

Besprechungen / Reviews / Comptes rendus

Kontra, Miklós (ed.) (2005): *Sült galamb? Magyar egyetemi tantervpolitika* [Language policy in the colleges and universities which use Hungarian as the medium of instruction in Hungary's neighbouring countries]. Dunaszerdahely (Slovakia): Fórum Kisebbségkutató Intézet/ Lilium Aurum Könyvkiadó, 257 p.

In contemporary linguistics there is a growing acceptance of the idea that language use and choice are a basic form of power and social control. Thus linguists have attempted to sell their expertise to politicians and bureaucrats, whose decisions on linguistic issues have too often been based on *ad hoc* considerations leading to superfluous and paradoxical practices. The book under review, which contains articles and comments from a meeting in Debrecen, Hungary, discusses language policy from a most complex perspective: linguistic minorities in higher education. From the traditional minority view, the issue is connected to linguistic, cultural and educational rights, the right to elite building, to prestigious professions and to a non-majority identity. From the typical majority point of view, it is a question of defining the (nation-)state, of tolerance and of multiculturalism or of sharing the power and economic resources with those who have different linguistic claims than the majority. In the official discourse, all actors have for long attempted to base and naturalize their claims in terms of educational and economic benefits.

The volume under review offers an introductory article on the issue by Miklós Kontra and reports by staff from universities and colleges using Hungarian as the language of instruction outside Hungary. Numerous comments by the conference participants have been transcribed for the volume, too. Finally, there are also comparative reports on Canada and Finland in the book, which I will not consider here due to their somewhat offbeat character.

Since 1920 there have been considerable Hungarian minorities in the countries surrounding Hungary. Today, about 520,000 Hungarians live in Slovakia, 157,000 in Ukraine, 1.4 million in Romania, 290,000 in Serbia, 17,000 in Croatia and a few thousand in Slovenia and Austria. Hungarian institutions in these regions, the universities in the first place, have been taken over by the majority group. Small concessions have been given to meet foreign policy goals. As the reports in the book show, this has resulted in the proportional under-education of the Hungarian speaking population in Rumania, Slovakia, Serbia and the Ukraine. The proportional representation of Hungarians in the higher education is below half of the proportion of the majority ethnic group in these countries. Furthermore, typically, only one third of the Hungarian students have the possibility to participate in higher education which uses Hungarian as the language of instruction. "Are Hungarians a weaker nation or is the educational system discriminative?" asks one of the commentators.

The introductory article by Miklós Kontra offers a fresh position to the problematic of minority higher education. In his view the solution to the problem is carefully explicated and planned *bilingualism*. Bilingualism seems to have been anathema for linguistic minorities, since the basic view has been that only *subtractive* bilingualism exists, that is, bilingualism has been seen as an

intermediate phase in language shift. What Kontra suggests is *additive* bilingualism, when the use of a new language does not exclude the use of the first language. A typical case for a language policy aiming at *subtractive* bilingualism has been the socialist era in Eastern Central Europe, when faculties and departments using Hungarian as a language of instruction have been gradually diminished as in Cluj (Hungarian *Kolozsvár*), Rumania. In Kontra's view additive bilingualism can be achieved when minority students have a curriculum which uses *also* the majority language as the language of instruction according to the needs of the minority. Hungarian students living outside Hungary are all fundamentally bilingual. The graduates should be able to use their skills and expertise in the majority language, too. This would serve at least two purposes: integration into the home state through better opportunities in the labor market, and a stable bilingualism, with less motivation for assimilation or emigration. Therefore, the share of instruction in the majority language, its practical applications and the role of foreign languages in the minority higher education institutions should be planned to fit the special needs of each community and academic discipline.

At present, circumstances are mostly dictated by the need to first re-establish (after socialism or the Balkan wars) the institutions which have the right and resources for using Hungarian as a language of instruction. However, according to Kontra, such restoration should not aim at a 'Hungarian only' language policy in these institutions. Too often, he argues, politicians cannot see the point of bilingualism, but rather assume that the Hungarian minorities will either emigrate (e.g. to Hungary) or assimilate to the majority.

In general, the end of socialism has not granted minority Hungarians the possibility to establish autonomous state-funded institutional structures (with the late exception of Slovakia). However, there has been a considerable widening of Hungarian higher education in all the countries considered (Rumania, Slovakia, Serbia, Ukraine), partly due to the possibility of establishing private colleges and universities. Next, I will briefly describe the situation of the countries involved as presented in the volume.

Rumania. The Hungarian university in Cluj (*Kolozsvár*) was closed in 1959 and the number of Hungarian departments in the new Babeş-Bolyai University was gradually diminished wherever possible in the communist era. After the fall of Ceauşescu in 1990 high hopes were posed on the re-establishment of a Hungarian university in Rumania. However, Rumanian governments and majority intellectuals have closed their ranks thus hampering the establishment of an autonomous Hungarian institution. Instead, in 1994, the Babeş-Bolyai University was turned into a "multicultural" institution through establishing three "lines" of education along the historically recognized languages of Transylvania: Rumanian (ca. 25,000 students), Hungarian (ca. 5,000 students) and German (ca. 700 students). In practice, the three "lines" are strictly separated and all fields of study are available only in Rumanian (e.g. law). All administration is in Rumanian, and the majority students or staff is not provided with encouragement or opportunities to learn Hungarian. Due to the strict separation of the Hungarian and Rumanian faculties there is no possibility of establishing bilingual programs. Among others, Hungarian is not recognized as a second or foreign language for Rumanian students and it is excluded from the applied linguistics programs. Due to the asymmetrical character of bilingualism among the staff and students the commentators in the volume call the Babeş-Bolyai a "pseudo-multicultural" university. Language policy on the part of Hungarian staff in the university has so far largely been based on making more and more fields of study available in Hungarian (still almost half of the Hungarian students are conducting their studies only in Rumanian). However, the need to improve their competence in academic Rumanian is widely recognized.

Due to the failure of re-establishing a state funded Hungarian university in Rumania, the Republic of Hungary decided in 2000 to fund a private university in Rumania. In 2004 the "Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania" already had three faculties and about 2.000 students in three towns. Furthermore, a private "Partium Christian University" was established in 2000 near the

Hungarian border, in the city of Oradea (Hungarian *Nagyvárad*). In 2004 it had already ca. 1.000 students. These private institutions use mainly Hungarian as the language of instruction. Even though the need to improve language skills in Rumanian is acknowledged, these universities are dedicated to providing a linguistically Hungarian academic environment, a "Hungarian oasis" as one of the commentators characterizes them. Thus, the local commentators are reluctant to integrate these institutions to the nation-state structures by introducing bilingualism.

Slovakia. Today, Slovakia is the only country where it has become possible to establish a state funded autonomous Hungarian university. "Hans Selye University" was established in 2004 in Komárno (Hungarian *Révkomárom*), which is situated by the border to Hungary. This new university was preceded by a possibility to use Hungarian as the language of instruction in three universities. There Hungarian departments and sections have been subordinated to majority structures. The Selye University is dedicated to using only Hungarian as the language of instruction. However, its graduates should be competent in Slovakian, too. How these two goals are combined in practice is not explicated in the volume.

An important institution offering instruction also in Hungarian is "Constantine the Philosopher University" in Nitra (Hungarian *Nyitra*). In 2003 the university leadership put into force an act passed in 2001 to establish a faculty for minority teacher training. This faculty gathered formerly scattered Hungarian staff and students to form one entity. Since then the number of Hungarian students in the university has increased considerably. Part of instruction is still in Slovakian. This bilingualism is considered temporary due to the lack of Hungarian staff. All the administration is however only in Slovakian. According to the local commentators, language policy issues are not explicitly discussed, but decided in *ad hoc* manner.

Ukraine. In the case of Ukraine, Hungarians live in an area called Transcarpathia, which is situated next to the Hungarian border. In the Soviet era, the Hungarian minority already aimed at establishing higher education in Hungarian. First the state university in Uzhgorod (Hungarian *Ungvár*) was targeted, but progress was limited to a Hungarian department and entrance exams in Hungarian for other fields. Instead the "Transcarpathian Hungarian Teachers' Training College" funded by the Republic of Hungary was established in Berehovo (Hungarian *Beregszász*) in 1996. The representatives of the college have a wide and explicit conception of language policy. To begin with, they promote tolerance towards local Hungarian norms against the traditional approach which has been based on an overtly negative view of (contact) dialect forms. In the case of Ukrainian, the aim is to develop methodology for teaching Ukrainian as a second language for the Hungarian minority (so far Ukrainian has been taught only as a first language). For all students, practical language skills in Ukrainian are taught. Furthermore, the college offers courses in foreign languages to its students for the whole duration of the studies. Nevertheless, apart from Ukrainian and foreign languages all other fields are instructed only in Hungarian.

Serbia. Before the development towards the Balkan wars, Yugoslavian language policies were often considered exemplary. Even though the local commentators claim that the actual practice was far less tolerant than its image, they would still prefer it to the situation in current Serbia. In 2004, among others, a special permission from the Serbian ministry of education was needed for the use of a minority language as language of instruction in higher education. Such permission was not needed for lecturing in e.g. English. Universities or colleges using only a minority language as the language of instruction are prohibited in Serbia. The hopes to re-establish a college for Hungarian teacher training in (Hungarian *Szabadka*) have been supported among others by a delegation of the European Parliament to little avail. Similarly, plans to establish a multi-ethnic university in Subotica are described in the volume.

In the autonomous province of Vojvodina (Hungarian *Vajdaság*), where most Hungarians live, higher education in Hungarian is available in five faculties of the University of Novi Sad (Hungarian

Újvidék) and in two colleges. All courses are taught in Hungarian only at the department of Hungarian. In general the lack of Hungarian speaking staff in the university is a great challenge for extending the use of Hungarian as the language of instruction. In practice all Hungarian students have bilingual curricula; however this bilingualism is not planned in any way.

To conclude on the "country reports", people involved in Hungarian higher education in Rumania, Ukraine, Slovakia and Serbia are all striving for the extension of Hungarian instructed learning. In all cases, statistical evidence is presented to the case that the proportional number of Hungarians in higher education is closely tied to the possibility of studying in Hungarian. For example, in Slovakia, the establishment of a Hungarian university has increased even the number of Hungarian high-school applicants. In several countries, the possibility to complete the entrance exams in Hungarian alone has raised the number of Hungarian applicants and students. The aim to integrate Hungarian students to the home-state labor market is shared by all of the commentators. Nevertheless, most of the commentators consider the need to extend 'Hungarian only' education more important than considering long term and conceptual bilingual curricula. Finally, nobody wishes to educate students for the Hungarian or Western European economies, even though this is where a considerable number of the graduates and staff end up working. Instead, an equal position in the Hungarian higher education market is targeted. That is, minority universities should also attract Hungarians from Hungary as students, not only the other way round.

The language policies in the considered institutions are somewhat *ad hoc* and of a temporal character, only the Transcarpathian Hungarian Teachers' Training College seems to have an outspoken ideology and clear practical applications. The volume focuses on the language of instruction, so other details of language use in the universities and colleges are not dealt with systematically. A glimpse at the homepages of the considered institutions might serve as a thumbnail sketch: only institutions with autonomous Hungarian sections have (operative) web-pages in Hungarian. Autonomy for state funded minority higher education, which is claimed to be the 'worst of the fears' for the majority, has been granted only in Slovakia, otherwise private universities have been established through funding by the 'motherland'. Without autonomy, many commentators claim, there is no ground for supporting bilingualism, since it would just play in the hands of the majority.

This volume is compiled by Hungarians for Hungarians. What makes the volume interesting to a foreign reader is that a new, innovative line of language policy is suggested. The idea of striving towards bilingualism is not accepted by all the commentators in the volume. However, also for those commentators, it serves as a provocation to rethink and explicate their ideology and its practical implications. For the case of extending the use of Hungarian as the medium of instruction in higher education, the volume offers an overview of the current issues. In this case, the volume is welcomed, since it presents the view of the underdog. Other views are less sympathetic, since there is no real or acceptable argument for *not* allowing the extension of the use of Hungarian in higher education at the present state of affairs.

Petteri Laihonen, Jyväskylä (Finland)

Darquennes, Jeroen (2005): *Sprachrevitalisierung aus kontaktlinguistischer Sicht – Theorie und Praxis am Beispiel Altbelgien-Süd* (Plurilingua XXIX). Bruxelles/ St. Augustin: Asgard Verlag. 213 p.

Le présent ouvrage reproduit avec quelques modifications le texte d'une thèse soutenue par l'auteur en 2004 en vue de l'obtention du grade de docteur de l'université K.U. de Bruxelles. Il est consacré à un sujet qu'on a trop souvent tendance à considérer comme marginal: la revitalisation de langues dont