Métissage and Multiculturalism, the New Dimensions of Globalization

Viorica Banciu, Claudia Leah, and Angela Jireghie
University Of Oradea
Email: myconferences18@gmail.com

Abstract—The new society we live in nowadays is being characterized by the increasing process of globalization, which involves an entire system of interactions at the global level, determining a higher interdependence at different levels: economical, political, cultural, social, technological, ecological, etc. The process of globalization is conceived to diminish geographical distances through technology, language and cultural differences. Considering these ideas, this work aims at highlighting the dimensions of multiculturalism from the globalization perspective, also focusing on the idea of language métissage, multilingualism and plurilingualism. In order to converse across borders and speak to and with different communities, the ability to speak and write in other languages using a large range of styles and forms is of utmost necessity.

Index Terms—cultural differences developing process, globalization multiculturalism, multilingualism, plurilingualism,

I. GENERAL FRAMEWORK

The entire present society is characterized, among other things, by a worldwide process, known as globalization, term that refers both to a phenomenon and to a system. In sensu stricto, it means a rapid growth of economic, social and technological changes, which can be considered a better variant that could replace the dissolution or re-dimensioning of old inter-statal economic organizations. In sensu lato, the phenomenon has extended towards the political and social areas of life structures, turning into a multidimensional system, which includes not only economic and sociopolitical levels but also a cultural level, through institutional, organizational and technological actions that are performed worldwide. The globalization process has been extended upon communication and thus, we can speak of a *linguistic globalization,* which refers to necessity of an objective acceptance of a common and unique means of communication in international relationships. Some political studies associate the term this term, linguistic globalization, with the spread of English as a tool for global communication [1] among people who use it as first or second official language, or as foreign language. On the other hand, language studies consider the linguistic globalization as global an intensive lexical borrowing

from English by languages whose speakers use English as a foreign language. This complex process of linguistic globalization is possible due to the cross-lingual borrowing, English being the dominant source language of vocabulary and set expressions.

Having tried to find answers to questions referring to what a language is and how can it be used, or why don't all beings have language, and how this instrument of communication cannot remain unchanged, linguists came to the conclusion that languages are specific to the human race and they change, develop, refresh their vocabulary, undergo semantic and syntactic alterations in a natural way, one of the reasons for those changes being the linguistic exchange between languages. This always happens when two communities, living in a close neighborhood, interact by exchanging ideas, tools, methods, cultural behaviors. This phenomenon is specific to the multicultural communities in large arias, such are the American cities, but also in smaller arias, such as Romania, our country, where, besides Romanians there also live Hungarians, Germans, Slavs, Gypsies and so on, each of these with their own traditions, cultures, mixed or not with the Romanian ones.

According to some researchers, it is sometimes considered [2] that every country has its own multilingualism consisting of the so called traditional languages which form part of its cultural heritage, and include the national language(s) and its/their varieties, minority languages, regional languages or dialects. In certain contexts, this kind of endogenous multilingualism may lead to an open hostility, due to the desire to preserve and highlight the position of national languages. On the other hand, the heritage multilingualism compels the contemporary societies to be exposed to greater linguistic diversity because of the increased economic and professional mobility.

The professional mobility we refer to, can be taxonomically considered as being of different kinds: some of them occur due to the proximity of the countries concerned to other countries situated in the same region, on the same continent or even on the other side of a shared border, and may only be temporary; while others appeared as a result of forced departures or flights from countries and cultures which are much more distant. Different factors influence the various types of groupings or communities to which they may give rise in the host

countries. Meanwhile, these different types of mobility represent challenges regarding the way in which linguistic and cultural diversities are taken into account in the social inclusion and in the quantification of the cultural and linguistic capital which migrant people bring with them.

Most people consider that the creation and the evolution of a language terminology is nothing but a cultural fact, of some social or political interest. It is obvious that the influence of globalization over the language and culture is ever growing, being, therefore, a good justification to the more frequent need for analyzing the situation of national languages and cultures within the context of other foreign terms assimilation. Globalization required a unique language of communication and imposed the English language as its main language regarding not only the international relationships, but also as a link between multicultural countries. This unique language, sometimes described as the first global lingua franca, got the name of global English,which, in a sociolinguistic context, refers in fact to the use of English as a global language.Therefore, the English language, has become the basic international language in general communication and science, and also in business, aviation, radio and diplomacy, dominating the world publishing, the media, being used in scientific papers. The political language, in the context of the global politics, is also characterized by a plethora of terms taken from English. In close correlation with the globalization process at different levels, we have to refer to *national identity, metissage, plurilingualism, polylingualism, multilingualism, cultural assimilation* and *multiculturalism. Cultural assimilation* is a political response to the demographic fact of multi-ethnicity, which encourages absorption of the minority into the dominant culture. It is opposed to multiculturalism which recognizes and manages the difference.

II. THE DIMENSION OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

In a strict sense, the term *National identity* is given to the way in which the elements of ethnicity are preserved, being affected only by the changes in modern times. National identity is distinct from nationalism, although the bases of each are founded in the characteristics of a nation and common cultural, ethnic and language traditions. The role of nationalism in defining a territorial or political community and the subsequent instability and conflict generated may be a consequence of national identity. Up to a point, the globalization seems to be a threat to the national identity, when the intergroup attitudes and relations move into the realm of out-group hate or overt conflict. This might happen to any level, but at least in what vocabulary is concerned. In countries with different language speakers, the process of globalization has been more easily accepted: people can speak to each other, learn to live well with each other, in the same region or country, and teach their children to do the same, and thus, in spite of the different people have already got accustomed to living in the same space of métissage: they are bilingual, mixed race and part of an immigrant and postcolonial diaspora.

If we are interested in process of identification with the nation-state, the national identity is considered a super ordinate identity, which can minimize "the differences people see between the in-group and the out-group", and can 'reduce competitiveness between groups by encouraging members to be less concerned about the relative gains of the in-group versus the out-group'. The conclusion could be that 'people who share a super ordinate identity tend to be more concerned with procedural justice than with distributive outcomes. If the process is fair for all super ordinate group members, then members do not focus on subgroup identity' [3].

The national identity has always been a problem of interest for the people involved, and for the researchers. For instance, in a Spanish study it is revealed the importance of a superordinate identity for reducing bias among subgroups *sharing* this identity. Analyzing the relationships between national identity and regional identities in Spain, it is considered that '… an effective way of reducing ingroup bias is to create a common ingroup identity… since among those who still share a common Spanish identity there is a reduction of ingroup bias' [4] This conclusion might be extended to almost any country context.

On the other hand, national identity founded on equal citizenship is conducive to its power of attraction, and therefore, an inclusive national identity nears more to these values than an exclusive national identity does. This kind of identity, which concatenates the principle of territory with certain values, gives any person the possibility and choice to attach to it according to criteria the individual himself is able to control. Thus, the ability to speak the dominant *language* of the country where one lives, the respect for the country's political institutions and laws and the feeling that one really belongs, as a member, to the country where one lives are samples of inclusive criteria, while corresponding exclusive criteria refer to the idea of having been born in the country where one lives, of having lived in that country for lifetime.

A criterion of special interest is related to language. In a country with widespread and equally distributed command of the dominant language, the national identity is oriented towards civic values such as freedom, democracy and equal rights, and the democratic state cannot be neutral to different cultures and social identities based upon these cultures within its territory.

III. THE DIMENSION OF MONO-, BI-, POLY-, PLURI- MULTI- LINGUALISM

The notions of monolingualism, bilingualism, and multilingualism although having some features in common, are characterizad by separate sets of features which can be distinguished from each other and counted. In monolingualism speakers know and use only one language, while bilingualism speakers know two such languages, i.e. they have acces to and competence in using two different sets of linguistic features in interaction.

When speakers employ features associated with different languages, in particular several different

languages, some of which the speakers do not know very well, we refer to *metrolingualism* or *polylingualism*. The term *multilingualism* takes into account the knowledge and use of two and more languages in the individual and in society at large.

A term belonging to the same semantic sphere is *plurilingualism*, used to analyze situations in which a person has communicative abilities in more than one language, while a multilingual area might have multiple languages that are used, but individual speakers may still be monolingual. In most cases, people consider plurilingualism to be more appealing than multilingualism. Knowing and using more languages can have advantages: when speakers of different languages are able to communicate, they are often more likely to interact and form a strong society together. In contrast, linguistic divisions can be very powerful and can make people inclined to remain in highly isolated cultural groups even when living in close proximity. Linguistic exchange between different cultural groups should be encouraged in order to ease the tense intercultural relations. The various languages in a plurilingual repertoire usually serve different purposes: communicating within the family, socializing with neighbours, working, studying, expressing membership of a group, etc.

The plurilingual contexts may develop in differnt ways, but usually involves contact between more than one culture. Sometimes bilingualism may be standard for an area and the bilingual community may have its own distinct culture, but linguistic competence is usually accompanied by cultural competence, because effective communication involves more than just words and this is sometimes called pluricultural competence.

The last decades are characterized by an increasing interest in the issue of multilingualism, which has been assigned more political importance in the European context, and particularly in the European Union, where the requirements of advancing Europeanization and the move towards upholding European cultural and linguistic diversity resulted in a conception of multilingualism as a political strategy which would ensure the Union's cultural and economic integration into a transnational community. This new ideology of diversity has suggested that a transnational community necessitates a pluralistic language regime based upon the principle of equality, which allows for democratic participation while at the same time forming the ground for a common European identity.

The Council of Europe makes a clear distinction between *plurilingual individuals*, who are able to communicate in two or more languages, at whatever level of proficiency, and *multilingual regions or societies*, where two or more language varieties are in use. Consequently, according to the European Council, language education should aim to provide learners with plurilingual and intercultural competence, understood as "the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures"

IV. THE DIMENSION OF MÉTISSAGE THROUGH MULTICULTURALISM

The affixed noun métissage, which is a term derived from the French word "metis", refers to the simultaneous existence of different cultures, the "interval between different cultures and languages, to the ways of merging and blurring genres, texts and identities. *Metis* (<Lat. mixtus = mixed) referred basically to a person of mixed race, especially the offspring of a white person and an American Indian. It is commonly used to name any multiracial person. In time, the term got new meanings, so that nowadays *metis* is used in social cultural and linguistic contexts.

Multiculturalism is a term used in the 60s in some Anglophone countries regarding the cultural needs of the non-European imigrants. Then, it appeared in Canada and Australia in the early 1970s, after a long period of time governed by some immigration policies which allowed 'whites only'. With this first stage, humanity made a huge step forward, when these two immigrant societies called an official *multiculturalism* to the rescue in order to juggle the incompatible claims of defeated homeland minorities (both Aboriginal and settler), newly entering Asian and other non-European immigrant groups, and their old European immigrant cores. It was strange and unexpected to notice that official *multiculturalism* was instituted in post-colonial societies that lacked independent nation-founding myths and clear breaks with their colonial past, being conceived as multiple cultures coexisting under the umbrella of a neutral state. The following stage of *multiculturalism*, being characterized by a strong sense of political nationhood and mixed ideology clashed with the multiculturalism's ethnicizing and centrifugal thrust, and this led to the conclusion that "cultural identity must imply the assumption of a bicultural or multicultural personality". In Samovar and Porter's (2003) [5] opinion, being aware of the relevant multiple identities is the first step in becoming an enlightened global citizen who is able to tolerate cultural differences and shows mutual respect in order to practice a multicultural coexistence in the context of globalization. Today, multiculturalism means the political accommodation by the state or a dominant group of all minority cultures, defined by reference to race or ethnicity and by reference to nationality, aboriginality or religion.

The idea of *multiculturalism* inherited the anthropology's relativist, anti-élitist, and comprehensive notion of cultures in the plural, also compriseing the preoccupation with pride and shame inherent in the encounter between the concepts of 'superior' and 'inferior' cultures. When considered as a weapon of the weak, *culture* received a new lease of life in the post-war anticolonial movements. The ensuing disposition 'culturalism' was even called 'the claim to one's own mode of existence as a superior value and a political right, precisely in opposition to a foreign-imperial presence' [6]

The critical, multicultural enterprise is to unmask the false universalism of the dominant group, and to give 'voice' to those groups who have been 'culturally oppressed', that is, 'both marked out by stereotypes and at the same time rendered invisible' [7].

V.   THE DIMENSION OF MULTICULTURALISM

Multiculturalism, or *ethnic diversity*, as the names suggest, refers to several cultures or ethnic groups within a society. Multiculturalism, also known as cultural pluralism describes the coexistence of many cultures in a place (city, region, country) without any culture dominating the region. Trying to make the broadest range of human differences acceptable to the largest number of people, multiculturalism aims at overcoming racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination.

The term *culture* comes from the Latin word '*colere*', which means to cultivate or till the soil, and, consequently, the notion of culture has always had a double meaning: one referring to a specific activity resulting in explicit artefacts, and, one referring to the way in which society rises above nature, where culture becomes an implicit dimension of social life as such and defines a collectivity as a 'personality writ large' [8]. If we mean the explicit culture (as distinct from other social spheres and practices within a collectivity) we refer to culture in the singular, and in this respect, it is the product of symbol specialists in the arts, sciences, and religions. In Immanuel Kant's philosophical conception *culture* is the mark of human beings as rational agents directing their lives according to universal moral laws [9], while some Post-Kantian German historicists, especially Herder, conceived another distinct notion of *cultures* (in the plural), which opposed the general characteristics of Anglo-French 'civilization'. In their view, the national *Kultur* is a weapon against the rootless cosmopolitanism of the French Enlightenment and the French mannerisms of the Prussian court. They also considered that the term 'civilization', as the mode of French culture, was not pluralizable, but thought of as the highest stage in a development to which all the other parts of the world were expected to aspire, and, therefore, the term *Kultur*, as the mode of German culture, was inherently plural, because it was born in confrontation with another culture deemed superior [6].

Since there is a coherent intellectual doctrine beneath its manifold manifestations, and therefore, *multiculturalism* appears as a critique of Western universalism and liberalism, with affinities to post-structuralism and communitarianism. Ontologically, it posits the group over the individual, namely, not any group, but 'social groups' defined by 'cultural forms, practices, or way of life', which are not the result of choice but of some existential 'throwness' [7]. Since society is composed not of individuals, or systemic spheres, but of groups, each is constituted by a particular way of life, or 'culture'. If one group has managed the 'universalization of its experience and culture, and its establishment as the norm', then it is

dominant. The critical, multicultural enterprise is to unmask the false universalism of the dominant group, and to give 'voice' to those groups who have been 'culturally oppressed', that is, 'both marked out by stereotypes and at the same time rendered invisible' [7].

The ontology of social groups can interweave with the epistemological relativism and a critique of universalism, the claim to the context-transcending foundations and applicability of abstract principles, which is exposed as the ethnocentrism of the dominant group, or the so-called unwarranted establishing of the specific values of one's own society as universal values. This idea, among others, has initiated a controversial discussion about the impossibility of objective knowledge about the 'other', turning the attention away from the investigated object to the investigating subject. As an alternative, a new, critical *multiculturalism* or *interculturalism* takes into consideration both the ways in which difference is represented at the level of language and culture, and the ways in which subjectivities are constructed within material relations of power and privilege linked to the globalization process.

As a dichotomous model for society, multiculturalism comes in two opposite versions. The first one has been clearly formulated by Salman Rushdie, in a defiance of his novel (*Satanic Verses)*,[10] considering that the novel 'celebrates hybridity, impurity, intermingling, the transformation that comes from new and unexpected combinations of human beings, cultures, ideas, politics, movies, songs. It rejoices in mongrelization and fears the absolutism of the Pure. Melange, *hodgepodge*, a bit of this and a bit of that is how newness enters the world.' The second model of a multicultural society is viewed as a *mosaic,* with every color distinct, vibrant and essential to the whole, with different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, respecting each other as mutual partners, each bringing its own ethos, arts, ideas and skills to a community that welcomes and encourages diversity and grows stronger by taking the best from it. While the term '*hodgepodge'* is about the intermingling and fusion of cultures, even within the same individual, '*mosaic*' is about the coexistence of distinct cultures held by separate groups. The first term seems to be similar to *cultural assimilation*, and maybe to *metissage*, while the second one includes the idea of preserving *national identities*. Multiculturalism is often described in contrast with the concepts of assimilation, as a 'salad bowl' or 'cultural mosaic' rather than a' melting pot'.

It is obvious that each multicultural society is formed of majority and minority groups. Although all of them have general rights, the minorities also claim another type of rights, i.e. *special benefits* granted to individuals belonging to a minority. For example bilingual education programs for children, or refugee resettlement programs, traditional cultural manifestations, the use of their own language even in official institutions (in the counties where their percentage is high) etc. Generally speaking, special benefits are uncontroversial if no majority society interest is directly touched, but his is not the case if special

benefits amount to *privileged treatment* of minority groups. A relevant example in this respect is Romania, our country, where besides Romanians (the great majority) there also live several minorities (Hungarians, Germans, Ukrainians, Gypsies a.s.o.), and the members of the minority groups are granted privileged access to education, and sometimes to employment, or to the political system. From time to time, in the situation of a privileged treatment, the members of the majority society equally (perhaps even better) qualified or situated lose out against members of a minority group. Moreover the nowadays request, to have a territorial autonomy, based on the self-government right, claimed by some minorities, may lead to ethnical problems. Consequently, privileged treatment, which entails reverse discrimination, is inherently controversial, and requires extraordinary justification. This right of self-government may be feasible in the case of exclusive territorial groups, essentially proto-nations, but in this case, the line between multiculturalism and nationalism is difficult to draw.

On the other hand, in Europe multiculturalism is directed to foreigners, postcolonial and guestworker immigrants and aims at a 'civic' redefinition of essentially ethnic nationhood, maybe too closely associated with a particular culture, while in the United States there is no national culture that immigrants would have to adjust to. To be more specific, the nationhood in Europe has strong cultural connotations that are absent in the United States, conditioning different multicultural issues. Europe itself is now growing from a regional into a political entity separate from and above its constituent states. The European Union is conceived as a *sui generis* supranational, multilevel, non-state policy, with unique minority issues. The basic characteristic is the lack of *internal* European Union policies on ethnic minorities, EU concerns for minorities having arisen only *externally*, in the context of the pending accession to the EU of East-Central European states, such as Romania, plagued by long-standing national minority conflicts. In these countries, the EU has kept a strict line of demanding elaborate constitutional protection and remedial policies for national minorities in the applicant states for EU membership.

VI. Conclusion

There are languages, such as English, especially American English, that might be considered multicultural, mixed languages if we refer to the many foreign influences upon it. However, it was never a truly mixed language in the strict linguistic sense of the word; mixed languages arise from the cohabitation of speakers of different languages, who develop a hybrid tongue for basic communication.

The concept of plurilingualism has been promoted by the Council of Europe in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). This proved to be a profound shift in perspective towards the use of multiple languages. Multilingualism is described as the co-existence of different languages, whether in the mind of an individual or a society, and represents a diversification of languages available. On the other hand, plurilingualism, emphasizes that a person's languages and cultures are not kept in strictly separated mental compartments, but that the languages in one's head will interrelate and interact to contribute to the growth of communication skills as a whole.

Globalization creates a world in which people of different cultural backgrounds increasingly come to depend on one another. Understanding and accepting cultural differences becomes an imperative in order to become an effective cross-cultural communicator in a global society. Therefore, according to Chen and Starosta [11], [12] the need for cross-cultural knowledge and skills that lead to cross-cultural communication competence becomes critical for leading a productive and successful life in the 21st century.

REFERENCES

[1] H. R. Dua, *Hegemony of English*, 1994. Mysore; R. Phillipson, *Linguistic Imperialism*, Oxford, 1992.

[2] J. C. Beacco and M. Byram, "Data and methods for the development of language education policies," *Part 2 of the Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe*, Council of Europe, Language Policy Division, Strasbourg, 2007.

[3] J. S. Halev and E. T. Morse, "National identity and self-esteem," *Perspectives on Politics*, vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 515-532, 2003.

[4] M. Ros, C. Huici, and A. Gomez, "Comparative identity, category salience and intergroup relations," in *Social Identity Processes*. London, Sage, D. Capozza & R. Brown, pp. 81-95, 2000.

[5] L. A. Samovar and R. E. Porter, "Understanding intercultural communication: An introduction and overview," in *Intercultural Communication, A Reader*, G. M. Chen, and W. J. Starosta, Thomson & Wadsworth: Belmont, CA, 2003.

[6] M. Sahlins, "Goodbye to tristes tropes: Ethnography in the context of modern world history," *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 65, pp. 1-25, 1993.

[7] I. Young, "Five faces of oppression," in *Rethinking Power,* T. Wartenberg, Ed., Albany, New York: SUNY Press, 1992.

[8] B. Ruth, *Patterns of Culture*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1934.

[9] J. Parens, "Multiculturalism and the problem of particularism," *American Political Science Review*, vol. 88, no. 1, pp. 169-81, 1994.

[10] S. Rushdie, *Satanic Verses*, Penguin Books Ltd, Registered Offices: Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England, 1989.

[11] G. M. Chen and W. J. Starosta, "Intercultural communication competence: A synthesis," *Communication Yearbook*, vol. 19, pp. 353-384, 1996.

[12] G. M. Chen and W. J. Starosta, *Intercultural Communication, A Reader*, Thomson & Wadsworth: Belmont, CA, 2003.

Viorica Banciu became a member of IERDC. Org. in September 2012. She was born in Sudrigiu, the commune of Rieni, the county of Bihor, Romania in August the 18th, 1962. She graduated highschool in 1980 at Ady Sincai, Cluj-Napoca, Romania and then attended the Faculty of Letters, Babes-Bolyai University. She graduated in 1989, becoming a teacher of English and Romanian. Viorica Banciu, doctor in philology in 2007. Her fields of interest are English Literature, Children's Literature, Linguistics, English Language Teaching, Ethnic Studies, Gender Studies. Current and previous research interests are linked to education and English Language Teaching for children with special educational needs and Children's Literature studies. Dr. Viorica Banciu

became associate professor of the University of Oradea in October, the first, 2012 and she is *Member of International Editorial Advisory Board of* PTSE- Practice and Theory is Systems of Education, Budapest, a journal specialized in education studies.

Claudia Leah was born in 1962 (26 of April) in Oradea, Romania, is a member of the English Department at the Faculty of Letters, University of Oradea. Her formal education is: BA, University of Oradea, Ph.D, „Babes-Bolyai" University, Cluj-Napoca(2005). She is member of ESSE **,** RSEAS, AELFE and APCE. Her interest in the field of English Linguistics is demonstrated by works on Morphology, Syntax, Lexicology and Discourse Analysis published in different reviews and journals. Current and previous research interests are linked to education and English Language Teaching for Special Purposes English Grammar Teaching, Cultural Studies Claudia Leah is senior lecturer at the University of Oradea.

Angela Jireghie was born in Arad, the county of Arad, Romania in October the 27th, 1962. She graduated highschool in 1971 at Highschool nr 5 Arad, Romania and then attended the Faculty of Letters, Timisoara University. She graduated in 1978, becoming a teacher of English and Romanian. doctor in philology in 2008. Her fields of interest are English Literature, English for Special Purposes, Linguistics, English Language Teaching, Ethnic Studies, Gender Studies. Current and previous research interests are linked to education and English Language Teaching for special purposes. Angela Jireghie is senior lecturer at the West University "Vasile Goldis" Arad.