

THE SITUATION OF THE FRANCOPHONIE AND THE FRANCOPHONE CULTURE IN KOSOVO

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Abstract

The educational and sociolinguistic context in post-war Kosovo and the cooperation in building a current educational system have gone through very specific histories. The current situation of French and Francophonie is the result of great changes throughout history. All this sociolinguistic situation is closely related to the sociopolitical context. Any linguistic situation is necessarily linked to the socio-political context, but in Kosovo more than elsewhere. It must be remembered that, for ten years, the Serbian judiciary had a long arm and that one in two Albanian-speaking adults had already been arrested in one way or another by the police. The massacres resulting from the violence had become part of everyday life. In 1999, during the Kosovo War, Serbian revenge experienced unprecedented developments while ethnic cleansing in Albania accelerated rapidly during 1998-1999.

At present, the official languages of Kosovo are Albanian and Serbian. At the municipal level, minority languages such as Turkish, Bosnian and Romani are languages officially used under specific conditions. French is only the language of communication between French-speaking communities and French-speaking Kosovars working in contact with embassies and cultural services in French-speaking countries. In this context French therefore has the status of a foreign language in its own right. It is also taught as a second foreign language in schools in the same way as German.

Keywords: *languages; French; francophonie; Kosovo; culture;*

Historical data of Yugoslavia until the independence of Kosovo

At the time of the creation of the Albanian state in 1912, Albania claimed Kosovo, but it was Serbia which, thanks to pressure from Russia, won the case with the great European powers.

In 1918, Kosovo was officially incorporated into the young "Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes", which later became known as Yugoslavia.

From 1915 to 1919, the Kosovars organized uprisings which were all ruthlessly suppressed, the Yugoslav government of the time having resorted to the expulsion of Albanians, the closing of schools, the confiscation of lands and repopulation by Serbs. In short, the events which will take place in Kosovo from 1995 to 1999 resemble strangely those which took place between 1915 and 1919. In 1942, fascist Italy integrated Albania, Kosovo, part of Montenegro, and western Macedonia into an ethnic "Greater Albania". In July 1945, Tito's (Croatian) army managed to crush the Albanian resistance.

Kosovo again became an administrative entity of the Republic of Serbia, first as an "autonomous region", then, after the riots of 1968, elevated to the rank of "autonomous province". This status was confirmed in the 1974 Constitution, and in 1989 the suppression of the 1974 Constitution and of Albanian as the official language.

On July 5, 1990, the Parliament of Serbia adopted the Law on the Repeal of the Activities of the Kosovo Assembly and its Government. By this law, Kosovo was deprived of all executive and legislative powers. In primary and secondary schools, including the university, the curricula were defined by Belgrade. The teaching of Albanian was only possible in the context of foreign languages. Teachers had to retake exams so that the Serbian government could test their knowledge of Serbian. In fact, most teachers had to leave their jobs. This was the case with doctors in clinics and hospitals. The Albanians could only keep menial jobs provided, they had signed an oath of allegiance to Serbia. The National Library of Kosovo was occupied and huge quantities of volumes were sent to Belgrade to be destroyed and used as recycled paper. All the museums were closed.

The Albanians organized a parallel power in education. Schools resumed in private homes, even in cellars. Parallel education in Albanian continued for some 400,000 pupils, from nursery school to university, with the contribution of 20,000 teachers. However, the university workforce was never large due to the lack of openings.

As a result, the young Kosovars were forced to emigrate. About 250,000 Albanians left Kosovo between 1990 and 1993. Under United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 of June 10, 1999, Kosovo was administered by a kind of proconsul. The Kosovo protectorate is based on cooperation from the United Nations, KFOR (Kosovo Peace Force) and the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe). Kosovo is divided into several zones: the French zone, the Italian zone, the British zone, the German zone and the American zone. The government of Kosovo unilaterally declares its independence on February 17, 2008. (source: <http://www.tlfq.ulaval.ca/axl/europe/Kosovo.htm>)

“The First World War allowed France to deepen its implantation in the Balkans. On the economic, political and cultural levels, the work started by the French Army of the East and then the Army of the East during the war allowed France to present itself as a leading power in the Balkans in the 1920s Thanks to the unwavering support of its Serbian, Greek and Romanian allies, France was able to replace the central powers in the Balkans. (The Austro-Hungarian Empire).

This policy of interest will create favorable conditions for the establishment of French throughout the former Yugoslavia. In Belgrade, the Franco-Serbian association erected a monument that said "We love France as she loved us". (ALEXIS TROUDE. Les relations franco-serbes au sein de l'Armée d'Orient 1915-1918) (source: <http://www.doiserbia.nb.rs/img/doi/0350-7653/2006/0350-76530637221T.pdf>).

The educational context: The situation before the war; an educational vacuum

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According to a UNICEF study carried out on 394 schools, 43% of them were completely destroyed or badly damaged. Given that half of the approximately 1,000 schools in the territory were completely or partially destroyed during the conflict by NATO bombings and abuses by the Serbian army, many students took their lessons in private homes. (<http://www.tlfq.ulaval.ca/axl/europe/Kosovo.htm>)

Post-war period and the need to set up a Kosovar education system UN actions

Albanian schools, closed for several years, have reopened since September and October 1999 to allow Kosovar children to resume their studies. A construction and renovation program was undertaken after the war to restore the Kosovars to all the equipment they needed.

The autumn 1999 school year started on Monday 25 October in almost all of the 529 available schools in Kosovo, for around 250,000 pupils and 25,000 teachers. For the past ten years, the Serbs have gathered in the region of Mitrovica where the school system is functioning as best as possible, while Turkish school children, Gypsies, Bosnians, Gorans etc.), for their part, have attended school. University education remains a thorny problem.

The sociolinguistic context: Official languages and languages of communication

If it is true that the regrouping of physical, political, economic and social causes have caused and still cause the disappearance of languages (*Halte à la mort des langues Claude Hagège, Paris, Odile Jacob, 2000*), L. J. Calvet's criticism of the PLC (politico-linguistically correct) discourse on his work, *Le marché aux langues*, part of the idea that "all languages are equal" from the point of view of their values, functions, a concept based on "the gravitational model" in which languages are deeply "unequal" in its unfrozen continuum (p. 91, 96, 99). "Around a hyper-central language gravitate around ten super-central languages, around super-central languages gravitate between one hundred and two hundred central languages which are all the pivot of gravitation of four to five thousand peripheral languages" (*L.J. Calvet Quelle diversité linguistique? 2007*)

"Like recent political configurations in the former Yugoslavia, each state, each region, where each new nation is demarcated on linguistic and / or ethnic bases". Cecile Canut (*Une langue sans qualité, chap. La langue de la race, p. 70, éd. 2007*).

Under Milosevic's Yugoslavia (1989-1999) the official language was Serbian. Minorities have gradually lost their rights, especially the Albanian majority. While minorities could previously communicate in their language with the administration, Milosevic's government put an end to this bilingualism and imposed the Serbian language as the only official means of communication in the former Yugoslavia. Albanian was then used only in the Albanian community. Only one language of instruction persisted: Serbian.

At present, the official languages of Kosovo are Albanian and Serbian. At the municipal level, minority languages such as Turkish, Bosnian and Romani are languages officially used under specific conditions. Education can be provided in the official languages. Minorities can,

however, have access to education in their mother tongue. (*Article 59 « Right of communities and their members », Constitution of Kosovo*). (source: <http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/repository/docs/Constitution1Kosovo.pdf>)

English, an unofficial language of communication

The predominantly spoken language in Kosovo is Albanian. Serbian remains limited to the Serbian population, which has become a minority after the forced settlement of Belgrade. However, the presence of the international community speaking very little Albanian means that English is mostly used as a language of communication between the international population and the Kosovar population. In international institutions, English is also the language of professional communication.

Kosovo in La Francophonie, La Francophonie in Kosovo

From Paris le Sommet to Yerevan (Armenia) XVIIe end 2018, French a rich and multiple language, Kosovo observer member of the International Organization of the Francophonie, but that to answer the compatriots during the meetings in the streets, in the buses... Is that so! French teacher?! Is there French in schools?! Pain felt as a French speaker. "The francophone adjective has been enriched with a new meaning:" belonging to the Francophonie (institutional) (Pöll 2001), the case of Kosovo at the last Antananarivo summit (Madagascar). "De jure" member in many international organizations, "de facto" total isolation. But what French speakers are we as such? Which French speakers are the teachers of French who for many years have not had contact with "the shared language", a language of liberation and fraternity.

In 2005 the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Kosovo, Jensen-Petersen said "Let us leave the divisions of Kosovo behind us and prepare for integration into Europe. The time has come to create new bridges between cities and villages, North and South, East and West, Majorities and Minorities, Kosovo must be an integral part of Europe. Now, soon 2018, still *waiting for Godot!*

In my eyes, the Francophonie is not a special subject that needs to be treated as someone sick, but as a language of communication in search of "convergences, alliances, interactions between areas of civilization "as Abdou Diouf says in an article in *Le Monde* (*La francophonie, une réalité oubliée* 2007), and I would add, common ground for the development of the dialogue of cultures.

The current situation of French as a foreign language

After the Kosovo war in 1999 in Kosovo there was a comprehensive education reform. Modern and democratic normative legislation and regulations are created which are constantly being perfected and harmonized with European legislation.

The National Assembly adopted new reforms ensuring the right and access to education for all Kosovar citizens regardless of their ethnicity. For the past few years as a French teacher, I have heard and felt that the regression of French is inevitable in the current Kosovar setting.

Today the percentage of French learners continues to drop. On what basis can I make these claims? In Kosovo, among other things, this negative development can be explained by the weak establishment of French-speaking investors and by a policy of quasi-disinterest of France vis-à-vis Kosovo which probably does not attract much or if not it is greatly exceeded by geopolitical competition.

The promotion of French in Kosovo requires investments. No French company participated in the major privatizations, except Pristina Airport, a Franco-Turkish company, something which discourages these Albanians for whom the image of France is the symbol and the engine of Europe. Certain factors certain factors have raised worrying diagnoses on the situation of French in Kosovo. The causes of the decline of French are numerous: firstly the dominance of English which is a factor of success in the country, parents want their children to be "connected" with the rest of the world, but also the choice of second foreign language turns mainly to German because of a great immigration in German-speaking countries (Germany, Austria, German-speaking Switzerland) as well as a pre-war economic link maintained between the former Yugoslavia / l 'Germany. If we take literally the words "The time seems to have come to tell the French world" (Rivarol, *Discours sur l'Universalité de la langue française* (1784)), after barely two and a half centuries, can be translated by the time seems to have come to say the English world, a language which is clearly more attractive for the pupils than the French in the Kosovar space, although beyond.

Even if officially teaching French is compulsory in the secondary school curriculum some establishments do not offer French lessons, the number of French lessons is almost non-existent and French, no longer has the privileged position before, for economic and social and historical reasons.

It should also be remembered that the freedom of the teacher is very weak and the transmission of knowledge is difficult to do in the context of learning "with a heavy

institutional burden" (*Louise Dabène, Variations et rituels en classe de langue, Editions Didier, 1990*).

In addition, it seems that the lack of motivation of teachers is one of the major reasons for the failure to expand French. Schools are confronted with many difficulties specific to the teaching conditions of Kosovo (overcrowded classes (38 to 44 per class), lack of didactic / pedagogical support, deficit in teacher training, initial and continuous, outages. electricity... etc.).

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