ELEMENTS OF PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE IN THE SCIENCES OF COMMUNICATION: COGNITIVE AND ACTION-ORIENTED PARADIGMS

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Abstract: In this study, the author presented certain applications of the philosophy of language to the communication's sciences, paying particular attention to a series of cognitive and action-oriented paradigms which seem to be able to explain several theoretical and methodological connections between language and communication in a globalized world. The increasing role of languages in the process of interculturality and cultural mobility is emphasized from a historical perspective, since Antiquity until modern times, as well as from a contemporary perspective of relevant projects and programs elaborated by various factors – local communities, national, European and international institutions, non-governmental organizations.

Keywords: value-paradigms of cognitive and action-oriented nature, barriers of thinking/mentality, comprehensive competence.

The researches in the field of philosophy of language in the framework of globalization, particularly in analytical and interpretative works related to the sciences of communication, emphasize a series of features and trends of communication process, directly influenced by several factors of historical, demographic, ethnic, educational, linguistic, cultural and social nature. In a broader vision, one could say that the processes of intercultural communication become an important parameter for all interconnections on institutional level, as well as on informal level. By its essence, communication means dialogue, transfers of values, criteria and standards, assessments and perceptions regarding various languages, cultural-spiritual systems, which are integrated in a coherent and comprehensive approach.

In an epistemological perspective, the concept of communication had in the recent years certain theoretical developments both in structural and terminological areas, with an emphasis on the intercultural communication and dialogue. In this respect, the expert E. Hess-Luttich (1) mentioned several cognitive, affective and pragmatic competences. Michael Byram (2), on his turn, insisted on some basic parameters, such as: knowledge of other cultural groups and their specific results/practices; certain attitudes (curiosity, openness, respect towards otherness, empathy etc.); abilities for discovering new culture(s) and for an axiological

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evaluation of concrete products belonging to the own or foreign systems of spiritual values.

The "*White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue*" (3), a pragmatic document elaborated in 2008 by the Council of Europe, stressed the fact that the role of this kind of dialogue seems to be essential for creating and promoting social cohesion; at the same time, learning of intercultural competences is fundamental for every democratic culture. A democratic citizen by his/her orientations and convictions needs linguistic competences which are usually specific to a social actor, actively involved in those communities sharing the same language. Nevertheless, due to the fact that the European states and Europe as a whole are plurilingual and pluricultural, the competence of citizenship and a certain brand of "*intercultural citizenship*" could be broadly used for recognizing and understanding this dimension.

The study of thematic diversification of goals and targets in the field of communication can be developed in terms of philosophy of science or pragmatic decision only in direct correlation with the new complexity of linguistic horizon, with plurality of languages, more precisely. In many scientific articles, there is a certain conceptual "*tandem*" which, in our view, clearly reflects a new zone of epistemic approach, but also a dynamic reality on global scale: plurilinguism and cultural diversity. The relations between various cultures in the world are at the same time relations between respective languages in their capacity as modalities of reflecting, expressing and transferring through generations those cultures and their basic components – literary, artistic, educational, scientific, technological etc. The mentioned processes require *ab initio* an awareness regarding the linguistic plurality and, on this basis, a realistic interpretation of plurilinguism; such an interpretation has as its starting point the principle that every written and spoken language, existing nowadays in our world, has its *raison d'etre*, its usefulness and social relevance.

The expanding of researches devoted to the topics presented in our study includes a preoccupation for analyzing the multiple risks and challenges facing the linguistic diversity in certain geographical contexts. For instance, experts and specialized institutions such as UNESCO, Council of Europe, European Union consider with deep concern the possible disappearance of more than 50 per cent of the spoken languages within a period of 1–4 generations, as well as the fact that only 10 per cent of the oral (non-written) languages could survive by the year 2100.

It is quite obvious that such negative phenomena would affect in various ways the whole zone of culture, but in particular the situation of those cultural systems expressed through languages which seem to be gradually eliminated from the social life. This is why the preservation of various languages in many parts of the world is directly connected with the respect for cultural diversity and protection of such diversity as basic requirements of promotion of communication. The relationship between linguistic/cultural diversity and the universe of precious

values created by the mankind implies a lot of nuances and connections, trends and challenges, periodical interpretations and corrections which should lead to updated and coherent strategies and programs elaborated on various levels, such as: Governments, non-governmental organizations, local communities, research centers, think-tanks, educational entities, media, cultural institutions, regional and international bodies (4, p. 139).

A new model of reconstruction in this important area was proposed by the Group of Intellectuals for the Intercultural Dialogue, a body established in 2008 at the initiative of the European Commission and composed of experts in media and communication, philosophers, writers, ex-ministers, teachers, leaders of cultural and academic institutions from Germany, Italy, Great Britain, Belgium, Czech Republic, Romania, Portugal. This Group published an action-oriented study (5) which had formulated with pertinent arguments a set of proposals concerning specific ways and means by which the plurality of languages could and should consolidate Europe. The mentioned EU body has stated that the linguistic diversity represents a significant challenge for our continent, but a "welcomed challenge", which could be monitored and thus utilized for the benefits of all Europeans. It is well known that in every society, the diversity of linguistic, cultural, mental, ethnic or spiritual nature is a source of enrichment, but also a source of tensions, misunderstandings and conflicts. In this respect, an effective activity on examining carefully the existing and growing diversity, including the linguistic one, implies the recognition of the entire complexity and permanent dynamics of the given phenomenon, with the aim of trying to maximize its positive effects and to minimize its negative effects (*ibidem*).

The process of knowledge and communication, implemented by the important acts of translation (bilingual, multilingual) brings a tremendous contribution to the promotion of intercultural dialogue, as well as to the partial elimination of several barriers due to the factual variety of languages as well as to the limited capacities of certain quasi-universal languages which are very spread on global level (e.g. English, French, Spanish etc.), but quite unable to demographically cover the whole contemporary world – population's strata; age-groups / generations; professional segments; linguistic communities etc.

Vocation of translation had, as it is very well known, rich and long traditions in the history of mankind, facilitating and stimulating in various periods of time the dialogue and contacts among different cultures, overcoming the geographical and mental borders and offering useful tools for a mutually beneficial intercultural communication. Great works in the fields of literature, science, law, history, religion, philosophy were translated in many languages – considered at the respective times to be universally representative – and those translated books have become, on their turn, works of intellectual / pedagogical priority and general reference.

Erasmus from Rotterdam translated, for instance, in Latin under the title "*Novum Instrumentum Omne*" the Greek version of "*New Testament*" which latter

served to the reformer Martin Luther who wrote again the "*Bible*" in German language. In other words, translation as an academic exercise gave the welcomed opportunity for transferring the fundamental religious book from Greek to German languages, *via* Latin language, in a splendid plurilinguistic interaction; due to the services of translation, the circles of readers and believers could be substantially bigger.

In the modern times, competent translators were in France – Jacques Anyot ("*Parallel Lives*" by Plutarch), Chateaubriand ("*Lost Paradise*" by John Milton), Jean Hyppolite (philosophical books of Hegel), Charles Baudelaire (works done by Edgar Allan Poe); in Germany – Schlegel and Tieck (plays of Shakespeare); in Italy – Cesare Pavese (novels of Dickens); in Japan – Matsudoira Chiaki (epical poems of Homer and writings of Xenophon); in Russia – Boris Pasternak ("*Faust*" by Goethe and "*Hamlet*" by Shakespeare); in Romania – George Coşbuc ("*Divina Commedia*" by Dante Alighieri), George Murnu (Homer's poems) etc. At the same time, one should underline the existence in many countries of important "self-translators", *inter alia*: Samuel Beckett, Jorge Luis Borges, Rabindranath Tagore, who succeeded to make known their literary creations to a broad area of readers all over the world, speaking other languages than the mother languages of the respective writers.

As a general remark after presenting the two situations regarding the process of translation from original to foreign languages, we could say that the interculturality realized *via* translations has enormous advantages in terms of "transfer of values" and "transfer of messages": i) from the translated author to the translator; ii) on the level of the same outstanding personality being in a double posture as a writer who translates and is translated. These spiritual transfers have always been able to preserve the cultural identity of the translated works and avoid the possible risks embodied in a well-known syntagma: "*traduttore-tradittore*".

In addition to the "author-translations", where the human factor is predominant, in the recent years there has been a broad expansion of electronic translations in many fields of activity: arts and literature, science and technology, education, media, politics and administration; this new technical modality generated, as it was expected, interpretations and evaluations with regard to their level of quality and effectiveness. As a matter of fact, the electronic translations have incontestable positive aspects, particularly envisaging the enlargement of the circles of receivers and the movements of cultural information among communities, situated in different geographic zones. On the other hand, those translations, generally based on dictionary quasi-automatic equivalences/similarities, do not have the capacity of understanding certain contextual nuances, semantic correlations, style constructions, figurative senses, "covered" connotations etc.; all such interpretative abilities belong only to the competence of human factor who is a creative, not mechanical interpreter of the texts provided for translation in other languages.

Another topic closely associated to the process of translation as linguistic and cultural transfer is the promotion of similar intellectual activities within a relatively narrow plurality of languages integrated in the same family. An example in this field is offered by the activity done by the Pan-Latin Network of Terminology "*Realiter*", created in 1993, which offers an unitary methodological background for translating certain essential terms /expressions in the neo-Latin languages: French, Catalan, Galician, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian, Spanish (4, pp. 137–138). The main goal of this inter-linguistic project consists in stimulating a harmonious and non-discriminatory development of all those languages, taking into account the following aspects: common origin; uniformity resulted from the utilization of a series of "related formants"; similar historical modalities of lexical construction etc. Under the auspices of "*Realiter*", multilingual studies of terminology are elaborated for many areas of common interest in science, technology, law, business, trade, transports, administration, education, media, etc.

Taking into consideration the linguistic and geographic diversity of the countries represented in the above-mentioned network, its whole activity and the results obtained through joint efforts are based on the principle of full equality among the languages included in the project and *ab initio* elimination of any possible privileged status for one/some of them (for example, French or Spanish that have become languages of international significance in terms of spreading and utilization). At the same time, "*Realiter*" shares at operational level all guidelines stipulated in the programs of International Organization for Standardization and International Network of Neology and Terminology.

The methodological profile of some explanatory patterns in the communication sciences contains an interesting aspect regarding the so-called "*Anglicisms*" – terms taken from the English vocabulary by one of the languages integrated in the pan-Latin / neo-Latin network. It is recommended in this respect to preserve a balance between the realistic approach imposed by the practices in drafting some multilateral documents and the observance of principles which are valid for the development of neo-Latin languages; practically speaking, there is a practical collaboration case by case, finalized with a specific decision to take or not to take within "*Realiter*" as a whole a given "*Anglicism*" already introduced in a particular neo-Latin language which is part and parcel of the terminological project.

The competence of intercultural communication as a kind of socio-linguistic competence has in our view a double configuration which should be emphasized in its theoretical and pragmatic parameters. Firstly, we have in mind the area of education as a *sine qua non* pre-requisite for an adequate and effective adaptation to the phenomena and trends of intercultural communication and dialogue, to the cultural realities existing in specific time and space parameters, on the level of society, continents, sub-continents, regions, local communities, *ad-hoc* groups. Adaptation primarily means: understanding, motivation, awareness, active assimilation of criteria, ability of observing a set of concrete standards, over-passing of certain

barriers of mentality and perception; all these conditions could be reached only in the process of learning in its broader sense, within school of various degrees as well as outside the school, in non-formal activities and optional events. Secondly, there is an obvious need for combining the present, co-temporal goals assumed in an institutional and individual approach with other prospective, action-oriented targets envisaging the future, based on short, medium and long- term tasks. More concretely, we should consider the transfer of all culture-related perceptions (coexistence of various cultures; their interconnectivity; intercultural dialogue and communication), consolidated during curricula and extra-curricula activities from a generation to another in the natural evolution of mankind and society.

Learning and teaching foreign languages, mainly on the level of school training – elementary, secondary, post-secondary, higher education, post-graduate are a lasting and meaningful parameter, a new important paradigm for the pedagogy of intercultural knowledge and communication. On the one hand, the knowledge of some languages broadly spread in our times (English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Russian, Chinese, German) can facilitate the access to multiple cultural productions, mainly literary ones, which belong to different nations, including those who express themselves through linguistic ways and means less distributed in the contemporary world. On the other hand, a systematic learning of those languages, often characterized as "rare" or "exotic", represents *per se* a condition of the direct semantic transfer of cultural information, without any intermediary factors like author-translations or electronic translations, from a culture to another; in such a way, the access to the universe of certain national / local cultures quite inaccessible for large strata of population could be assured. In both situations, there is a matter of understanding the need for communication and dialogue between various cultures and systems of spiritual values, without inadequate representations, artificial hierarchies or fragile discriminations.

To the process of learning/teaching foreign languages, which has been considered earlier, it would be necessary to associate some coherent educational approaches on school and extra-school levels towards a step-by-step construction and consolidation of cognitive and axiological abilities in the field of communication. Thus, through teaching activities devoted to disciplines (universal history; comparative history of culture and civilization and of their basic zones – literature, arts, architecture; anthropology; philosophy of culture; sociology of culture; cultural psychology), several attitudes of cognitive and emotional relationship with the level of spiritual otherness can be built-up; among them, we could mention the following which are more relevant in our view: receptivity; tolerance; curiosity; interest; analytical and critical spirit; awareness of genuine values; capacity of comparability; respect for foreign cultural values etc. It is obvious that these discursive abilities do not diminish the own cultural identity, but just include it in a broader vision and context, structured in terms of "social solidarity", a concept put forward by the Council of Europe.

A significant dimension of education for an "*intercultural semantics*" envisages the inclusion of cultural studies in curricula of secondary schools and higher education institutions. In the opinion of some experts, e.g. Ernest Hess-Luttich (1), in the last decades there was quite visible an "academic institutionalization" of such kind of studies. Starting from the years '60, this discipline has been gradually incorporated as such, particularly in the USA, in curricula devoted to liberal arts and modern languages as components of a multicultural vision and background. Later on, in some Western European countries specific structures were established with the aim of teaching and research in the field of culture. One of the first institutions having this profile was the Center for Cultural Studies in Birmingham, Great Britain, followed by similar centers in Spain, Italy, France. Simultaneously, in Besancon, France, the UNESCO Center for Education and Interculturality was created. This institutional trend was also reflected in some Western and Eastern-European countries by the setting-up of centers/institutes for comparative study of literature – an academic activity strongly stimulated by the existence of the International Association for Comparative Literature (IACL); several times, IACL supported a "change of paradigm" consisting in the transition from an inter-literary research (contacts among literatures, writers, literary zones and currents) to the intra-literary research (internal laws of genesis and typology of literary phenomena and trends). In Romania too, there were created specialized institutes, responsible for elaboration of various studies regarding the literature, history, languages, ethnography in the Balkan states and South-Eastern European region as a specific contribution to the collective exercise of intercultural semantics.

It goes without saying that all processes of communication require information; otherwise, it would be very difficult to imagine how could be reached the dialogue and connection between different cultural systems. The growing mobility in terms of information, specific to our contemporary world, provides significant resources needed for promotion of interculturality on individual and institutional levels. The history of mankind registered a lot of important developments such as: written press, radio, telephone, television; gradually the public life had assimilated the term "*mass media*" designating several means and ways of communication, addressed to many segments of population, having different degrees of instruction, culture, professional background, mental and psychological skills. The Internet and mobile phones were in a position to generate a genuine revolution in the field of information and its universal dynamics. The electronic networks in a vigorous evolution and expansion all over the world are able to transfer a great amount of data related to culture in its complexity and diversity: outstanding works in literature, music, painting, sculpture, architecture, law, philosophy, religion, science, technology; relevant documentation about the respective authors; events of cultural nature (exhibitions, festivals, concerts, theater shows, excursions); archeological discoveries etc.

Such a broad transfer of information makes possible the promotion of otherness in culture, accompanied by a positive attitude in the spirit of mutual understanding, tolerance, human solidarity and social cohesion. Thus, the universalization of

spiritual phenomena and trends is also achieved on the level of knowledge and information – two important parameters for preparing adequate reactions, interpretations and actions. According to the views of Jeanne Peiffer (6), in the electronic era of information there is a co-existence of the so-called "*local villages*" and the "*global village*"; local operators ensure the access to Net, propose assistance regarding navigation, allowing to a certain community of users to identify those relevant and interesting data, to create "*news-groups*" on local level. The mentioned entities act themselves not only as spaces of information, but also as spaces of cultural communication. Some Japanese specialists in marketing have introduced the original term "*glocal*", a combination between "*global*" and "*local*" that suggests a strong correlation in double sense: global is local and *vice-versa*.

Certain predictions about the evolution of intercultural communication in the era of computers are formulated by the specialists. One of them considers that the Internet has the mission to facilitate to a great extent this kind of communication, being able in a theoretical perspective to reduce the distance between cultures and to create that "*global village*" mentioned above. A second prediction says that Internet technologies would be in a position to further guarantee the domination and prestige of English-speaking nations and thus to amplify the gaps and inequities among cultures; in other words, the universal access does not mean an universal power which remains in the hands of those who produce and control the contents of information *online*. Questions regarding the use of English language as the only instrument in the zone of digital products manufactured in some Anglo-Saxon countries, have been, more clearly than in the past, put forward by many experts in linguistics and semantics: the equal opportunities to utilize these effective products will lead to a "*global monoculture*" or the existing pluralism of cultures could be further preserved?

Intercultural communication is not a recent reality, but it has long traditions in the history, starting with the ancient times when so many spiritual and material values were created. Several facts are eloquent in this respect.

First of all, we have chosen some of them from the rich cultural life of Antiquity (7, p. 104): a) The greatest orator of Rome, Marcus Tullius Cicero studied the art of rhetoric not only in his native country, but also in Greece, more precisely in Rhodes Island, having Apollonius as one of his mentors; after a passionate debate, a Greek person present there, whose name was Molon, felt suddenly obliged to say the following words: "Since now, my country has just a single advantage, that of knowing that you, Cicero, took the eloquence from here and sent it to Rome"; b) For a long period of time, the Latin spirituality was inspired from the cultural values of ancient Greece; in "*Ars Poetica*", Horatius warmly recommended the inspiration from the Greek models: "*Vos exemplaria Greca nocturna versate manu versate diurna*" (Day and night, read and consult the Greek books); c) Ennius described this Greek-Roman cultural dialogue in the following words: "The conquered Greece was able to tame its wild conqueror".

In the Middle Age, Erasmus from Rotterdam became a symbol for the concept of interculturality and such a great symbol was built-up through daily activities as well as lasting convictions and intellectual options; since 1499 until his death in 1536, Erasmus traveled in many European countries – France, England, Italy, Belgium, Switzerland, having numerous university lectures and academic conferences at Cambridge, Louvain, Paris, Torino, Basel; he established fruitful links with other scholars and scientists, among them Thomas Morus and Aldo Manuzio and translated famous books from Greek and Latin languages.

In the same historical period, a broad socio-economic process known under the name "*Silk Road*" connected two continents, Europe and Asia; one should say that it had also a strong non-commercial, spiritual dimension in terms of contacts, exchanges and communication. Besides the material goods to be sold elsewhere, a lot of "spiritual goods" were transported, such as: books, maps, handicrafts, carpets, jewelry, ivory, wood and metal sculptures, paintings etc. At the same time, a verbal culture "traveled" in double direction – to Europe and from Europe; this culture was composed of spoken funny stories, poetry, sayings, myths, popular legends, fables, anecdotes, riddles, games of words, songs, national idiomas – all of them transferred *ad-hoc* from people to people, without any protocolar or other special arrangements. One could therefore say that the "*Silk Road*" contributed centuries after centuries to the mutual knowledge and interaction of various cultures, styles of life and styles of thinking.

The XX-th century registered specific projects in the field of promotion of interculturality, some of them receiving institutionalized forms. For instance, between the two World Wars certain multilateral structures under the auspices of the League of Nations in Geneva became operational (7, pp. 153–154). The *International Commission for Intellectual Cooperation* and the *Permanent Committee for Letters and Arts* had significant contributions from many outstanding scientific and cultural personalities from various countries, such as: Henri Bergson, Paul Valery, Albert Einstein, Thomas Mann, Marie Sklodowska-Curie, Aikitu Tanakadate, Gilbert Murray, Le Corbusier, Paul Langevin, Garcia Morente, Wa-Shi-Fee, Salvador de Madariaga; some of the active members of these bodies were Romanian: Elena Văcărescu, Ion Pillat, George Oprescu,Vespasian Pella, Sextil Puşcariu. In Frankfurt and Madrid, Paris and Venezia, Luxemburg and Buenos Aires, there were organized periodical events, named "*Entretiens*" (Gatherings) on several interesting topics, *inter alia*: Goethe and European lyrics; future of culture; relationship between arts and society; role of museums; significance of Latin spirit; translations as an expression of cultural dialogue; universal and national in culture etc.

In one of her conferences delivered in the capital of Spain in 1933 (8), Elena Văcărescu spoke about interaction between national culture and human culture, taking into consideration the so-called "*abstract memory*" generated by the broad movement of ideas and forms of spirituality (8). Regarding the example of French national culture, she offered the following list of names: Montaigne, Racine,

Voltaire, Chateaubriand, Hugo, Pasteur. At the same time, in her vision, the culture of mankind is based on some great personalities: Jesus Christ, Luther, Homer, Shakespeare, Dante, Leonardo da Vinci, Goethe, Hugo, Pasteur. It goes without saying that these ideas expressed by the Romanian poet and orator represented *sui-generis* arguments for the concept of interculturality which has to be simultaneously conceived in terms of national values and their universal interference.

The epistemological identity of languages represents a dynamic reality having relevant instruments of social practice at its disposal, but facing at the same time certain potential risks as far as the preservation of the diversity of modalities of inter-human communication is concerned. In accordance with the new methodological profile debated nowadays within the philosophy of science, the decision-making factors at all levels should take into consideration all those phenomena and trends, by promoting coherent and action-oriented visions and projects.

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