

Мовне питання у передвиборчих програмах політичних партій країн Західної Європи

У статті обґрунтовується нагальність мовного питання для країн Західної Європи. Актуальність проблеми у конкретних державах виявляється за допомогою застосування контент-аналізу передвиборчих програм політичних партій. Дослідження базується на ствердженні, що якщо яка-небудь з політичних партій, що пройшли до національного парламенту певної країни, у своїй передвиборчій програмі торкається проблеми використання тієї чи іншої мови, мовне питання є важливим для населення відповідної країни. Робиться висновок, що нечасте згадування мов у програмах політичних партій Західної Європи, що було виявлено, свідчить про непершочерговість мовного питання, що може бути пов'язано з успішною імплементацією Європейської хартії регіональних мов або мов меншин, ратифікованою більшістю країн Західної Європи.

Ключові слова: Західна Європа, контент-аналіз, передвиборчі програми політичних партій, мова, мовне питання.

The Language Issue in the Electoral Programmes of the Political Parties of Western European Countries

The article provides proofs of the language issue urgency for Western Europe. The relevance of the language issue for particular countries is revealed with a content analysis of the electoral programmes of the political parties. The research is based on a statement that if none of the political parties that made it into the national parliament of a particular country deal with the issue of language use in their electoral programmes, the language problem is not urgent for the population of that country. It is concluded that not frequent mention of languages in Western European political parties' programmes evidences that the language issue is not a priority. That may be due to the successful implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, ratified by the majority of Western European countries.

Keywords: Western Europe, content analysis, electoral programs of political parties, language, language issue.

In modern Western Europe, national frontiers often do not coincide with linguistic boundaries. The mismatch of state and ethnic (linguistic) boundaries is inevitable because there are more ethnic groups than states. A situation where a state territory and distribution of a particular ethnic group match is a rarity. This is due to the fact that throughout its history Europe has undergone significant changes of state borders as a result of wars, dynastic combinations, interstate and international agreements. The French-speaking area extends for France, Belgium and Switzerland, German-speaking – for Germany, Belgium, Austria, Switzerland and Liechtenstein, Basque-speaking – for Spain and France¹. Ethnic and linguistic boundaries also exist within countries. For example, the Breton and the Basque minorities in France, the Sorbs and the Frisians in Germany.

The ethnolinguistic problematics continues to be of relevance for Europe. Such scholars as Monica Heller², Robert F. Weber³, Durk Gorter and Jasone Cenoz⁴ occupy themselves with the study of linguistic minorities in Europe. Today even states referred to as monoethnic, that is, those where the bulk of citizens are members of one ethnic group (according to different classifications from 2/3 to 4/5 of total population), can potentially face the challenge of ethnic and, as a consequence, linguistic regionalism, since even the remaining 1/5 of population who reside locally and belong to a different cultural and linguistic paradigm may be a conflict causing factor.

The purpose of the research was to reveal the relevance of the language issue in the countries of Western Europe.

A political party as a socio-political institution represents the interests of a certain social (including linguistic) group, i.e. if the language issue is urgent, there must be a party that will raise this issue. Therefore decision was made to find out whether (minority) languages are mentioned in the party programmes and, if so, in what context. For this purpose, a content analysis was conducted of the electoral programmes of the political parties which qualified for the national parliaments of Western European countries: Austria, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, Finland, France, Switzerland, Sweden. It should be noted that a content analysis is an independent quantitative and qualitative research method consisting in the study of documents; socio-political problems, inter alia, can be the subject of a content analysis.

The following hypothesis was put forward: if none of the political parties that made it into the national parliament of a particular country deal with the issue of language use in their

¹ Raasch, A. Europe, Frontiers and Languages. Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe. From Linguistic Diversity to Plurilingual Education. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2002. p. 9.

² Heller, M. Linguistic Minorities and Modernity: a Sociolinguistic Ethnography (2nd ed.). London: Continuum, 2006.

³ Weber, Robert F. Individual Rights and Group Rights in the European Community's Approach to Minority Languages. *Duke Journal of Comparative and International Law*, 17 (361), 2007.

⁴ Gorter D., Cenoz J. Legal Rights of Linguistic Minorities in the European Union. Peter M. Tiersma, Lawrence M. Solan (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Language and Law* (pp.261-271). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

electoral programmes, the language problem is not urgent for the population of that country. If the party does not have enough support and therefore has not qualified for the parliament, its ideas, including that concerning the language, are not very popular, indicating the absence of the language problem. That is why the sample included only electoral programmes of the parties that made it into the parliaments as all the parties having even the lowest level of electorate support a priori qualify for the representative bodies of the respective countries, because the countries under the study were that ones with developed pluralistic democracy.

The conducted content analysis was qualitative by type. The official sites of the parties were an information source for the content analysis; analysed messages were electoral programmes of the parties; the time of appearance of the messages was 2011-2014 (parliamentary elections in the respective countries of Western Europe). The word “language” and cognate words in the language corresponding to the language of a message were used as the unit of analysis (keyword).

After an analysis of some 152 programmes of political parties, it was found out that the unit of analysis was mentioned in the programmes of the following parties.

1. “Siumut” (“Forward”) is a social-democratic political party in Greenland (Denmark), advocating independence and sovereignty of Greenland. In the 2011 Folketing elections “Siumut” got 37.1% of votes and secured 1 of 2 seats allotted to the representatives of Greenland. In the 2013 elections it got 14 of 31 seats in the regional parliament of Greenland. The unit of analysis appears in the electoral programme of the party in the following context: the languages of the autonomous Greenland should be Greenlandic and Danish⁵.
2. «Convergència i Unió» (CiU; “Convergence and Union”) is a nationalist secessionist party in Catalonia (Spain), speaking for the independence of Catalonia in the European Union. In 2012, it got 4.17% of the vote and obtained 16 of 350 seats in the Congress of Deputies. Since 2011 CiU has 13 (9 selected and 4 appointed) of 264 seats in the Senate of Spain. In 2010 elections to the regional Parliament of Catalonia CiU got 38.5% and got 14 seats of 62. The CiU programme says that the language and culture are the tools to ensure and protect collective future of the Catalonia population⁶; Catalan is the language of social cohesion; Catalan must be accessible to everybody, and not to be discriminated against; immigration to Catalonia should be made conditional on the knowledge of the Catalan language⁷. CiU supports the existing language regime of the Catalonia education system in accordance with the Catalonia

⁵ Electoral programme of the political party “Siumut”, 2011. p. 17. Retrieved from http://www.siumut.gl/Portals/0/Pdf/ka/Sumup_anguniagai_2011-2014.pdf

⁶ Electoral programme of the political party “Convergència i Unió”, 2012. p. 62. Retrieved from <http://www.ciu.cat/media/76990.pdf>

⁷ Ibid, p. 136.

education act⁸; ensuring the administration of justice in Catalan in all judicial areas⁹; guaranteeing the respect for the right of citizens' linguistic choice in the judiciary¹⁰; augmentation of the number of books published in Catalan. CiU recognises Spanish as the language of part of the population of Catalonia, therefore it maintains Spanish should have an official status¹¹.

3. "Izquierda Unida" (IU; "United Left") is a left-green coalition of political parties in Spain. IU has 11 of 350 seats in the Congress of Deputies, 2 of 264 seats in the Senate, 1 of Spain's 54 seats in the European Parliament. In its electoral programme IU emphasises respect for cultural and linguistic diversity of Spain; the study of both official languages in the Basque Country¹²; the guarantee of the right for free education in Basque; promoting the use of the Basque language and achieving true bilingualism of the society¹³.
4. "Chunta Aragonesista" (CHA; "Aragonese Union") is a nationalist and eco-socialist party in Aragon (Spain). In 2011 elections CHA got 1 seat in the Congress of Deputies as a part of the electoral alliance with "Izquierda Unida". CHA claims that the linguistic policy of Spain offering Castilian language as the only option is disrespectful towards linguistic diversity of Aragon¹⁴, and advocates preservation of cultural and linguistic variety of Aragon¹⁵, compulsory teaching of the relevant regional languages at all the stages of educational process in all the regions of Spain¹⁶ and the protection of languages of Aragon, especially of Aragonese¹⁷.
5. "Bloque Nacionalista Galego" (BNG; "Galician Nationalist Bloc") is a political coalition of nationalist socialist parties in Galicia (Spain). In 2011 BNG got 2 of 350 seats in the Congress of Deputies with 11.25% of the votes. In 2012 elections to the parliament of Galicia BNG gained 10% of votes – 7 seats of 75. BNG considers that public authorities are to protect the Galician language, and their aim should be to use Galician in all the areas of life. For this purpose it is necessary to publish official documents related to Galicia in the Galician language; to use official toponyms;

⁸ Ibid, p. 62.

⁹ Ibid, p. 99.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 100.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 137.

¹² Electoral programme of the coalition of political parties "Izquierda Unida", 2012. pp. 5-6. Retrieved from <http://www.izquierda-unida.es/node/11244>

¹³ Ibid, p. 10.

¹⁴ Electoral programme of the political party "Chunta Aragonesista", 2014. p. 16. Retrieved from <http://www.chunta.org/workspace/uploads/programmemea-europeas-2014.pdf>

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 2.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 16.

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 18.

to use Galician in scientific researches¹⁸; to promote use of the Galician language in industry; to legally oblige financial institutions (including online and customer services) and the mass media to use the Galician language (including advertisement); to expand use of Galician to labour relations, trade and business; to prevent discrimination of the Galician language in legal proceedings; to establish minimum levels of use of the Galician language in private life¹⁹. In addition BNG speaks for ensuring of presence of Galicia representatives in all the institutions of the European Union and acknowledgement of Galician as one of the official languages of the European Union²⁰. BNG claims to guarantee new attitude to cultural and linguistic diversity and identity of Galicia²¹ which will provide for encouragement of study of the Portuguese language at schools²².

6. "Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya" (ERC, "Republican Left of Catalonia") is a nationalist separatist political party in Catalonia (Spain). In 2011 ERC got 3 of 350 seats in the Congress of Deputies of Spain. In 2012 ERC gained 13.7% of the vote (second best result) and got 21 of 135 seats in the Parliament of Catalonia. ERC argues that Catalonia is experiencing a situation of systematic attacks by public authorities on their language²³ and speaks for the establishment of the Republic of Catalonia and granting Catalan the status of the state language²⁴. ERC believes that the state should undertake necessary measures to make the Catalan language one of the official languages of the European Union²⁵ and for Catalan to be used in international organisations²⁶. In its programme, ERC argues that the linguistic reality in many areas is still far from normal, that globalisation is encouraging the use of the most common languages of the world, Castilian being more widely presented in social life than Catalan²⁷. According to ERC's electoral programme the language of Catalonia shall be Catalan, which means its primary use in public institutions, public media²⁸ and at all educational stages²⁹; public authorities of Catalonia shall establish the necessary

¹⁸ Electoral programme of the coalition of political parties "Bloque Nacionalista Galego", 2012. p. 45. Retrieved from http://www.bng-galiza.org/wp-content/uploads/Programmemea_BNG_Eleccions_Galegas_2012.pdf

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 46.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 50.

²¹ Ibid, pp. 8, 45.

²² Ibid, p. 37.

²³ Electoral programme of the political party "Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya", 2012. p. 153. Retrieved from http://www.esquerra.cat/partit/programmemea/c2012_programmemea.pdf

²⁴ Ibid, p. 28.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 29.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 153.

²⁷ Ibid, p. 153.

²⁸ Ibid, p. 153.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 66.

measures to prevent any discrimination in use of any of these two languages: Catalan – the official language of Catalonia, and Castile – the official language of Spain³⁰.

7. “Amaiur” is a left-wing nationalist and separatist political coalition in the Basque Country and Navarre (Spain). In 2011 got 7 seats of 350 in the Congress of Deputies of Spain and 3 of 264 in the Senate. “Amaiur” think Basque is the national language and the main feature of the Basque ethnic identity, so there is a necessity to grant the Basque language the appropriate status and to make it preferable in all areas of everyday life. The Basque language should obtain such status that the Basques can become equal to the Spaniards and the French in the Basque Country in political, legal and socio-linguistic sphere. Other linguistic communities will also benefit from the comprehensive development of the Basque language³¹.
8. “Euzko Alderdi Jeltzalea” (EAJ; “Basque Nationalist Party”) is a regionalist nationalist party in the Basque Country (Spain). EAJ is the largest and oldest Basque nationalist party, the largest political party in the Basque Autonomous Community, and a marginal one in the French Basque Country. EAJ has 6 of 350 seats in the Congress of Deputies, 4 of 264 seats in the Senate and 1 of 50 in the European Parliament. Main ideas of its Declaración del Centenario concerning language issue come to a statement that the language of the Basque people is Basque and its support and promotion should be a priority for every Basque³².
9. “Unione per il Trentino” (UpT; “Union for Trentino”) is a regional Christian-democratic political party in Trentino (Italy). It has 1 of 630 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 1 of 319 in the Senate, 5 of 35 in the local council. In 2013 general elections UpT gained 19.6% of the vote, in the local elections – 13.3%, in 2014 European elections – 12.2%. In the programme UpT suggests appointing three representatives of the linguistic minorities to local parliament³³.
10. “Alternativ Demokratesch Reformpartei” (ADR, “Alternative Democratic Reform Party”) is a national-conservative political party in Luxembourg. It has 3 seats in the sixty-seat Chamber of Deputies, making it the fifth-largest party. ADR advocates making knowledge of the Luxembourgish language one of mandatory criteria for naturalisation, and supports protection and promotion of use of Luxembourgish which they claim to be something more than just a symbol of cultural identity³⁴.

³⁰ Ibid, p. 153.

³¹ Electoral programme of the coalition of political parties “Amaiur”, 2012. p. 97. Retrieved from <http://ehbildu.net/program-memea/NL.pdf>

³² Electoral programme of the political party “Euzko Alderdi Jeltzalea”. Retrieved from http://eaj-pnv.eu/adjuntos/docs_estaticos/declaracion_centenario.pdf

³³ Electoral programme of the political party “Unione per il Trentino”, 2014. Retrieved from http://www.unioneperilrentino.it/sites/default/files/images/statuto_upt_-_approvato_01_03_14_0.pdf

³⁴ Electoral programme of the political party “Alternativ Demokratesch Reformpartei”, 2006-2014. Retrieved from <http://www.adr.lu/unsere-themen/immigratioun-an-integratioun/>

11. “Fryske Nasjonale Partij” (FNP, “Frisian National Party”) is a nationalist autonomist party in Friesland (the Netherlands). FNP has 1 of 75 seats in the Senate and 4 of 43 in the regional parliament. FNP advocates that decisions relating to the Frisian language and culture should be made at the provincial level and it is necessary to strengthen the Frisian identity and, in this regard, to promote the Frisian language and culture, but other languages and cultures should also be practiced and respected. The programme also refers to the substantial increase of the number of trilingual primary schools and to support of Frisian post-secondary educational institutions. FNP promises to implement the measures, implementation of which the Dutch government has undertaken regarding the Frisian language, having adopted the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages³⁵.
12. “Plaid Cymru” (“Party of Wales”) is a nationalist separatist party in Wales (the United Kingdom), speaking for the independence of Wales in the European Union. Since 2012 “Plaid Cymru” has 3 of 40 Welsh seats in the House of Commons, 2 of 775 seats in the House of Lords, 1 of 4 Welsh seats in the European Parliament, 11 of 60 seats in the National Assembly of Wales, 171 of 1264 seats in the Welsh local government. One of the main aims of the party is to create a bilingual society by promoting the revival of the Welsh language³⁶.

As a result of the content analysis there was made a list of countries where the language issue is actual:

1. Denmark (Greenlandic);
2. Spain (Aragonese, Basque, Galician, Catalan);
3. Italy (German, French and Franco-Provencal);
4. Luxembourg (Luxembourgish);
5. The Netherlands (Frisian);
6. The United Kingdom (Welsh).

In all the six countries, where the political parties touch upon the language issue in their programmes, it is about the languages of regional linguistic minorities. The exception is the Luxembourgish language in Luxembourg, where the number of Luxembourgish language speakers is 266,000 citizens, while there are 82,000 and 10,200 French and German speakers respectively³⁷.

As for Denmark the language of Greenland Eskimos mentioned in the programme of the local political party is the most common (out of 57,000 inhabitants 50,000 speak Greenlandic,

³⁵ Electoral programme of the political party “Fryske Nasjonale Partij”, 2011. Retrieved from [http://www.fnp.nl/english/provincial_council/programmeme/](http://www.fnp.nl/english/provincial_council/programmeme/programmememe/)

³⁶ Electoral programme of the political party “Plaid Cymru”, 2012. Retrieved from http://www.plaidcymru.org/uploads/Cyfansoddiad_Nov_2012.pdf

³⁷ Ethnologue: Languages of the world, 2014. Luxembourg – Languages - Luxembourgish. Retrieved from <http://www.ethnologue.com/country/LU/languages>

3,000 speak the Eastern Greenlandic dialect, 44,000 speak the Western Greenlandic and 800 use the Northern dialect) and has an official status³⁸: the Act No. 577 of 29 November 1978 (“The Greenland Home Rule Act”) in the Section 9 establishes that “Greenlandic shall be the principal language”³⁹.

The Frisian language according to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (01 March 1998 entered into force in the Netherlands) is recognised as the regional language within the territory of Friesland (as a regional language European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages considers a language traditionally used within a given territory of a state by nationals of that state who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the state’s population; and different from the official language(s) of that state)⁴⁰, and thereby enjoys a high degree of protection: in the educational sphere the Netherlands undertook obligations to make available studying in Frisian from pre-school to secondary education and to provide facilities for the study of the Frisian language as university and higher education subject. Frisian is also protected in the economic and social life, judicial and administrative spheres, media and culture⁴¹.

Some of the analysed programmes, where a regional language was mentioned, speak to the need of autonomisation of the respective region, accretion of power of regional authorities or even federalisation. Nevertheless the language in such cases cannot be considered a major factor. Thus «Fryske Nasjonale Partij» stands for federalism with Friesland not only enjoying self-rule, protection and recognition of the Frisian language, but also creating the provincial fiscal system⁴². The majority of the political parties simply offers to use language in some sphere where it is not used yet.

None of the political parties that made it into the Senate and the National Assembly of France mention Corsican, despite the evident existence of the Corsican language problem. After the French Revolution, state policies aimed at smoothing regional differences and culture standardisation through the elimination of linguistic diversity, in particular. French was considered the epitome of civilisation and progress and recognised as the sole national language to represent interests of the new revolutionary order. The maintenance of other languages countered the Revolution objectives. The French politician Bertrand Barère de Vieuzac in 1794 asserted that “federalism and superstition speak Breton; emigration and hate of the Republic

³⁸ Ethnologue: Languages of the world, 2014. Greenland – Status. Retrieved from <http://www.ethnologue.com/country/GL/status>

³⁹ The Greenland Home Rule Act. Act No. 577 of 29 November 1978. Retrieved from http://www.stm.dk/_p_12712.html

⁴⁰ European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages CETS No.: 148, 2014. Retrieved from <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/ChercheSig.asp?NT=148&CM=8&DF=06/10/2014&CL=ENG>

⁴¹ List of declarations made with respect to treaty No. 148, 2014. Retrieved from <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/ListeDeclarations.asp?NT=148&CM=8&DF=06/10/2014&CL=ENG&VL=1>

⁴² Electoral programme of the political party “Fryske Nasjonale Partij”, 2011. Retrieved from http://www.fnp.nl/?english/provincial_council/programmeme/

speak German; the counter-revolution speaks Italian, and fanaticism speaks Basque” and suggested to “smash these faulty and harmful instruments”⁴³.

Today, Corsican speakers number 160,000⁴⁴, so UNESCO’s annual “Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger” considers the Corsican language endangered⁴⁵. In Corsica there functions “Fronte di Liberazione Naziunale Corsu” (“The National Liberation Front of Corsica”), a militarised group advocating creation on the island of Corsica of an independent state separated from France.

The French government signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages on 07 May 1999, but on 15 June 1999 the Constitutional Council claimed that the preamble of the Charter contradicted the French Constitution, since the Constitution declares that the right to use a regional or minority language in private and public life inalienable. Some provisions of the second part of the Charter – in regard to the use of specific rights of linguistic groups within the boundaries of the territories where these languages are used – are also in conflict with the French Constitution.

As a result of the research it may be claimed that the electoral programmes of political parties of Western European countries qualified for the national parliaments mainly deal with the regional ethnic minorities’ and linguistic minorities’ languages. The language issue despite being relevant is not a priority, as languages are only mentioned in 12 of 152 political parties’ programmes analysed. It is possible to presume that this is due to the successful implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, the adoption of which has become one of the common approaches to language problems solving in Europe. In Denmark it is not the language mentioned in the programme of the party qualified for the parliament (Greenlandic) that gets under the protection of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, but German. Italy signed the Charter in 2000, but never ratified. Luxembourg has ratified the Charter, but did not specify which languages will be considered regional or minority ones. In Spain, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands the Charter applies to all the languages mentioned by the parties in the electoral programmes.

Taking into account the traditions inherent to Western European politics the very fact of touching upon the language issue in the electoral programmes of political parties that made it into the respective parliaments means they are going to undertake the actions aimed at implementation of the declared language policies and in that way to solve the language problem gradually.

⁴³ May, S. *Language and Minority Rights: Ethnicity, Nationalism, and the Politics of Language*. Harlow, Essex, UK/New York: Pearson Education (Longman), 2001. p. 168.

⁴⁴ UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages. *Language Vitality and Endangerment: Document submitted to the International Expert Meeting on UNESCO Programme Safeguarding of Endangered Languages, 10-12 March 2003, Paris, 2003*. Retrieved from <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/00120-EN.pdf>

⁴⁵ UNESCO Interactive Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger, 2014. Retrieved from <http://www.unesco.org/culture/languages-atlas/index.php>