалық білімді құптайтындардың сәйкестігін атап көрсетеді. Осы аралық элиталар, атап айтқанда, космополитикалық ұлтшылдар Венгрия корольдігінде билік үшін күресте қандай рөл атқаратынын түсіну үшін, өңірдің дәстүрлі тарихнамасында пайдаланылатын биполярлық үлгіден гүл конфигурациясына ұқсас модель қолданылады.

Тірек сөздер: Трансильвания, Австрия-Венгрия империясы, мультилингвистикалық режим, гүлдес фигуративтік модель, лингва франка, космополитикалық қақтығыстар, космополитикалық ұлттар.

Introduction

With the 'Ausgleich' of 1867, the Hungarian kingdom, i.e. the Transleithanian part of the Habsburg Empire received an equal status to Austria. Hungary became a sovereign entity within the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy. Next to a common monarch from the House of Habsburg who had the title of 'emperor' in Austria and the title of 'king' in Hungary, three ministries were in common, including the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Finances and Defense. The Ausgleich marking the autonomous position of Hungary ended in 1918 with the dissolution of the Dual Monarchy.

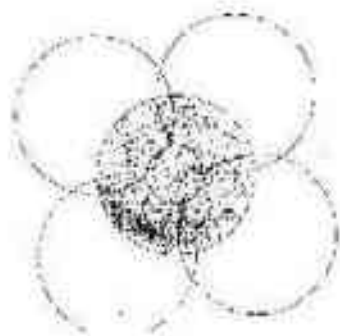
The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was a clear multilingual state in which fourteen languages were officially recognized, including Croatian, Czech, German, Hungarian, Italian, Lithuanian, Polish, Romanian, Rusyn, Serbian, Slovak, Slovene, Ukrainian and Turkish. Although not all the languages were spoken throughout the empire and sometimes very much restricted to certain regions and local areas multilingualism was regulated by law. The language regime in Austria was differently managed from language policy in the Hungarian part (Goebel (1994), Rindler Schjerve, ed. (2003)). The 'top-down' introduction of an official lingua franca in the Hungarian kingdom between 1867–1918 caused political conflicts that jeopardized state governance. The management of linguistic diversity caused conflicts and tensions affecting nationalist and cosmopolitan narratives and identities.

This paper that is part of a larger research project focuses on the question in what sense ideological and language conflicts in the Hungarian kingdom affected the policy towards linguistic and cultural diversity. The question arises whether these policies include cosmopolitan and nationalist solutions shaping the cultural encounters and the different cosmopolitan and nationalist identities in the Hungarian part of the Habsburg Empire. Here we will break with the mutually exclusive nationalist, hegemonic narratives that has been the point of departure in the post-World War I historiographies of the region. It has been claimed that multilingualism was severely restricted in the Hungarian kingdom and that the non-Hungarian official languages were suppressed being one of the most important reasons for causing harsh language and ethnic conflicts (see Seton-Watson (1972), Bideleux and Jeffries (1998)). However, these nationalist narratives have drawn the attention from the management of linguistic and cultural diversity in which supranational and sub-national political and cultural entities, i.e. the county and local levels played a prominent role. For example, the various church denominations managed their own educational system in accordance with the Law on the Equality of Nationalities XLIV/1868. This Act guaranteed multilingual communication in the Hungarian kingdom. It established a hierarchy of the regional languages stipulating that Hungarian was the official language of the state but it did allow the use of any other (regional) vernacular language as an official language at the local level, both in governmental administration, judiciary, church organizations, and in education (Bideleux & Jeffries (1998)). Cosmopolitanism in this region of the Habsburg Empire was shaped by the fact that the Hungarian language was the state's vehicular communication language and by the fact that German functioned as a *lingua franca* for the whole of the Habsburg Empire. Although the Hungarian language was also the vernacular language of the dominant group in the Transleithanian part of the empire, i.e. the ethnic Hungarians the analysis of multilingualism in the Hungarian kingdom is more complex than setting up a simple, bipolar opposition in terms of 'Hungarian' versus 'non-Hungarian' that has been inherent in nationalist narratives. Analyses based on models from political and social sciences, like the one in De Swaan (1988) that take into account the relation between languages and their speakers in the Hungarian kingdom demonstrate that these relations do not display a bipolar structure but rather an intersecting one. In fact, these analyses lead us to discover a relevant social group being crucially involved in the antagonisms between the Hungarian state metropolitans and the other nationalities recognized by the Equality Law of 1868. The members of this group were nationalists representing their monolingual peers living in the country-side but these mediation elites themselves were a 'hybrid' or 'syncretic' social group from a cultural point of view. They can be referred to as 'cosmopolitan nationalists' relying on their own vernacular identity but being shaped by the cosmopolitan features of the Habsburg Empire, like the transnational, wider community, cosmopolitan nobility, the common economic space, and *lingua franca* communication in Hungarian and especially German (Gal 2011). Hence, next to (Hungarian speaking) metropolitans and the different national communities identified by a specific language we find a third social group that is involved in these antagonistic encounters, the cosmopolitan nationalists.

Methodology

The so-called floral figuration model put forward in De Swaan (1988) referring to the language competence of social groups that are struggling for power can give good insights in above and related questions. Let us briefly introduce this model here. Consider the following figure:

Figure 1 – The Floral Figuration of Languages



In the floral figuration model, the outer circles represent the speakers of the regional languages; the shaded area represent speakers of the standard language, i.e. the lingua franca of the national communication network. Those in the unshaded part of the outer circle speak only the regional language, i.e. those are the mother tongue speakers of the regional language. Those in the core star, the metropolitans speak only the standard language. Note that local or regional speech communities are hardly intersecting with one another but all of them are linked to one central or national language community through the mediation of bilingual and literate local elites. The bi- or multilingual mediation elites are to be found in the overlapping areas of the shaded central circle with the outer circles.

Cosmopolitan and nationalist encounters

It is assumed that the political conflict between Hungarians and non-Hungarians, i.e. Romanians, Slovaks and so on had a bipolar structure which led to asymmetries and inconsistencies in the educational system. However, the postulation of a bipolar opposition is not fitted for studying the phenomenon of multilingualism in the Hungarian kingdom and its power political implications. Although a bipolar theory tells us something about the political intentions and the goals of the different nationalities and the character of the political antagonisms between them it obscures the analysis of linguistic diversity. A bipolar approach will not provide sufficient insight into the complicated relations between the communication networks of groups of monolingual speakers and those of groups of bi- and multi-lingual speakers. A bipolar approach restricting the political and linguistic conflicts of dualist Hungary to a Hungarian versus non-Hungarian opposition only completely neglects the fact of bi- and multilingual speakers and the political role they played in society.

In the Hungarian kingdom 23 percent of the population, i.e. 4.880.000 persons were bi- and multilingual controlling one or more languages next to their mother tongue¹. A bipolar model does not tell us anything about how and when these languages in communicational networks were used in daily practice. A bipolar model does not explain why members of non-Hungarian, regional elites were against the introduction of Hungarian as a subject in primary education, although by preventing this their peers were excluded from the communicational networks of the state weakening their power and legal position. A bipolar approach to cultural encounters in the Habsburg Monarchy cannot make us understand why leaders of the Romanian nationalist movement in Transylvania, like Ioan Slavici, Alexandru Vaida-Voevod and a number of others who had enjoyed a multilingual cosmopolitan education, including German and Hungarian were ardent nationalist and fighting against the introduction of the Hungarian language as a subject of instruction in non-Hungarian schools. In fact, these representatives of the nationalist movement were the living example that L2-instruction of Hungarian had not threatened their nationality². To put it otherwise: why did nationality activists fighting against the introduction of cosmopolitan culture in education deny their peers upward mobilization in society, something they did achieve by participating in L2-instruction.

In the case of dualist Hungary, De Swaan's model will be helpful in order to analyze the sociological aspects of linguistic diversity in a more insightful manner. Our analysis in terms of this model is to be considered as a first approximation of the various interest involved in the use and learning of language and the learning of alphabetization in the Hungarian kingdom. Observe that this model allows an analysis in which not only the dynamics of the conflict in terms of ethnic group and class is accounted for but also in terms of religion and region. In some cases, these categories are intersecting.

First, the Hungarian state promoted the lingua franca, i.e. Hungarian on its entire territory to have direct communication with its citizens in order to increase the power basis of the state. This served the interest of the Hungarian metropolitan elites in the capital of the kingdom, i.e. Budapest. The non-Hungarian, regional elites consisting of local gentry, church officials and notables were against the extension of the Hungarian lingua franca in their region for two reasons. First, they feared to loose the monopolistic mediation position which made them profit from the state communicational network. Secondly, at the same time this mediation position gave them power over their clientage. This were in the Hungarian kingdom quite often monolingual peasants, especially in the case of the Romanians, Serbs, Slovaks and Ruthenians.

Second, let us interpret the conflict over the introduction of the Hungarian language as a subject of instruction in non-Hungarian private schools in terms of the strive for power between the social

¹ See for statistical data in this contribution Lökkös (2000).

² An L1-speaker of language X is a mother tongue speaker of language X; an L2-speaker of language Y is a foreign language speaker of language Y.

groups in the floral figuration. The state, i.e. the metropolitans saw the introduction of Hungarian as a subject in primary schools as the first step to gain control of these schools. This was opposed however by the non-Hungarian, regional elites because they did not want state involvement in matters considered to be controlled by them. As a consequence, the presence of linguistic diversity within the school building was seen as a reflection of the power relations between the Hungarian metropolitans and the non-Hungarian, regional elites. The control of the schools was seen as fundamental because the struggle for power was attended with a different ideological transmission.

Third, we observe inconsistencies in attitude not only on the side of the state both also on the side of the nationalities, when taking into account the floral figuration model instead of a bipolar approach. The bipolar model predicts that the non-Hungarian nationalities were the subjugated party who could only practice marginally their rights. However, the local mediation elites, although opposing or completely rejecting the law in order to be on an equal footing with the metropolitans refer to the same law in order to accentuate their own position in the system and to mobilize support from their peers. For example, local elites rejecting the Law of Nationalities of 1868 refer to this law when they want to use their own language in the administrative and the judicial domain. For example in the case of the Memorandum trial before the Kolozsvár Court in May, 1894¹. At the trial in which the condemned Romanians were complaining about their rights being trampled down by the Hungarian state they exclusively spoke in the Romanian language throughout the trial. Hereby they were making use of the right to speak one's own mother tongue before court (compare, § 7 of Law XLIV. 1868) (Jancsó 2004).

Fourth, in 1910 only 23 percent of the inhabitants of dualist Hungary, i.e. 4.880.000 were bi- and multilingual. In the case of the nationalities, these figures were even worse. Only 15.7 percent of the Romanians were bi- and multilingual, i.e. 465.000 persons; only 12 percent, i.e. 374.106 Romanians spoke also Hungarian. In the early decades of dualism the situation was even more dramatic. Hence, the Hungarian state had hardly the possibility of direct communication with their ethnic Romanian citizens. This was only possible through the mediation of bi- and multilingual speakers. Two groups were available, including Hungarians that could speak Romanian as an L2. Their number counted in 1910 400.674 persons, especially Hungarian minded Uniates. The second group consisted of Romanians having control over Hungarian as an L2. The first group was not trusted by the Romanian commoners. Hence, the bi- and multilingual Romanians being a rather small group enjoyed a monopolistic position as mediators between the Hungarian state and their peer Romanians. This category is however interesting between it offers insight into the inconsistencies in attitude among the non-Hungarian nationalities. These mediators argued against the interference of the Hungarian state in the matters of non-Hungarian, mostly denominational schools and against the introduction of the Hungarian language as a subject of instruction to oppose the expansion of state power, similarly to the representatives of the private schools of the non-Hungarian nationalities. Note however that these mediators had benefited optimally from the educational system in the Hungarian kingdom that allowed pupils to visit different nationality schools and hence they had learned the *lingua franca* of the empire. These mediators, although all the time campaigning against "Magyarization" of non-Hungarian schools were the living examples that by learning Hungarian as an L2 one's nationality was not changed automatically.

In sum, the cosmopolitan nationalist profited optimally of the multilingual culture and educational opportunities the Hungarian kingdom offered. However, in course of time they became the most fanatic anti-Hungarian nationalists doing everything to prevent the Hungarian state from directly communicating with their Romanian citizens and preventing their Romanian peers from enjoying what they had enjoyed in dualist Hungary, i.e. full participation in the communicational networks of the Hungarian state. In this way, the cosmopolitan nationalists could maximally benefit from their position as being members of the Romanian bi- and multilingual mediation elite.

Conclusions

Although the Hungarian language and educational policy during dualism had its deficiencies it is unmotivated to label it as the Magyarization of the non-Hungarian nationalities. In this context, "Magyarization" is in fact an anti-Hungarian stereotype that was and is used by critics of dualist Hungary. It is not only incorrect to analyze the ethnic and linguistic political power constellation in terms of "Magyarization" but this term also obscures the sociological patterns of bi- and multilingualism in the Hungarian kingdom. We have argued that the so-called floral figuration model

¹ Today's Cluj-Napoca in Transylvania, Romania.

gives us more insight into the cases of unspecified bi- and multilingualism that have not been studied in a systematic way so far. By making use of the floral figuration model we were able to track down the social groups that struggled for power using language and linguistic competence as instruments in the nationality conflicts. Furthermore, the floral figuration model provides also deeper insight into the linguistic attitudes of the social groups involved in the power struggles which are characterized, just like the state policy, by inconsistencies and asymmetries. The claims of the separate ethnic groups of Hungary were recognized which blocked their full integration into the state system. This state of affairs yielded the worsening of the ethnic antagonisms being one of the main causes for the collapse of dualist Hungary. However, there was no rising social class strong enough that could have changed the system breaking through the fixed pattern of class, religion and regions. Hence, the educational system with the separatist educational regime dominating preserved the social and regional status quo.

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