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LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS IN EUROPEAN INTEGRATION PROCESSES

It is necessary to view the problem of the position of the national languages in our conceptions of the future forms of international relations in Europe and all over the world in the following ways:

1 First of all, we must formulate systematically comprehended models¹ of the arrangement of relations among ethnic groups, nations, and states in a future Europe, in the context of a future world. Taking into account the total number of all these presumable models, the set of official conceptions propagated by European military, economic, financial, political, propagandistic, medial and legislative subjects seems to be just one of all the possible variants of future development.

All these varied and systematically comprehended conceptions are evaluated not only from the financial, economic, international policy, military, and strategic points of view, but also from ethnical, cultural and medial aspects. All these variants result in mutual interprojection of all the above mentioned criteria. The deciding complex criteria are the specification of the border between the part of Europe officially controlled by the so-called European structures (North Atlantic Treaty Organization, European Union, single currency, etc.) and the so-called »Non – Europe« (on the European continent), which represents the border between the officially and non-officially integrated territories of Europe².

2 All these variants in the arrangement of European and world relations must be understood as systematically formulated, dynamic nets of discourse. During the structuring process, terms such as the focal point irradiating information and the periphery of such a focal point are also found to be useful. By the focal point irradiating information we mean (in the broadest sense of this term) not only the flow of information, but also the influencing processes and the impact of power structures, esp. financial, economic, military, and political bodies. The periphery is

¹ Extensive literature dealing with the theory of systematic thinking reveals the sophistication of solving its paradigm, i.e. J. KOŘENSKÝ, *Proměny myšlení o řeči*, Prague, 1998, 25.

² This border dividing the world into different parts becomes a borderline also from the semantic point of view. Semiotic interpretation will be of a different character on both sides of this line.

more or less determined by the point of focus. All the possible variants of relations among states, ethnic groups, nations, and economies must be interpreted from the semiotic point of view.³

3 All the current national and ethnic European languages, in close relation with their ethnic and cultural bases, create a semiotic space, a type of semiotic substratum, which is the framework within which all the processes classified, such as integration⁴ or disintegration, are realized. It is necessary to take into account the fact that all these old and historically-conditioned relations among nations, ethnic groups and their languages will not be merely the object of these integration processes (in any of their many possible forms), but will also influence them, being their pragmatic context. That is why these processes should be classified as interdependent, dialectic. The individual variants of the arrangement of European situation, and its integration processes should be classified as semantic processes, such as the processes of changing the sign's content features, such as the processes of expansion or regression of specific meanings. All these semantic processes must be studied within the context of their pragmatic, that is social and societal, aspects. Changes in the means of language expression in the broadest sense of the term (intension and extension of the meanings of single words and set phrases, developmental tendencies of grammar systems of language) must be understood as the external expression of the semantic processes widely motivated by and resulting from the given society. In other words: these real or anticipated processes of lexical and grammatical changes must be classified through the above-characterized interdependent and very important semantic processes. To a certain degree, it is not of such importance to what extent some languages will edge out some others in European communication. At the same time, it is not a tragedy for a national or ethnic language to be limited within its functional spectrum to the territory of its

³ By semiotic interpretation we mean the systematic study of sign features of discourses in close relation to syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic dimensions. There are numerous works dealing with the problem of semiotics from the historical and also current points of view. See i.e. J. KOŘENSKÝ, *Proměny myšlení o řeči* Prague, 1998, 46, 57 and pages immediately following them. See also U. ECCO, The Influence of Roman Jakobson on the Development of Semiotics, *Roman Jakobson. Echoes of his Scholarship*, Liss, 1977, 39–58, and U. ECCO, *Semiotics in the Next Millenium*, Opening Speech at the 6th International Association for Semiotics Studies, Dresden, 1999.

⁴ The thousand-year history of Europe is the history of striving for integration which came from various power centres (pre-Christian Rome, Christian Rome, The Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, Napoleon's post-Revolutionary Paris, Vienna and Paris during the post Holy Alliance period, Berlin in the 1930's and 1940's, Moscow and its World Socialist System – we list only those examples where not only economic and financial tendencies, but also state and political tendencies were important). Using this analysis it is possible to come to the conclusion that integration and disintegration processes were always realized within these dimensions. From this point of view, the current integration ideologies are just a current example of thousand-year old efforts; however, the economic and financial motives and international policy arguments, and the ideologies derived from them are different and modified. See i.e. J. KOŘENSKÝ, *Rečová tvár (hlavního) mesta, Mesto a jeho jazyk*, Bratislava, 2000, 60–66; J. KOŘENSKÝ, *Verbální komunikace a národní společnosti v dnešní Evropě, Retrospektívne a perspektívne pohľady na jazykovú komunikáciu*, Banská Bystrica, 1999, 13–17.

nation or state if it is replaced by an expanding language in some types of communicative relations. It is more important to compare the original »preintegrated« meaning with the new meaning resulting from the expansion of ideologies, cultures, and languages, and to judge their identicalness or non-identicalness. In other words: it is not so important to what extent such changes alter our understanding of human beings and their world. We can come to very interesting conclusions if we study the usage of words like: nationality, nation, liberty, commonly accepted values, etc.

4 It is clear from historical experience that changes in the lexical system or some of the developmental tendencies in grammar systems are of a more or less short-lived character, limited, often ephemeral. When the political and economic conditions responsible for them are changed, these tendencies disappear very quickly. As far as Czech studies are concerned, it is possible to study prolonged economic and civilizational contact in all the spheres in the case of relations between the Czech and the German languages, as well as the brief contacts seen in some very special and interesting circumstances between the Czech and the Russian languages. See i.e. J. Kořenský, *Komunikace a čeština*, Jinočany, 1992.