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THE ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION'S LANGUAGE POLICY IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF EUROPEAN IDENTITY¹

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Abstract: *European identity is an identity of the European Union (EU) and it has been constructed again and again since it was introduced. It is a socially constructed identity, which is not defined, not fixed, not finished but dynamic. The language policy of the EU also has an effect in this construction process, as the EU is a multilingual Union, which has 24 official languages. This policy has been developed for many years just like the European identity. The purpose of this research is to examine the role of EU's language policy in constructing the European identity. Both the European identity and the EU's language policy serve social cohesion and integration. They are in relation with one another, and the language policy has an effect on the construction of European identity as it is socially constructed through the interactions of individuals as agents equipped with language resources and with the developments sustained by the EU institutions.*

Keywords: European identity, Language policy, Multilingualism, Interaction.

Introduction

Identity and language policy are two subjects which were researched many times separately. However, their interaction, especially within the framework of the European Union (EU), was not the subject of much research. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to see and determine the role of the EU's language policy in constructing the European identity.

This research is structured in three parts: identity, language policy, and their interaction. Firstly, identity, which is a complex term is explained from the perspective of social constructivism as it focuses

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on construction, which is also the case for identities. Then, the European identity is explained within a historical context to see how it has developed since its first introduction in the EU. As a second step, the language policy of the EU, which has its own unique characteristics, is analysed. To be in line with the first part, the language policy, related developments are also placed in a historical context. Lastly, the identity-language relation and the role of the European language policy in the construction of European identity are examined and questioned.

This research accepts that identity is a construction, and it is constructed and reconstructed in interactions. In other words, it is not finished or stable, instead, it is dynamic and always under construction. Furthermore, it is a term that can be used to understand, perceive and define the other actors and also ourselves in any kind of relations.

In the construction process of identity, interactions and relations are important and language is a fundamental tool for communication, which sustains this relation. However, language is not just a way of communication; it is also a constituent of culture and identity. For that reason, identity and language are both researched in this paper to see their relation and the effect of language policy in constructing identity. Moreover, the main argument is that the European identity is a construction, and the language policy of the EU has a role in this construction process.

1. THE ISSUE OF IDENTITY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM

Onuf (1989, p. 1) introduced constructivism as a term in International Relations and stated that “people always construct, or constitute, social reality even, as their being, which can only be social, is constructed for them”. This statement is important in terms of this research as it notes that social reality and people’s being or, in other words, their identity is constructed. Risse (2009, p. 145) also points out that social reality does not come from somewhere else, but it is constructed and reproduced by human agents in their daily lives, with their daily practices. Therefore, social reality is constructed with interactions within the daily lives of the human beings, and the human beings who interact are the constructors of the social reality. According to Thomas Christiansen, Knud Erik Jorgensen and Antje Wiener (2001, p. 5), norms and ideas have an impact on the construction process of identities. However, norms and ideas are not the only determinants in this construction process.

Within the constructivist approach, institutions have an essential and shaping role in constructing identities. According to Koslowski and Kratochwil (1994, p. 227), institutions are defined

as elements of stability and strategic variables, which are used for the analysis of change in the constructivist research program, and they “are continually reproduced and modified through the actors’ practices”. Kohli (2000, p. 119), who has also similar views, indicates that the European identity will be a by-product of its institutional constructions and adds that its growing cultural networks of communication and exchange, its common economy and currency, its political framework of governance and representation, its institutions of redistribution and solidarity and its European level organisations also contribute to the construction of European identity. Here, it is crucial to note that, similarly to human beings, institutions also have effects on constructing and shaping the identities, a top-down effect.

To prevent misunderstanding and to be clear with the aim of this research, the first aspect is focused on the characteristics of identity. For example, Hall (1996, p. 1) points out that identity is “a ‘production’, which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation.” Hall (1991, p. 19) also states that “identity is always an open, complex and unfinished game - always ‘under construction’”. Shore (1996, p. 110) emphasizes the importance of change in describing identity and notes that identity is constantly changing. Building on these views, identity is active and alive, rather than being static, fixed, or inactive. It is a process in which the identities are constructed, reconstructed, shaped and reshaped in time; it is never finished but always under construction. This is also the case for the European identity, which has been shaped with each enlargement and official developments.

An important contribution to the literature of identity is made by Delanty through his research. According to Delanty and Rumford (2005, pp. 51-52), identity has four aspects which are its processual or constructed features, narrative dimension, relation to self, and other and multiple features. If these aspects are connected to the European identity, the first of the four is referred mostly because the European identity is thought to be constructed in a process. Delanty and Rumford support these views by stating that identity is not given but it is a mode of self-understanding and identities are fluid, negotiable and contested.

In defining identities, the term ‘other’ can be used as a good reference point. According to Mayer and Palmowski (2004, p. 577), identity is constructed “through interaction with each other and with outsiders”. Here, “outsider” can be seen as “other” who is a reference point for the individual in defining himself/herself. Identity is formed while two parties are interacting; in other words, it is constructed when they are in an interactive relation. In a relation, individuals interpret themselves by using “other”. In short, “others” are functional in defining and positioning identities.

2. THE CONSTRUCTION OF EUROPEAN IDENTITY

This second part analyses the construction process of European identity in a historical context. It is aimed to focus on the change of European identity in time. In order to reveal this change, official documents are analysed.

The *Copenhagen Declaration on European Identity* can be evaluated as the starting point of the historical analysis, as the concept of European identity was first introduced in this declaration in 1973 (European Commission, 1973, p. 118). There are three parts in the Declaration. In the first part, which is about the unity of the members of the community, the fundamental elements of the European identity (such as democracy, the rule of law, social justice and human rights) and the essential parts of the European identity (such as the Treaties of Paris, Rome, the common market, the customs union, the institutions, common policies) are stated (CVCE, 1973, p. 2). Here, the common values and essential parts of the EU are used to define the European identity; therefore, it can be said that they constitute both the EU and its identity. In the second part, which is about the European identity in accordance with the world, the objectives of the union are set (CVCE, 1973, p. 3). Lastly, in the third part, which is about the dynamic nature of a united Europe, the concept of European identity is expressed clearly, and it emphasizes the fact that it would evolve. Here, the other countries are used as a reference point in defining European identity, and the progressive nature of this definition is emphasized (CVCE, 1973, p. 4). Consequently, it can be said that identity is constructed in relation to others, and it is dynamic.

The Tindemans Report is another historical development in the construction of European identity. The Report is about the European Union, its common vision of Europe, its place in the world, its policies, institutions, and its relationship with its citizens. With a view to this research, there is also a focus on the cultural diversity and uniting factors, which can be evaluated as the common values. The Report also contains some proposals to ensure solidarity, to become closer and real for the citizens. Some of these proposals focused on a greater integration in education and the media to show the European reality, providing information about the cultural heritage of the EU, supporting the spread of information, and knowing each other better. The Report emphasises that educational integration can be provided with bilateral and multilateral agreements between universities and reciprocal recognition of studies in various sectors. All these aimed to bring the EU citizens closer (European Commission, 1976, p. 28). After this emphasis, in 1986, the European Commission proposed Erasmus programme for student exchanges. The Erasmus programme has an important role in constructing European identity because it provides the

mobility of students, shortens distances, and brings citizens closer, helps to create a feeling of belonging and provides awareness of the European culture and its richness.

Another step is Solemn Declaration on European Union. This document emphasizes the European identity by noting that member states, “wish to affirm European identity” and “confirm their commitment to progress towards ever closer union” (CVCE, 1983, p. 2). The phrase of “ever closer union” was mentioned many times in relation to the issue, in the following years.

The reports of the Addonnino Committee can also be seen as a progress in constructing the European identity. The first (interim) report was generally about arrangements to offer the citizens “tangible benefits in their everyday lives” and to ease the “rules and the practices which cause irritation to Community citizens” (University of Pittsburgh, 1985, p. 9). In the second (final) report, there were more culture-oriented issues and offers for strengthening the image and identity of the Community, such as having a flag and emblem; using the music of the “Ode to Joy” from Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony as an anthem; designing stamps about the events and ideas in the Community; abolishing inadequate and obsolete signs at internal borders (University of Pittsburgh, 1985, pp. 18-30). These were just some of the recommendations, but there were many more. It can be said that there were many proposals to strengthen the image and the identity of the EU and to make it tangible and alive for the peoples of Europe. As Shore (2000, p. 47) indicates, various “symbolic measures” to enhance the Community profile were recommended as a remedy for the ordinary citizens because of their lack of awareness of their identity and heritage. These early attempts were both about constructing European identity and making it visible and concrete.

The Single European Act is another step in constructing the European identity. There is a reference to the European identity, but it is just related to the closer co-operation on European security (Eur-lex 1987, pp. 13-14). It does not give detailed information about the European identity, but it is still important as the concept entered the EU treaties.

Another step is the Maastricht Treaty. The references in the Treaty and in the Declarations are about the European security and defence identity as it is in the Single European Act, but they are a little bit clearer. However, as Delanty (2002, p. 350) states, there was no attempt to describe the European identity; there were just some references to the “common cultural heritage”, which were generally about the common foreign and security policy (Eur-lex 1992, p. 1). As Moreira (1997) expresses, the Maastricht Treaty just related the European identity to defence. However, the Maastricht Treaty contributed to the EU by providing a legal basis for the concept of European citizenship because it was first introduced in the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 (Herrero n.d., p. 3). The concepts of citizenship and

identity have a common point as Preuss (1998, p. 142) emphasises that “the concept of citizenship is a social construction” and, according to him, it is “constitutive of the identity of a particular -political-community” and it “defines the social identity of the individuals.” So, its existence supports constructing an identity and its presence.

Another report on the European identity is the 1993 *De Clercq Report* (Dunkerley et al. 2002, p. 117). In general, the Report is concerned with the information and communication policy of the EU but there are also references to the European identity. The document mentions some of the European’s shared values as well as the fact that these values could be seen as the basis of the European identity. Furthermore, the report expresses the significance of symbols and mottos, and indicates that the Europeans start realizing their identity and assert their position and their cultural richness in the world (University of Pittsburgh 1993, pp. 1-33). Therefore, it can be noted that common values are the constituent of the European identity, while symbols, and mottoes are tools in constructing the European identity.

The Treaty of Amsterdam is also an important step as the principles of the EU; in other words, the common values related to European identity are clearly stated among the Articles of the Treaty (Eur-lex, 1997, p. 8). According to Laffan (2004, p. 82), besides these common values, the self-definition of the EU includes references to diversity, and he gives Articles 6(3) and 151(1) of the Treaty of Amsterdam as an example of respecting and referring its diversity.

The Treaty of Nice is also a vague step in this process as identity is mentioned just twice and it is defined as “a coherent force on international scene” (Eur-lex, 2001, p. 8). This shows that it is evaluated as a tool.

Another development is the Treaty of Lisbon. The common values take place within the Treaty but there are not any references to the European identity (Eur-lex, 2007, p. 11). The symbols (flag and anthem) that imply a supranational state; departing from the nation states and stated in the Constitutional Treaty, are abandoned in the Treaty of Lisbon (CIVITAS, “Treaty of Lisbon”, n.d.). Even so, sixteen member states continued to use the symbols to “express the sense of community of the people in the European Union and their allegiance to it” (Eur-lex, 2007, p. 267). This can be evaluated as retreating from more integration because of the state implications of the symbols. This may be a sign of doubt about the European identity and its power, which co-exists with national identities in a harmony. However, some of the member states still use these symbols and they are visible, touchable, and effective in citizens’ daily lives. As such, they are still valuable in constructing the European identity.

3. THE EUROPEAN UNION'S LANGUAGE POLICY

The EU has 24 official languages and over 60 indigenous regional or minority languages (European Parliament, 2016, p. 8); it is, therefore, accepted as a multilingual Union. The citizens of the EU have the right to write to the EU institutions in one of these official languages and the institutions have to answer in the same language (European Commission, EU Languages, n.d.). This part focuses on the general historical development of the EU language policy to point out the impact and contribution of multilingualism on the European identity. As linguistic diversity is accepted as one of the core values of the EU and has many advantages such as the continuity of communication within the EU, greater transparency, legitimacy and efficiency, positive effects on the cognitive skills and using the mother tongue of the citizens, (Directorate-General for Translation, 2014, pp. 1-2), it also supports the prosperity of both the EU and its citizens and contributes to intercultural dialogue and social cohesion (Eur-lex 2008, pp. 5-9). According to Schjerve and Vetter (2012, p. 2), multilingualism serves to economic growth, transnational communication, socio-cultural cohesion, and the development of a common European identity. Therefore, it can be noted that the EU language policy is closely related to integration, the functioning, the economy, and the identity of the EU.

3.1. The Historical Development of the European Union's Language Policy

The general framework of the language policy was structured in the Treaty of Rome in 1957, and two articles related to the language policy were stated in this Treaty. One of them is Article 217 and the other one is Article 248. That the first one states that the decisions related to the languages of the Community institutions would be decided unanimously by the Council (European Commission 1957, p. 74), and, as Ives (2004, p. 31) states, this shows the significance attributed to the language issues from the beginning. Article 248 notes that all four texts of the Treaty are equally authentic (European Commission, 1957, p. 80).

After the Treaty of Rome, the first regulation is also about the language policy of the EU. The first regulation, which is Council Regulation No 1/58, notes that Dutch, French, German and Italian are the official languages and the working languages of the institutions of the Community, and it is also decided that regulations and other documents of general application shall be prepared in the official languages (Eur-lex, 1958). It is worth mentioning here that the terms "official language" and "working

language” were mentioned in this Regulation for the first time. However, there were also other articles all of which were directly related to the language policy of the EU.

The Resolution of the Council and the Ministers of Education on comprising an action programme in the field of education is the second step, which includes language-related proposals. The Resolution was about language teaching and one of its objectives is “offering all pupils the opportunity of learning at least one other Community language” (Eur-lex, 1976, p. 4). This objective shows the beginning of the development of the EU language policy.

The Maastricht Treaty plays an important role in the development of the EU’s language policy, as it includes developments related to culture and education. The articles related to culture and education focus on language (Eur-lex 1992, 44). The EU attaches special importance to the language teaching, and this can be seen in the Maastricht Treaty, but it can also be traced through various programmes and projects, such as Erasmus, Erasmus+, Creative Europe, Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions, Horizon 2020, Europe for Citizens and as well as through European language initiatives such as the European Day of Languages and the European Language Label. It is worth mentioning that language learning and language teaching support and develop the EU’s multilingualism, language policy, and its identity and these projects and funds are important factors in this process.

The EU language policy has changed and shaped with each new report, conclusion, and regulation. In 1995, a Council Resolution stated that students should have the opportunity to learn two languages of the EU (Eur-lex, 1995, p. 4). Another development is the *White Paper² on Education and Training, Teaching and Learning towards the Learning Society* (1995). Proficiency in three European languages is one of the objectives of the Paper (Eur-lex, 1995, p. 1). The contributions and benefits of proficiency in languages for citizens are itemized clearly, and the White Paper states that this proficiency helps citizens to “benefit from the occupational and personal opportunities open to them in the border-free Single Market”, “build up the feeling of being European with all its cultural wealth and diversity and of understanding between the citizens of Europe” and opens “the mind, stimulates intellectual agility and, of course, expands peoples cultural horizon” (Eur-lex, 1995, p. 44). Furthermore, the document adds that “multilingualism is part and parcel of both European identity/citizenship and the learning society” (Eur-lex, 1995, p. 44). The emphasis on identity and its relationship with

² White Papers are documents with some proposals for action in a specific area.

multilingualism are important points to note that multilingualism and the European identity have a relation as one being part of another. Therefore, the contribution of multilingualism to the construction of European identity should not be disregarded. The White Paper also indicates that being European means having “the advantage of a cultural background of unparalleled variety and depth” (Eur-lex, 1995, p. 51). The emphasis on cultural background and its depth and variety points to the concept of “diversity”, which is described as an advantage and an asset for the EU.

The Lisbon Strategy is a milestone in the process as the perception related to multilingualism changes with it. A new strategic goal is noted for the EU; foreign language knowledge is indicated as one of the new skills, which would have a role in accomplishing this goal (European Parliament 2000). Wodak and Krzyzanowski (2010, p. 117) evaluate the Lisbon Strategy as a “tipping point, which triggered the Union’s interest in multilingualism and related issues.” They also state that it “put languages among a set of crucial skills to be fostered throughout the EU member states if the Union is to become one of the world’s most competitive knowledge-based economies.” Departing from this idea, it would not be wrong to note that the Lisbon Strategy has a shaping effect for the language policy because language skills are stated as tools to cope with the new developments and the necessities of that time. In the *Final Report of the High-Level Group on Multilingualism*, the importance of this Strategy is also pointed out, and the report indicates that “the learning of language is no longer simply regarded as being beneficial to the individual citizens, but as being of special importance for the Lisbon aims of economic growth and social cohesion” (European Commission 2007, p. 5). This shows that the scope of the language policy is broadened with new objectives. Thenceforwards, the language policy of the EU also serves as an instrument to fulfil this new goal besides its other objectives, such as sustaining individual multilingualism and providing many benefits to the citizens at different levels.

The Decision of the European Parliament and the Council on the *European Year of Languages 2001* is another important step related to the significance of linguistic diversity in the EU language policy. Here, the language question is defined as a challenge, which must be tackled as a part of the European integration process (Eur-lex, 2000, p. 1). In the Decision, the importance of language learning is noted with relation to its contribution to develop “mutual understanding and giving a tangible content to the concept of European citizenship”, to enhance “awareness of cultural diversity”, to eradicate “xenophobia, racism, anti-Semitism and intolerance” and to benefit economically (Eur-lex, 2000, p. 1).

Another development comes with the conclusions of the Barcelona European Council meeting of 15-16 March 2002. The European Council calls for action in some fields and

language is one of them. The aim related to teaching foreign languages becomes more demanding as it is at least one at the beginning and it becomes at least two foreign languages (University of Pittsburgh, 2002, p. 19), which can be interpreted as two and more languages.

Many other conclusions, resolutions and reports related to multilingualism were prepared. Some of them are the *Resolution about the promotion of linguistic diversity* (Eur-lex, 2002), *Framework Strategy for Multilingualism* (Eur-lex, 2005), *Multilingualism: an Asset for Europe and a Shared Commitment* (Eur-lex, 2008a), *Council Resolution on a European Strategy for Multilingualism* (Eur-lex, 2008b), *Council Conclusion on multilingualism and the Development of Language Competences* (Concilium, 2014), *Council conclusions on a Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training* (Eur-lex, 2009), and *Council conclusions on Language Competences to Enhance Mobility* (Eur-lex, 2011). In these official documents, the developments related to the EU language policy are noted; the importance of linguistic diversity is stated; they explain why and how it should be supported; and targets related to language learning are set again and again. Furthermore, the articles in the treaties in force support linguistic diversity, prohibit discrimination and provide the right to communicate with the EU institutions in one of the treaty languages.

In a nutshell, there have been many developments related to languages since the Treaty of Rome and the First Regulation. The treaty languages increased because of the enlargements and the deepening process of the EU. This increase adds value to the European identity, which is under-construction, and enriches the diversity within the EU. The first objectives were less demanding as the learning of at least one Community language was aimed in 1976, and, in 2002, the recommendation was for citizens to learn at least two foreign languages. Today, the choice for a foreign language is left to the individuals as it is not restricted to “Community language”. The importance of multilingualism and linguistic diversity has been restated in most of the official documents, and their benefits for the society and for the Union have been argued and noted. Many conclusions, resolutions and recommendations have been asserted to realize multilingualism, to support it and to respect linguistic diversity. However, it should not be forgotten that proposals just show the aim of the EU, but the member states are the main decision-makers in this field, so if they do not prefer to realize these proposals, they have no meaning. The Commission and the other stakeholders can just recommend, supplement, and support the actions but not force the member states to implement them.

The benefits and effects of supporting and respecting multilingualism can be noticed clearly within the above-mentioned documents, and they have effects on social cohesion, intercultural dialogue, cognitive skills, integration, openness, tolerance, preventing xenophobia, mobility, employability,

economy, and the European identity. The linguistic diversity of the EU is one of the components of the European identity and it affects its construction. Moreover, it is an added value and brings richness for the European identity. The effects of diverse languages, which shape, change and enrich the European identity, should not be underestimated. To sum up, it can be stated that the European identity without the language policy, which stands on the linguistic diversity and the equality of the languages, would be different.

3.2. Language-Identity Relations in the Construction of European Identity

In social sciences, the concept of “language” is researched extensively. According to Sapir (2004, p. 5), language is a method for human being to communicate about their ideas, emotions, and desires by using symbols and is a tool of significant expression (Sapir 2004, p. 17). Consequently, one can note that language is a way of communication, and people express their ideas, feelings, desires, and problems by using this tool. Sapir (1949, p. 68) also defines language as a social reality and a medium of expression for the society. One can say that people construct their identities by using languages as a medium of expression. However, language is not just a tool for expression or communication and Kilgour (n.d.) citing Edward Sapir notes that it “is not only a vehicle for the expression of thoughts, perceptions, sentiments, and values characteristic of a community; it also represents a fundamental expression of social identity”. Just because of this, languages can be evaluated as a tool that reflects people’s social identity, helps to shape /construct it and is a part of it.

3.2.1. Language – Identity Relations in General

Many researchers work on language and identity issues; however, this research focuses on their relations. Boxer (2006, p. 678) is one of the scholars who focuses on language and identity and, according to her, “adding a language to one’s verbal repertoire necessarily entails modifying one’s self-perception in relationship to others in the world.” This shows the role of language in changing and shaping one’s identity. Boxer and Cortes-Conde (2000, p. 203) use “relational identity” in their research about second language learning and claim that this identity is different from individual and social identity. They explain relational identity as a “bonding between interlocutors that is formed by the group and for the group” and they add that it is the identity of the total groups, not any individual’s identity (Boxer and

Cortes-Conde, 2000, p. 203). Taking this as a reference point, the European identity may be evaluated as the identity of the citizens as a group in their interactions in a multilingual community.

Norton is another scholar who focuses mainly on identity and language issues. According to Darwin and Norton (2015, p. 36), “language constructs our sense of self” and the identity, which is constructed, is “multiple, changing and site of struggle”. Norton (2006, p. 3) states that “Identity constructs and is constructed by language”, and this is one of the main characteristics of the identity. This is closely related with this research; identity is constructed by language. In the case of the EU, the European identity is constructed by its languages, namely by its language policy and multilingualism.

According to Norton (2006, p. 504), another important point in language identity relations is the notion of “investment”. She uses this notion in second language acquisition to explain that investment in another language has effects on an individual’s identity. In other words, it can be said that she evaluates it as an investment to the individual’s identity. In terms of European identity, it can be noted, that when the citizens of the EU invest in their language acquisition and multilingualism, they will be invested on their own identity and at the same time they will also invest in the European identity as they co-exist.

Power can be set as a notion that should be researched in relation to identity and language. Bourdieu’s notions of ‘symbolic power’ and ‘symbolic capital’ should be noted in relation to language. According to him, symbolic capital is “a credit; it is the power granted to those who have obtained sufficient recognition to be in a position to impose recognition” and he defines symbolic power as “the power to make things with word” (Bourdieu 1989, p. 23). He also states that symbolic power depends on the symbolic capital, and has to be based on it (1989, p. 23). As such, it can be said that symbolic power and capital are in relation and support each other. In this perspective, Schjerve and Vetter (2012, p. 135) state that language is seen as a symbolic power, which determines the positioning of the individuals in social markets. Consequently, if an individual had symbolic power, he/she would also have a word about the place in the market.

In language identity relations, emphasis should also be put on multi-competence as a means of power. Schjerve and Vetter (2012, p. 143) draw attention to the close interaction between power and multi-competence and, according to them, multi-competence is connected to flexible language use and proficiency, and they compose symbolic power in the European knowledge-based society. To be clear, one should look to the definition of multi-competence, which is defined by Cook (2016) as “the knowledge of more than one language in the same mind”. To give details about multi-competence, Cook (2016) refers to Grosjean and adds that it is assumed that “someone who knows two or more languages is a different person from a monolingual and so needs to be looked at in their own right rather than as a deficient monolingual”. Marian and Shook (2012) express that bilingualism has cognitive, neurological,

and social benefits. Therefore, it is obvious that multi-competent individuals with knowledge of different languages benefit from the opportunity to communicate more with the EU citizens who know the same foreign languages than monolingual individuals. This can be seen as the social and cultural benefit of multi-competence. It should also be indicated that it has effects on identity construction as identities are socially constructed by the interactions of the individuals who are equipped with necessary resources such as foreign languages, which provide and multiply the interactions.

These interactions are a vital part of identities and Bucholtz and Hall (2010, p. 18) explain the construction of identity with interactions. According to them, identity is the social positioning of the self and the other and it is a relational and socio-cultural phenomenon, which “emerges and circulates in local discourse contexts of interaction rather than as a stable structure located primarily in the individual psyche or in fixed social categories.” This explanation shows the importance of interactions in constructing identities and is in line with the constructivist point of view.

To summaries, the language policy of the EU includes official, local, and minority languages and this policy affects the construction process of European identity. It would not be wrong to note that multi-competent individuals who have symbolic power benefit it more because they can use their multi-competence to interact, communicate, get closer and understand each other. Edward (2009, p. 254) states that “language and identity are powerfully and complexly intertwined, and contexts of bilingualism and multilingualism only reinforce this point”. This reinforcement is significant in the EU context as it has many languages in duty at different levels in constructing European identity rather than one or two as in some nation states.

Lastly, it must be emphasized that both the individuals as agents and the institutions have roles in constructing the European identity, which is the identity of the Union. When looked at from the institutional level, one can notice that both the identity construction and the language policy have been developed and improved since the beginning with the treaties and other official documents. When looked at from the individual level, the effect of multilingualism in constructing the European identity can be seen, as well. Individuals, as agents equipped with language resources construct identity socially within their interactions. A medium for interactions and resources should be provided and developed to support the construction of the European identity and maintain and increase its presence in real lives.

Conclusion

This research focuses on the role of the EU's language policy in constructing the European identity. The construction process of the European identity is examined in relation with the language policy of the EU. As such, the European identity and the EU's language policy are the main focal points.

The construction process of the European identity is discussed according to social constructivism as it is socially constructed with the interactions of the actors in relations. The construction process of the European identity is an active process, which is shaped both with changes within the EU and in the international context. Each new enlargement, change and development has contributed and is still contributing to the construction and reconstruction of the European identity, which is an unfinished, on-going and a dynamic process. Here, the role of "other" should not be disregarded either because in interactions "self" needs "other" to position itself.

The developments can be seen as the attempts to construct the European identity with basic treaties and some official declarations. These are also the institutional outcomes of the process, which have been created by the institutions, and this is the top-down identity construction process of the EU. In this process, many proposals were made to strengthen and promote the European identity. Even though some of the symbols, which were proposed, were internalised, they did not become legally binding because of their association with supranationalism. However, the European identity continues to be constructed, and historical developments show that the European identity is not defined and not fixed; with each new report, new treaty and enlargements, it has been constructed and reconstructed. Economic values, the free movement, human rights, democracy, transparency, freedom, and education are the components of the European identity.

The development of language policy is discussed in respect to the treaties and other related official documents just like the European identity. Since the beginning, many projects, programmes, actions have been implemented. They support both the multilingualism and the construction of the European identity by providing mobility, creating the feeling of belonging, raising awareness, sustaining interaction and cohesion. The reasons for supporting language policy can be noted as sustaining communication within the EU; providing transparency, legitimacy, and efficiency; supporting and contributing to prosperity, intercultural dialogue, integration, cohesion, the functioning of the EU and the European identity.

The initial objectives of the language policy of the EU were less demanding as they were offering citizens the opportunity to learn at least one other Community language but in time it has changed, and the EU started to recommend learning at least two foreign languages with no limitations like “Community language”. Therefore, citizens can learn any language they want to learn. This shows the rising importance of multilingualism for the citizens, society, and the EU, and it has been stated and restated in most of the official documents.

As mentioned before, the European identity is an identity which is socially constructed through the interactions of the agents who are equipped with necessary resources and power, which are languages in this context. In other words, the intersection point of the European identity and the EU language policy is the social interactions, and these interactions are maintained through communication and languages. The individuals who invest in language competences, benefit from this investment in many fields of life such as their social, cultural, and economic life, and this also affects the European identity. For that reason, the EU should take more measurements to sustain this power and these resources of the individuals and provide the appropriate medium for the individuals to interact socially to support the presence and development of both the EU and its identity. At this point languages play a vital role.

In conclusion, both the European identity and the EU’s language policy serve social cohesion and integration. They are in relation with each other, and the language policy has an effect in the construction of the European identity and the language policy should be supported to protect and develop the European identity.

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