



Language and Ideology in the Context of Language Policy of Albanian Language

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Abstract

This paper discusses the significantly tight relations which exist between ideology and language. It emphasizes that language and ideology are intertwined since ideology provides the framework within which a linguistic message is constructed and expressed. The influence of ideology is noted in language policy and language planning efforts since it enables actions taken by a certain social group to standardize a particular language. Another realm in which the influence of ideology becomes noticeable is the realm of discourse. Ideology is at best expressed through discourse structures. This type of ideological influence can be noticed in the case of Albanian language standardization process in which ideology served two functions: supporting the language policy and helping to build discourse rhetoric with which language policy was elaborated and promoted to the public within former Socialist Albania.

Keywords: language, ideology, standardization, discourse

1. Introduction

The definition of ideology as a set of ideas, views and social beliefs on the basis of which people determine their behavior and actions describes the extensiveness of the influence of ideology on the lives of individuals and social communities. Ideology forms a view on the world, reality and other issues of common interest to social communities as well as influences rapprochement within community members and social cohesion. The influence of ideology does not exclude language, and the latter often turns into the main tool for the realization of ideological goals. By influencing communication, linguistic ideology becomes a powerful tool for spreading views and ideas based on a certain ideological framework. Ideological influence on language is one of the most illustrative examples of linguistic determinism. This phenomenon is seen from different angles in linguistic, anthropological and sociolinguistic studies. Ideology is viewed in close liaison with language and linguistic manifestations and these relations are manifested in the form of mutual influence. The most obvious manifestation of ideology in language is expressed in the process of language policy development and in activities in the field of language planning aimed at the creation of standard languages. By the same token, the most concrete impact of ideology appears in the realm of discourse.

In this paper, I will discuss the influence of ideology on language from the theoretical point of view. For the purpose of this discussion, ideology is defined on philosophical background, and not in terms of ideological language attitudes. Mainly, I will explore the correlation between language and ideology, and the influence of the latter on first. In this context, I shall examine the ideological influence on the language planning process, the views related to the Marxist concept of the superstructure, the implications of language included in the superstructure, as well as the manifestation of discourse ideology.

2. The Impact of Ideology in Language Policy and in the Language Planning Efforts

The influence of ideology in language is manifested in the form of creating beliefs and convictions regarding the evaluation of language forms and their functional use by language users. From this metapragmatic source emerge the efforts to promote language forms which may be perceived as "good" and, "adequate" by a speech community as well as efforts to change language forms, which are considered "bad" or "inadequate". Ultimately, this starting point, in fact, is the starting point for building language policy and starting the language planning processes.

Ideology has exerted a strong influence on the processes of language policy and language planning. Historically, the conscious efforts of European social communities in the field of language planning and language policy for the creation of standard languages are an integral part of efforts to build national identities and create national state entities. The formation of a standard language which emerges as a *koine* from a multitude of existing dialects was a model first applied in ancient Greece. Subsequently, the same model was spread more or less in the formation process of standard languages in Europe which took wider extent in the 18th and 19th centuries. The mere process of standard language formation was an integral part of the nationalist ideology that had overtaken Europe at that time and aimed at the creation of larger ethnic, political and cultural entities (national states), which has resulted in the creation of wider markets.

The emergence of romantic nationalism and the development process of national states in Europe was accompanied almost in parallel with the further development of means of production and technological advancement. This progress was also accompanied by the development of infrastructure, especially during the period of Industrial Revolution, enabling the establishment of more frequent contacts between members of the community belonging to the same ethnicity and speaking the same language. These developments led to the creation of large urban centers and markets which members of ethnic communities who spoke dialects of the same language gravitated more frequently. If the migration and distance between human communities (clans and tribes) in the past had resulted in language divergence and dialectal separation, the development of urban centers necessarily provided opportunities for intensified contacts between speakers of different dialects and dialect convergence. These developments produced national, political and cultural elites simultaneously, elites which had assets and power to pursue socio-cultural and linguistic goals. National elites gave particular importance to the promotion and imposition of a language code, namely standard language, which was considered as a very important tool for the creation of national homogeneity within a given society and for the closeness of people who had populated urban centers. In discussing the linkage of national elites to language, Joshua Fishman points out that "the functional dependence of new protoelites in their vernaculars was a reflection of the need of these elites to communicate, organize and activate the new urban populations that were still illiterate. Less obvious is the fact that these populations did not have a common vernacular (but had a continuum of social, regional or experience-wide vernaculars) or did not have vernaculars that would be ready to be used for modern purposes ideologized and other organizations that took into account new prototypes (Fishman 2003: 155).

Clearly, in such established political, economic and cultural circumstances, there was a need to have a common linguistic code which, in addition to communication needs, would also serve the homogenization needs of the population and conception of features over which the nation was consolidated, and the national state was built. For this reason, the elites implanted linguistic ideology within their nationalist ideology, which had an ultimate goal of creating the standard language. The common standard language was considered as one of the main binding features on the basis of which a nation was identified and perceived. But language standardization is not just about interfering with the language structure and simply creating a common language code. Given the ideological background of the linguistic norms, Rexhep Ismajli rightly notes: "language normation is not only a concrete intervention in the structure, in channeling a certain use of the language, but it is in the first instance interference in the social organization of speakers of that language. Thus, normation should not be seen as a confrontational action of certain forces in concrete societies, which sometimes also produce certain linguistic argumentation as ideological production "(Ismajli 1991: 305).

Among the authors who first emphasized the importance of the common language for the nation-building process is the German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), who emphasized the importance of language for the creation and strengthening of national sentiment, in addition to other cultural features and oral literature. Meanwhile, Ludwig von Mises (1919) sees the unification of the language as a result of the influence of several factors, such as the need for trade exchanges, political and military influences, religion, and so on. According to Von Mises, after the formation of the standard language, members of different communities who speak different dialects are motivated to learn and use standard language, since the latter becomes an important tool for their integration within the nation. This type of process of gradual transition from dialect to standard language is seen by Von Mises as part of national assimilation.

The author Susan Gal indicates that although it seems unusual, 'language' is said to have been discovered in Europe (Gal 2006a: 14). In this case, she refers to the standard language which is the carrier of prestige. Standard languages which were formed in European nations became prestigious linguistic codes marked with positive features and considered as a correct form of language use, while on the other hand the emergence of stigmatizing attitudes towards dialects and other languages appeared in relation to the standard language, and were labeled with negative marks and considered as incorrect forms of language use. Thus, the emergence of standard languages caused simultaneous evaluations and prejudices for other forms of language. On these grounds, linguistic ideologies of European countries were born. According to Susan Gal, the roots of linguistic ideology are found in European Enlightenment and in the subsequent period of Romanticism. According to ideological frameworks based on which standard languages were created, views were also made that language forms are acceptable as a language only if they have scripts and if they have literacy and correct usage rates. Thus, the spoken forms of colonial territories and rural peripheries of European countries, have been treated as incomplete languages. Moreover, social groups, relying on their linguistic homogeneity and variability, feel that they deserve a state, a territory, a kind of political autonomy (ibid. 14-15). So the languages not only became tools and criteria for social appraisals but also became the necessary and integral features of the socially-owned administrative entities of a higher degree, such as the national states, which were being created in Europe in the second half of the XIX century. However, since ideology is a system that is absorbed by social groups, it can change as part of the dynamic process of other socio-cultural changes occurring in society. Thus, from the time of the creation of national states in Europe to the present day, political and linguistic ideologies in Europe have changed quite a bit. Linguistic understandings have also changed for the assessment of language codes, and all these developments are of course only the adaptation of ideological influence.

3. Interconnection of Ideology with Language Phenomena and the Impact of Ideology in Discours

Let us now turn to the discussion of the connection of ideology with the language. One of the first authors who had a strong influence on the treatment of language ideology as a field to be studied separately was Michael Silverstein. He considers language ideology as a range of features and guidelines on how to use the language by its users. Linguistic ideology plays an important role in defining views, beliefs and convictions about language codes within society. On this basis, views are also expressed on the necessity of the existence of a common language code which, besides being a communication tool, would also play an important role in building social views and beliefs regarding a language code as well as social homogeneity. This aspect is taken into account by many authors when they talk of linking ideology and language. In this context, Woolard and Schifflin (1994) rightly emphasize that not only linguistic forms but also institutions such as the national state and schools, genders, dispute resolution and laws are directly determined by the use of ideologized language. Meanwhile, there are authors, such as Susan U. Philips, who emphasize that language plays a central role in the creation, dissemination, and retention of ideologies (Philips 1992). From the statements of both authors, it is clearly seen how related the ideology and the language are, and how much powerful is the mutual influence of these two social categories.

The phenomenon of linguistic ideology and the ideologized language is seen by different

authors also from the perspective of Marx's concepts of base and social superstructure, as well as the linkage of language and ideology with the social class. Russian linguist N.J. Marr (1864-1934) was the first to take language in the theory of language as the concept of social superstructure. The other Russian linguist Valentin Voloshinov (1895-1936) considers language as the medium of ideology as a tool that cannot be separated from ideology. As far as his concepts are concerned, there are doubts that behind those concepts stands the other Russian author, his contemporary and collaborator, Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975)¹. According to these concepts in every sign, which is a means of linguistic communication, the criteria of ideological evaluations are applicable ... the field of ideology complies with the field of signs. Among them can be placed a sign of equality (Bahtin 1980: 11). Moreover, the theme of the ideological sign and the form of the ideological sign are inseparable from each other and, of course, can only be distinguished in abstraction (ibid. 24). This inseparable relation between the sign (language) and the ideology is also found by other authors. In this sense, Augusto Ponzio emphasizes that, because of their linkage to ideologized linguistic or non-linguistic codices, each linguistic message is more or less ideologized, both by the way and meaning of how it is formulated and by the way and meaning that as it is understood (Ponzio 1978: 58). According to him, the messages are often constructed according to ideologies for which the speaker is not fully aware, but which he has received (internalized) in a passive way i.e. on the basis of 'spontaneous' ideologies (ibid. 74). However, if there is a greater consensus on the powerful influence of ideology in the language, the issue of the language superstructure is questioned. Further, among the first to reject the idea of the language superstructure was former Soviet dictator Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin (1878-1953). According to him, "language as a means of communication among people serves all classes alike, and in this regard shows some indifference to class (Stalin 1979: 22). Meanwhile, by rejecting Marr's concept of language superstructure, Stalin states:

"N.J. Marr put into linguistics a wrong thesis, a non-Marxist, the thesis of language as a superstructure, and thereby confusing linguistics itself. Soviet linguistics cannot be developed on the basis of a wrong thesis."

"N.J. Marr put into linguistics another thesis, even this wrong and non-Marxist, the thesis on the class character of the language. Soviet linguistics cannot be developed on the basis of an erroneous thesis that is at odds with the whole course of the history of peoples and languages." (ibid, 35).

He concludes that language can be introduced neither into the base nor in the category of the superstructure (ibid, 38).

With reference to the concepts expressed by Stalin, Ponzio points out that Stalin's statements are directed at testifying how interpretations on language as superstructures are invalid and only partially acceptable. He adds that language can be in the service of different ideologies, while superstructural phenomena have a clear ideological direction, regardless of their intentions to be the result of a descriptive, worthless and neutral attitude (Ponzio 1978: 178 - 179). However, the phenomenon of linguistic superstructure may appear in the context of relations between different languages in the context of territorial conquests, especially in the context of colonialism. Louis-Jean Calvet (Lui Žan Kalve) believes that Stalin's statement of denial of putting the language in the framework of the superstructure is partly correct and relates only to monolingual situation, whereas in situation of colonialism the linguistic superstructure appears in the physiognomy of the dominant language (Kalve 1981). I would argue that the concept of language as superstructure in the context of monolingual situation can also be traced within the framework of language standardization, in the sense that, once adopted, a standard language is imposed by social means as a superstructure relative to other variations of the same language.

Based on what has been said so far, it can be concluded that language cannot be regarded as a phenomenon separate from the influence of ideology, rather it becomes a powerful tool for the

¹ In this paper Voloshinov's views are derived from a book bearing the authorship of Mikhail Bakhtin entitled "Marksizam i filozofija jezika". Nolit. Belgrade. 1980. In most of the bibliographic sources this work holds the authorship of Valentin Voloshinov, but we are giving the source reference, which we had available.

expansion and spread of ideology. Ideology influences the formation of the language message, reflecting a particular worldview of social groups. In this context, the most evident manifestation of the influence of ideology in language appears in the field of language standardization and discourse.

Social group discourses most of the time unfold the ideological background and incorporate features and concepts that are perceived as values of a certain ideology. Building upon Louis Alhuser's concepts of the reflection of ideology on subject and further on social discourse, Fairclough endorses the interconnection between ideology and language/discourse, but emphasizes that more diverse range of linguistic features and levels may be more ideologically invested than is usually assumed, including aspects of linguistic form and style as well as 'content'. In addition, he believes that the study of language and ideology should be focused upon the change in discursive practices and structures, seen as a dimension of change in the balance of social forces (Fairclough, 1991: 113-114). In addition, to paraphrase Fairclough, socio-economic and political changes go together with the appearances of new economic, political and business discourses, and only after the discourse begins to circulate and be disseminated, the new economic practices, institutions, organizations, and agents become real. Economic changes may happen after the discourse is operationalized, implemented and put into practical use (Fairclough 2006: 2). In this respect, I would add that, since socio-economic and political change is usually based on an ideology the latter becomes crucially important in the operationalization of the discourse change.

In regard to discourse and ideology connection, one of the notable authors in the field of discourse analysis, Teun van Dijk, states that ideologies are defined as fundamental beliefs under the manifest social representation of specific types of social groups. These representations, according to Van Dijk, are the basis of discourse and other social practices. It is also often implied that ideologies are widely expressed and understood by discourse, that is, by spoken or written communication interaction. When group members express, motivate, or claim their legitimate actions, this is typically done in terms of ideological discourse (Van Dijk 2004: 11). Further, he emphasizes that if ideologies are appropriated, expressed, functioned, and reproduced by discourse, and this can happen through a variety of structures and discourse strategies (ibid. 18). Van Dijk concludes that ideological discourse is generally organized by a general strategy of self-representation (laudation) and negative representation of others (humility). This strategy can act at all levels: generally, in such a way that our good things are pronounced, while the bad things are silent; and the contrary in relation to others: their bad things will be emphasized, whereas good things will be diminished or forgotten (ibid. 19). He concludes that, when ideologies are sketched into discourse, they are typically expressed in terms of their subordinate structures, such as the positive description within the group and the negative out-of-group description. This can happen not only explicitly with pre-set tools (topics, meanings, etc.), but also with many other discourse steps that emphasize or silence good and bad things, such as titles and positions, sound structures, and visualization, lexicalization, syntax structure, semantic actions, such as denials, and a variety of rhetorical figures and argumentative actions. Thus, at all levels of text and speech, we can be witness to the influence of the bias of the ideology of underdeveloped mental models and social representations (ibid. 42).

4. The Ideology of Language Policy in Former Socialist Albania

In the third section of this paper, I will turn now to the discussion of the ideological background of the standardization process of Albanian language after World War II. I will try to outline that ideological background was built not by relying upon certain philosophical concepts of ideology, in case of Albanian in Marxism. Rather, I will emphasize that ideology has been instrumental in developing a discourse of language policy aimed at justifying language planning efforts in Socialist Albania from 1945-1991.

Language policy and language planning efforts aimed at standardization of Albanian after World War II were based on the idea selecting and imposing one dialect over the other. In case of Albanian, Southern Dialect or Toskërishte was imposed as standard dialect against Northern Dialect or Gegërishte. The standardization of Albanian as language leveling was not simply part of general the socialist ideal of leveling social and economic distinctions in Albania since a number of

a number of diverse ideologies and perspectives can lead to the same position and, moreover, be realized concretely, with varying degree of success (Byron 1976: 71-72). I would argue that two motives were dominant in the efforts to standardize Albanian after WWII. The first motive was based on, as Susan Gal (2006) calls it Standard Language Ideology, which was Europe's dominant ideology for centuries. And, the second motive was based rather on the intention and efforts to build a socialist centralized state based on communist ideology which requires *per se* many manifestations of socio-cultural and linguistic uniformity.

In this context, it should be considered that the language policy which was pursued in Albania was determined by the new circumstances created after the end of World War II. The National Liberation War, apart from the liberation of Albania in 1944, brought political changes of the social system as well. Thus, from a monarchy that was before the beginning of the WWII, Albania turned into a communist system based on Marxist ideology. These changes also determined the fate of language policy in Albania in the field of language planning and standardization of the Albanian language and the efforts were done through the direct implication of state establishment, which defined the path that would be followed by the intellectual elite when selecting the variety as a base for standard language. In this context, actions had to have some sort of ideological support and elaboration, which originated from the nature of the social system. As L.J. Calves points out "ideology, first and foremost, has a social function, it is there to 'defend' a class" (Kalve *ibid*: 67). In the case of language policy ideology will be supportive of that particular language policy which is followed by the ruling class. Thus, it is somehow natural that the language policy of a political-ideological establishment in power will have its origin and foundation in the ideology of the ruling class is establishment. In the case of Albania after World War II, there can be no exceptions. For every action and for any solution to be taken, support was sought within the framework of Marxist ideology although the latter had shortfalls in many cases to provide solution for linguistic issues.

Within this framework, Albanian scholars argued that within the new system the issues of language standardization will be solved. Albanian scholars Androkli Kostallari emphasizes that "the new socialist order, which develops on the basis of the deep knowledge of the objective and dialectical laws of nature and society, of the materialistic understanding of history, creates such conditions as society can really and more comprehensively assume under his control the development of the literary language than in any previous order" (Kostallari 1970: 12). By the same token, ideology is used to give attributes to the standard language as Kostallari states that literary language "is the language of Marxist-Leninist truth, the powerful weapon of our socialist revolution" (*ibid*. 10). Such ideologically coined attributions to standard language have been used by other scholars of the Socialist era in Albania. Anastas Dodi, for instance, calls it 'our Marxist-Leninist language' (1984: 135). Another notable element of these writings of Albanian scholars is the tendency to glorify the contribution of the state and the party leader as founder of language policy. In this respect, Kostallari notes that "the issues of language have always been in the spotlight of Party and comrade Enver and are closely related to the self-existence respect, freedom and independence of our people, with the defense and flourishing of our national culture ... In light of Marxist-Leninist theory for the nation and for the national culture, comrade Enver Hoxha has elaborated with a scientific foresight the linguistic policy of the Party and our state. This language policy, for which monographic studies must be carried out, has as a foundation stone the assessment of mother tongue as a fundamental feature of the nation as a powerful tool for freedom, independence, and progress as a symbol standing next to the flag" (Kostallari 1984: 39).

These examples show a clear tendency of some of the Albanian scholars of the Socialist era to link the language policy with the ideology of the ruling class in this case with Marxist ideology. The latter served as a means of bulding the rhetoric with which language policy was elaborated and justified publically. Ideology served as a shield: whoever would attack the rhetoric would attack ideology and whoever would attack ideology would attack the political system and the Party hence become the enemy of the state.

The question is how sound would be this type of ideological foundation based on Marxism taking into account that language has not been a matter of significant interest to Marxist ideologist namely to Marx, Engels, and Lenin. In this respect, Dubravko Škiljan emphasizes that linguistics is one of the rare humanistic sciences, which Marxist thought to this day, at least in the modern

streams of this science, has found no suitable land and Marxism alone has remained almost without any influence directly in linguistic research. He also notes that in the matter of language Marx and Engels have expressed only a few fragmentary thoughts, while in their views they have never emerged from the philological frameworks and comparative-historical researches, hence from the frameworks which had been assigned by the linguistics of that time. As for Lenin, he points out that he deepened in revolutionary practice, and has extensively engaged in language issues, but has always approached to these issues in practice by solving the real problems that he encountered during his activity. The greatest number of its passages are about showing the need for equality of all languages (1978: 151-1957).

Taking into account such a viewpoint I would conclude that one cannot talk about any Marxism contribution to linguistics. In addition, one would not be able to talk about any phenomenon that would be called Marxist linguistics. It is obvious that the stagnation of Marxism would make any contribution that could be attributed to the linguistic phenomenon. However, I would argue that every linguistic phenomenon reflects elements of a certain ideology. It happens that in certain cases this serves as a starting point for solving practical language problems encountered in a particular society. Consequently, the social class that has the power for any solution will invoke the ideology it belongs to. This will also happen if within that ideology there are no sustainable concepts in which those solutions would be supported. The ideology will build the rhetoric by which a problem or an issue is elaborated before being solved.

Regarding Albanian linguistics and conclusions of some Albanian linguists of Socialist-era on the existence of a Marxist-Leninist Albanian language or Marxist-Leninist linguistic ideology framework, I would argue think that in those case we are dealing with ideological phrases and with a tendency to build the popper discourse of language policy, which served to justify certain results in the field of linguistics. This can be best illustrated in the case of standardization and language policy related to Albanian. Whenever there was a need for some philosophical and ideological support for certain practical actions support was sought in Marxist philosophy or at least in manipulating rhetorically that particular philosophy. The ruling social class was promoting this ideology and that meant if you were attacking any action that was taken in the field of standardization of the Albanian, then you attacked the ruling class itself. Hence, ideology was only used to justify certain sociolinguistic actions.

In practical terms, standardization process of Albanian can be viewed only within the framework of Standard Language Ideology and nation-building efforts. The use of Marxist ideology in developing the discourse of language policy had a practical aim at reducing any social and cultural resistance towards language planning efforts undertaken by the Socialist establishment of Albania.

5. Conclusions

The influence of ideology is present in almost every social realm. This ideological influence is expressed by building a certain format of a mental framework, on the basis of which people base their own social beliefs and actions. Language as a social phenomenon cannot escape from the influential force of ideology. At the same time, language is not only a communication tool, since there are other functions to it as well. Beyond the function of communication, language is also a very important pragmatic tool of social interaction, which enables a person to associate with society, as well as to build and maintain the social participation with the social structure.

Having these functions, language becomes one of the most suitable terrains for the influence of ideology. Ideology directly affects the format of the message and the form and the way it is expressed. Moreover, as the ideology builds certain traits and values of the interior, it aims to reflect precisely the features and ideological values of the language messages. Ideology affects the predetermination of the appropriate language forms and the criteria for accepting these forms. It becomes the basis of metapragmatic manifestations. Within this premise, one can also see the manifestation of ideology in the processes of building singular and unique linguistic systems, such as standard languages, since the latter is considered as a necessary tool for the realization of ideological goals. Consequently, it can rightly be stated that standard languages are always the product of certain ideologies and are in the service of certain ideologies.

On the other hand, the area in which the ideology is best expressed and in which the most powerful ideological influence is exercised beside language policy and planning is the field of discourse. Since discourse is the main tool of communication and social interaction, it cannot remain outside the influence of ideology. In fact, discourse structures become the main instrument of the development and preservation of ideology within a language.

Based on the above discussion, I conclude that, given the narrow grip between ideology and language, the study of the linguistic phenomenon cannot be done without regard to the influence of a particular ideology. This is particularly true for studies in the field of language policy and language planning, as well as in studies in the field of discourse analysis.

In the case of Albanian Language Standardization, one finds an illustrative example how ideology can be used and even manipulated to support language planning efforts and to build the ideological discourse with which language policy is elaborated.

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