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IN SEARCH OF LANGUAGE ORDER
G. W. LEIBNIZ'S "UNVORGREIFLICHE GEDANKEN"

1.1. Between the objectivity and illusion

In the letter from 7th April 1699 written to Gabriel Spartvenfeld, Swedish thinker and erudite, Leibniz referred to a trend in linguistic research inspired by “not yet” the pure nationalism, but certainly by the argument on the priority of linguistic and cultural tradition, enhanced by the conscience of existence of fundamental national differences¹.

¹ H. Wieselgren (ed.), *Leibniz'breif till Spartvenfeldt*, in: “Antiquarisk Tidskrift for Sverdge” 7 (3) (1884/85), s. 40: “Au reste il est plaisant de voir, comment chacun veut tout tirer de sa langue ou de celle qu’il affectionne. *Goropius Becantus* et *Rodurnus* de l’Allemand (sans distinguer les nouvelles inflexions de ce qui est de la langue ancienne), *Rudbeckius* du Scandinavien, un certain *Otroski* du Hongrois, cet Abbé François (qui nous promet les origins des nations) du bas Breton ou Cambien, *Praetorius* (auteur de l’orbis Gothicus) du Polonais ou Esclavon. Thomassin après plusieurs autres *Bochart* meme de l’Hebreu ou Penicien, *Ericus* Allemand établi à Venise du Grec. Et je crois, si un jour les Turcs ou Tartares deviennent sçavants à notre manière qu’ils trouverons dans leur langue et dans leurs pais des mots ou allusions, don’t ils prouveront avec autant de droit que Monsieur *Rudbeckius*, que les Argonautes, *Hercule*, *Ulysse* et les autres Heros ont été chez eux et que les Dieux sont sortis de leur pais et de leur Nation. Ils trouvent bien des passages des anciens favorables à leur hypothèse. [...] La verité est que les anciens parlent confusement et contradictoirement des choses, qu’ils ne sçvoient plus eux memes lors qu’ils ecrivoient de sorte que leur auctorités dans ces choses obscures sont à peu pres come les regles de l’Astrologie, sont on peut tirer tout ce qu’on veut, su tout après coup”.

The argument over the priority of linguistic tradition had its origins in started in the end of 15th century intensive cataloguing action languages, first European, than of the Old World finally of the New World. Theoretical conclusions from at first purely mechanical arrangements of languages went in two directions: 1. determining of the original language, 2. determining of the relationship between the existing languages. In genealogical consideration nationalisms played certain role. The ambition of many researchers was proving that their language was the closest to the first language of humanity – the language of Adam. It was not however the nationalism in modern sense. Admittedly the roots of nationalism develop from the same soil as the whole western civilization and go back to the beginnings of Jewish nation and ancient Greece, but the first contemporary national country was the 17th century England. As for the scholars mentioned by Leibniz in the letter, he means the sense of a certain linguistic and cultural superiority, common also to Hebrews and Greeks. See H. Kohn, *Nationalism: Its Meaning and History*, D. Van Nostrand Company, INC., Princeton, New Jersey, New York 1955.

A few years before in an essay entitled *Analysis linguarum* Leibniz expressed the conviction about the parity of languages. He wrote that when it comes to the contribution of a language to the process of cognizance suffice to consider whichever language since every nation is equally able to make discoveries². Hence we can suppose that Leibniz, the author of genealogical classification of languages, conscious of differences between languages, especially historical differences, attributed them equal cognitive functions and did not divide them into “better” and “worse” ones. This opinion is contradictory with other Leibniz’s statements. It can be without any difficulty proved that he was not much different from Goropius Becan- tus (criticized by Leibniz) declaring the superiority of German over other European languages from the point of view of cognizance, and from the historical and cultural point of view arguing that German is the closest to the primary language in its supreme form, and that it is particularly adapted to philosophy³. It seems that this discrepancy fully comes to light when we compare the general linguistic theory, the origins of which are to be found in his texts on cognitive theory and representation, and the opinions formulated by Leibniz on the grounds of comparative and historical research which he conducted. Linguistic historians claim that Leibniz in his hypotheses on the origins of German succumbed to the same illusions which led astray other scholars criticized by him⁴. There are however some extenuating circumstances which admittedly do not justify Leibniz in the aspect of scientific reliability, but they contribute to explanation of his attitude as a member of a particular linguistic and cultural community.

² G. W. Leibniz, *Analysis linguarum*, in: G. W. Leibniz, *Opusculæ et Fragmenta Inédits de Leibniz*, extraits des manuscrits de la bibliothèque royale de Hanovre par Louis Couturat, Paris 1903, p. 352, quoted as C.

³ G. W. Leibniz, *Dissertatio Praeliminaris. De alienorum operum editione, de Scopo operis, de Philosophica dictione, de lapsibus Nizolii*, in G. W. Leibniz, *Die Philosophischen Schriften von G. W. Leibniz*, ed. C. I. Gerhardt, Halle 1849–1863 (repr. Hildesheim 1960) VII Vol, IV, p. 144, (quoted as GP, volumn, page). *Illud tamen asserrere ausim, huic tentamento probatorio atque examine philosophematum per linguam aliquam vivam, nul- lam esse in Europa linguam Germanica aptiorem, quia Germanica in realibus plenissima est et perfectissima*”.

⁴ See S. Gensini, *Leibniz Linguist and Philosopher of Language: Between ‘primitive’ and ‘natural’*, in: M. Dascal, E. Yakira (ed.), *Leibniz and Adam*, University Publishing Projects Ltd., Tel Aviv, 1993, pp. 118–119, H. Aarsleff, *Leibniz on Locke on Language*, in: H. Aarsleff, *From Locke to Saussure*, Athlone, London 1982, pp. 46–47.

1.2. Seventeenth century Germany

1.2.1. The history of 17th century Germany is the history of a struggle to survive which involved the political survival – maintenance of the statehood, of economy and above all it involved the cultural survival and rebirth. The statement that people living in 17th century considered war rather than peace a normal state in Europe seems not to be false. Numerous armed conflict with political, religious or social background went on in different parts of the continent. Still they all had less reach and consequences than the phenomenon called ‘The Thirty Years’ War’. Let the historians judge the reasons and the results of this great all-European war⁵. Suffice to say that it was conducted in the name of religious and political security. What remains important for us is the fact that the war, in which great European powers took part, was generally waged on the grounds belonging to The Holy Roman empire of The German Nation. The war causes tremendous material loss, extermination of the population, decline of crafts and trade, it left its impress on the cultural life of 17th century Germany. The war and years after it are called, with some exaggeration certainly, the times of the most deep cultural collapse of Germany. Andreas Gryphius (1616–1664), a great lyricist and playwright of the German Baroque wrote:

*Wir sind doch nunmehr gantz, ja mehr den gantz verheeret.
Der frechen Völker Schaar, die rasende Posaun
Das vom Blutt fette Schwerdt, die donnernde Cartaun
Hat aller Schweiss und Fleiss und Vorrath auffgezehert.*

The Holy Reich (the Holy Roman Reich) was in state of shock since the Thirty Years’ War and French aggressions. Demographic catastrophe was deepened by the 1630–1640 plague. From the point of view of confession the Empire was highly differentiated; the majority of population was Lutheran, the minority Calvinist and the rest of it were Roman Catholics. In this multicultural milieu German language with its poetry and memoirs of gone power and magnitude of the Empire was the only common weal. Traditional North-South tensions based on religious criterion (Protestant Germany – Catholic Germany) subsequently adapted to the tastes of Enlightenment (efficiency – education, ignorance – immorality), did not facilitate the survival of the imperial myth. In the second half of 17th century because of the threat from France, a real attempt to create imperial economic

⁵ See G. Parker, *Wojna trzydziestoletnia*, in: A. Mączak (ed.), *Europa i świat w początkach epoki nowożytnej*, PWN, Warszawa 1992, part 2, pp. 98–135.

policy was undertaken. There were attempts to create common trade rules that could be followed by all Imperial countries. The Empire itself was not a country in respect of modern or national monarchy. It constituted rather a general outline of a medieval monarchy.

Scientists, lawyers, theologians struggled for the endurance of the Empire, believing that the national unity could be saved thanks to internal reforms, the tradition in such domains as the law, especially the German law more ancient and better from the Roman and canon law. Pufendorf, Reinking, Seckendorff, Arumnäus, Limänaus, Conring, Chemnitz and Leibniz should be mentioned here.

1.2.2. The Westfalian peace agreement signed in Munster in 1648 that ended the Thirty Years' War was according to historians the beginning of a gradual decomposition of the Reich, while for France it opened the way to a 40-year political dominance in Europe. The second half of 17th century could be labeled 'the French era'. The growth of its power, *'This expansion, this vigor, this glory are the signs of an intense vitality. France is an entity, a person, a moral whole. Her will to unity, her will to expand, follow one another like the steps in a logical process growing increasingly aware of itself.'*⁶ France gains not only political supremacy. The most astonishing is the development of its intellectual force. Since the beginning of 17th century there is *'a miracle of perpetual profusion of masterpiece'*. processions of eminent scientists and philosophers led by Carthesius, writers and artists shaped new currents of thinking affecting with their creations the scientific and cultural life of other European countries. French became the universal language of European intellectual elites. Pierre Boyle wrote: *'The French language is the rallying point for all the countries of Europe. It is a language which we might truly call transcendental, for the same reason that philosophers bestow that epithet on natures which spread and wide, and freely manifest themselves in every clime and country'*⁷.

Paul Hazard observes that intellectual hegemony was until the end of 17th century almost a family property: it remained in the Latin circle. In the age of Renaissance it belonged to Italy, then Spain had its golden era, finally France took over the legacy⁸. England did not withdraw from the fight for political influence trying to frustrate political plans of France,

⁶ P. Hazard, *The European mind 1680–1717*, transl. by J. Lewis May, Penguin Books, 1964, p. 77.

⁷ Ibidem, p. 80.

⁸ Ibidem, p. 70.

but on the cultural battlefield England managed to get ahead France only in the beginning of 18th century. ‘In 1702, no country in civilized Europe was in a more melancholy condition of intellectual emptiness than England; in 1712, not France itself could compare with us for copious and vivid production. (...) The little volume of dialogues, which Berkeley issued under the title of *Hylas and Philonous* belongs to the *annus mirabilis* 1713, when Pope, Swift, Arbuthnot, Addison, Steele, were all at the brilliant apex of their genius, and when England had suddenly combined to present such a galaxy of literary talent as was to be matched, or even approached, nowhere on the continent of Europe.’⁹

If the conscience of intellectual dominance of France was the source of frustration in the motherland of Boyle’s, Newton’s and Locke’s, the country which in the second half of 17th century created the foundations of the modern experimental science, the country where numerous scientific societies had operated with Royal Society created 15th July 1662, how should we measure the feeling of cultural slavery in those European countries which fed themselves with the memories of the lost power and were far behind from the point of view of civilization.

4.3.3. Historians of science agree that Germany was far behind France, England, Italy and also the Netherlands in terms of civilization. Experimental science was especially backward and even though Nurnberg was the center of European crafts, manual skills – crucial element of laboratory work, essential in creating research instruments – were not used as scientific base. Among the leading European researchers, engaged in experimental research the two that are mentioned are Johannes Kepler (1571–1630) and Otto Guericke (1602–1686)¹⁰.

Although during 17th century the number of German universities increased from 17 to 39 the increase was not the result of scientific enthusiasm. It was rather caused by decentralization of the Empire. Every sovereign, even the least, aimed at establishing his own university. The majority of those were very poor and the poverty was not material at all. The utmost issue was the lack of well-formed staff. The majority of universities were owned by Protestants (23) the rest was in Jesuit’s hands, except the Salzburg university controlled by Benedictines. Religious values were dominating in Protestant and Catholic schools as well. Certain differences denoting the

⁹ Ibidem, words of Edmund Gosse quoted by P. Hazard, p. 87.

¹⁰ M. Ornstein, *The Role of the Scientific Societies in the Seventeenth Century*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1928, p. 165.

dissimilarity of education courses still remained. Protestant establishments laid emphasis on the law and theology and usually had a medicine faculty. Catholic universities formed mainly philosophers. At the most progressive catholic university in Würzburg 75% of the program was devoted to philosophy and rhetoric, while the law constituted 7% and medicine 5%¹¹. What was common to university education was the language – lectures were given in Latin. While Latin remained the language of universities and was the official language of German science of 17th century French became the language of enlightened intellectual, courtly and influential circles. The Germans like other European nations submitted to French replacing Latin bonding all Europeans with the language of the enemy. ‘If some of our ancestors were to come back on earth – wrote Christian Thomasius in his *Discourse on imitating the French (1687)* – they simply wouldn’t know us, degenerate hybrids that we are. Nowadays, everything about us has got to be French – clothes, cookery, language, all French. French are our manners, and French are our vices.’¹²

1.2.4. Martha Ornstein in her work entitled *The Role of Scientific Societies in the Seventeenth Century* observes that the civilization backwardness of 17th century Germany was mostly visible in the degree of development of the national language¹³. While eminent French and English writers and scholars were writing in their mother tongue, German was merely the language of uneducated masses. It is hard to believe, that the restoration process of Germany, ‘crushed and humbled to the dust, as she was, swept and swayed’¹⁴, had its beginnings in the process of repair and development of German language.

The realization of this program was the main goal of numerous scientific societies. It is characteristic that German societies in the beginning of their activity concentrated on the study of German and this was so to say an initial stage which was to prepare the ground for other research. Meanwhile European scientific societies proceeded in experimental research. Language societies (Sprachgesellschaften) were modeled upon Florentine Academia della Crusca, the institution brought into being in 1582 by the poet Antonio Francesco Grazzini (1503–1582) and which was engaged in purifying

¹¹ Ibidem, pp. 227–229.

¹² P. Hazard, op. cit., p. 81.

¹³ M. Ornstein, op. cit., p. 165.

¹⁴ P. Hazard, op. cit., p. 440.

Italian from chaff (in Italian – crusca)¹⁵. One of the first societies is Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft (also called Palmenorden) created in 1617, aiming at cultivating of mother tongue and obligating its members to employ the pure German. Poets and writers stood up for the language. Martin Opitz (1597–1637) recognized as the leading German poet published the same year *Aristachus sive de contemptu linguae germanicae*, pronouncing against the cult of ancient languages, and announcing the arrival of grandeur of German¹⁶. One of the most radical societies was the Teutschgesinnte Genossenschaft, founded in 1643 in Hamburg by Philippe von Zesen. Its members decided to purify German from all foreign loan-words even those functioning in the language for ages. Language societies attained the peak of their activity in the second half of 17th century. These highly specialized institutions were the first real centers of scientific life and movement for the safeguard and renovation of cultural legacy coming to light in Germany. The founder of Societas Eurenetica, society which motto read as follows: *‘Per inductionem et experimentum omnia’*, Joachim Jungius (1587–1657) wrote: *‘It is absolutely true, that all arts and sciences, as for instance, the art of governing, the knowledge of weights and measures, of medicine, architecture, fortifications, could be lectured and spread in German more easily, more properly, perfectly and clearly than in Greek, Latin or Arab’*¹⁷.

Although German universities in 17th century were the ramparts of scholastic science with traditional curriculums – Leibniz used to call the university educational system ‘minism’ – some signs of change which were to lead to reform in the Enlightenment era were visible in the second half of the century. Revaluation of the attitude towards mother tongue accompanied this process. Some professors had the courage to face the Latin domination, and one of the first who defended his mother tongue was Christian Thomasius.

Thomasius called the Luther of German university reform, professor of law at the conservative university of Lipsk ventured for the first time in 1679 to notify about his lecture in German. The incident was judged a sacrilege, there were even attempts to clean the blackboard with the holy water. Thomasius was however consistent, he raised German to a dignity of language of instruction and published books in German. He argued that one ought to imitate the nations that use their mother tongues: *‘Greek philosophers*

¹⁵ Académie Française engaged in language and literature research, which in 1635 cardinal Richelieu made the greatest public scientific institution in the country, also referred to the ideas spread by the same institution.

¹⁶ See W. Czaplinski, A. Galos, W. Korta, *Historia Niemiec*, Ossolineum, Wrocław, Warszawa, Kraków, Gdańsk 1981, p. 349.

¹⁷ M. Ornstein, op. cit., p. 167.

Halina Świączkowska

*did not write in Hebrew, but in their mother tongue*¹⁸. Even though the mentioned scientists had a tremendous influence on shaping the national consciousness, especially by emphasizing the linguistic unity, none of them could compete in this field and in any other scientific domain with Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz.

1.3. *Unvorgreiffliche Gedanken...* – linguistic culture treaty

1.3.1. The above outlined social and cultural situation in Germany in 17th century justifies Leibniz daring hypothesis related to the unusual role of German in the history of European civilization. This great philosopher and untiring scholar conscious of the ravages made on the substance of national identity used arguments of psychological nature. They were to – as it seems – maintain the ‘national spirit’ and it is hard to assume that Leibniz believed it was possible to supply any documentary evidence to support them. After all they are contradictory with his studies in history of German. Leibniz in his voluminous correspondence with Job Ludolf exchanged his assumptions regarding the direction of migration of German tribes and their origin, relating to accessible sources, but any comment on primary role of this language appears there¹⁹.

Renovation and improvement of a national language, and restoration of its standing became the most important duties for Leibniz. He unfolded his renovation program in dissertation *Unvorgreiffliche Gedanken, betreffend die Ausübung und Verbesserung der Deutschen Sprache*²⁰, which unfortunately wasn’t published in his lifetime. The dissertation deals with German but it has in our opinion more universal characteristic. Leibniz’s instructions and remarks might concern a whichever ethnic language and understood this way could constitute a set of elements shaping language culture of a given community.

In the very first sentence of his dissertation Leibniz observes (not for the first time after all) that a language is the finest mirror of the mind and that improvement of mind goes hand in hand with the development of the language itself. Leibniz refers here to Greeks, Roman and Arabs. The

¹⁸ M. Ornstein, op. cit., p. 233.

¹⁹ GP IV, 144.

²⁰ G. W. Leibniz, *Unvorgreiffliche Gedanken, betreffend di Ausübung und Verbesserung der Deutschen Sprache*, in: G. W. Leibnitii, *Collectanea Etymologica, illustrationi linguarum, veteri celticae, germanicae, gallicae, aliarum inservientia*, cum praefatione Hohanis Georgii Eccardi, Hannoverae 1717.

same thought is present in his previous writings, among others in *Analysis Linguarum*. If a national language becomes a language of science it has to be improved and adjusted to its requirements. According to Leibniz the case of French and English speaks volumes about it. They achieved considerable progress in philosophical science since having abandoned Latin they began to philosophize in their own languages. This made possible for simple people and ‘even women’ to form their own opinion on the matter²¹.

Leibniz a skilful politician and diplomat while joining the struggle for the linguistic rebirth refers to the achievements of the German nation and points to the domains in which Germans scored some success. He is aware of the fact that he cannot mention any scientific achievements, German scientists having recourse solely to Latin and letting their mother tongue take its own course. German could not develop properly being a language of uneducated majority²². ‘The majority’ reached according to Leibniz high level of knowledge in such areas as: mining, hunting, forestry, mechanics and navigation. Specialized vocabulary adopted by other national languages is the evidence²³. Leibniz reminds also his nation’s military victories and writes that the nation which distinguished itself by courage and prowess is capable of intellectual effort. It is possible solely thanks to development of one’s own language²⁴.

1.3.2. Leibniz reasoning is to a certain extent emotional, it is not however deprived of an important dose of common sense. Leibniz acts like a ‘real psychologist’ trying to cure German spirit severely experienced by war-time adversities. The Thirty Years’ War among other things caused – he wrote – that ‘*our language was in a chaos as well as our homes*’²⁵ and after the war we were dominated by French power and language. ‘*France set [...] a model of elegance*’²⁶. He judged foreign influence differently than his contemporary linguistic purists. Being aware of hazards Leibniz highlighted certain benefits resulting from interpenetration of different cultures. Germans learned about prevention from contagious diseases from Italians, from the French they got the knowledge on improving their military structures²⁷. Further-

²¹ GP IV, 144.

²² UG, § 9.

²³ GP IV, 144.

²⁴ UG, § 4.

²⁵ UG, § 25.

²⁶ UG, § 26.

²⁷ UG, § 27.

more relations with French culture which added some delicacy to a serious 'German nature' permitted some change in aesthetical tastes and lifestyle. The language itself was enriched by expressions introduced to German in a natural way, like plants, that grow in a breeding ground.

Leibniz in general was against the usage of any foreign language in common every day life as well as in any social, scientific or institutional activity. *'It would be shameful and scandalous – he writes if our basic language, the one of our heroes vanished due to our negligence'*²⁸. Employing foreign languages, which could never be mastered by all, causes confusion in the way of thinking. One who is not aware of various meanings of foreign vocabulary and expressions cannot write or think properly. Nothing good can result from adopting a foreign language, and there is danger of losing freedom²⁹. Leibniz relating to documents from Imperial archives writes that after analyzing them one can make a thorough study of progressive decline of German which in the times of Reformation still kept its integrity. Undertaking of a repair program with the aim of giving German back its due standing depends on the goodwill of scholars, ecclesiastics and educated social elites³⁰.

1.3.3. Leibniz presents his program by enumerating lacks and defaults which should be coped with. He highlights above all the lack of specialized terminology in such domains as logic, mathematics or theology. It is obviously due to secular addiction to Latin, the official language of science. Leibniz thinks however that it is not due to German lack of skill which restrains them from improving their language but absence of goodwill. If *'everything done by a simple man could be expressed well in German, undoubtedly matters proper to eminent and educated people, could be, if they were willing to do so, expressed well or even better in pure German'*³¹. It seems Leibniz returns to his own thoughts presented in a radical way in the 'Introduction to Nizolius' *'if something cannot be expressed in common parlance it should be removed from philosophy'*³². Similarly to 'Introduction' certain incoherence of Leibniz's views can be observed. Leibniz maintains that in principle every colloquial language is to the same extent suited to the needs of everyday life and adjusts the requirements of science. Development of science depends

²⁸ UG, § 21.

²⁹ UG, § 20, 21.

³⁰ UG, § 24.

³¹ UG, § 10.

³² GP IV, 143–144.

on formulating thoughts in a clear and precise way especially in the mother tongue. It is therefore unimportant if we philosophize in English, German or French the only important matter is that each of these languages follows the traces of our inventions and reflects in the best manner the inner order of thoughts. Thus, if Germans overcome some psychological barriers they will be able to succeed in every domain by perfecting their language. In the struggle for enhancement of 'national spirit' this democratic sounding argument appeared too weak for Leibniz. He probably believed in philosophical mission of German language when he reached for more substantial measures of persuasion. Leibniz explained to his compatriots in a rather publicist than a scientific style that none of European languages is as well adapted to verification of various philosophical doctrines as German³³. It is so because '*We Germans, we have got a special measure of thoughts, unknown to others [...] Empty words, are void and foam and are not accepted in German.*'³⁴. If we put aside arguments of propagandist nature as the readers of *Unvorgreifliche Gedanken* we will appreciate the objective analysis of mother tongue especially in areas where – according to Leibniz – its specialization should take place.

Improvement of onomathology and enrichment of a language, apart from the above mentioned, relates to such areas as morality, psychology (Leidenschafften des Gemüths), customs, management, national and internal services and politics as well as the law³⁵. Leibniz notices the need of protection and restoration of German language not only as a means of everyday communication but above all as the national official language of power and administration. National documents, legal deeds, the Government representatives should procure examples of appropriate use of the mother tongue to the people. It is also useful to read theological writings since even though theologians gave themselves up to fanatical fantasies, expressions and terms which testify for wealth of German are present in their works³⁶.

Leibniz considers the language a living system consumed by a disease. He enumerates the reasons for that, diagnoses and prescribes the treatment. An important element of this treatment are institutional activities engaging influential and educated representatives of 'higher' classes of society. Leibniz values the contribution of linguistic societies to the safeguard and restoration of German. He reminds that the basic mottos of their acti-

³³ GP IV, 144.

³⁴ UG, § 11.

³⁵ UG, § 15, 67, 90.

³⁶ UG, § 14.

vity were wealth, purity and transparency of the language. Even though Leibniz agrees on the general idea of their activity, he criticizes their procedures claiming that the members of the societies went too far clearing the German of any foreign influence³⁷. There exist, according to him, fundamental difficulties in selection of criteria allowing to decide on the right origin of expressions. Job Ludolf, a friend of Leibniz who refused cooperation with Palmenorden shared his doubts. In a letter to Leibniz in January, 22nd 1692 he wrote *'the first thing that must be decided is which words are to be considered foreign and which ones of native stock, for not everything associated with foreigners is foreign. Who would be so senseless as to assert that our ancestors lacked noses, ears, mouths, or eyes before learning these words from the Romans'*³⁸. Ludolf, the same as Leibniz doubted the actual influence of linguistic societies on the change of linguistic behavior of common users even though he observed some benefits resulting from their activity. The behavior in his opinion cannot be shaped by means of any law.

1.3.4. Leibniz postulates methodic review of all German expressions. The foundations of a language – as he writes – are words, on which idioms grow. Vocabulary analysis should include both common parlance in all its environmental varieties and every possible dialect. Leibniz points out that though the written language is ruled by High-German still Low-German, the Margraviate of Brandenburg dialect, Swabian dialect, Bavarian and others should be treated equally. Languages related to German ought to be studied as well since there are some words and expressions having their source in German. Documents and texts written in Old German, Old Saxon, or Old Frankon provide valuable information. It should be added that Leibniz did not limit himself to postulates only. Studying German dialects was one of his passions. In *Collectanea Etymologica...* one can find Low-German lexicon prepared by Leibniz on the grounds of materials provided by Johan Justus Kelp, a clergyman from Brema³⁹. Leibniz collaborated in this field with numerous scholars, he encouraged Gerhard Meier to initiate work on his lexicon of Saxon, Dutch and Danish⁴⁰.

³⁷ UG, § 19.

³⁸ J. T. Waterman (ed.), *Leibniz and Ludolf on Things Linguistic, Excerpts from Their Correspondence (1688–1703)*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1977, p. 23.

³⁹ See Leibniz's letter to Ludolf from April 17th 1692, in J. T. Waterman (ed.), *Leibniz and Ludolf on Things Linguistic...*, p. 25 and Waterman's commentary, p. 66.

⁴⁰ J. T. Waterman (ed.), *Leibniz and Ludolf on Things Linguistic...*, p. 31.

Linguistic material demands a detailed analysis and classification on the basis of which it is possible to isolate vocabulary belonging to common parlance, technical vocabulary, expressions typical of rural areas, and also words of foreign origin and archaisms. It is the starting point for works aiming at creation of dictionaries and books, which would determine what we call today a linguistic standard. Leibniz observes the necessity to elaborate a German dictionary of colloquial speech, a specialist dictionary covering technical terms and an etymological dictionary containing information on the meaning and origin of expressions. He relates here to the experience of Académie Française and Florentine Crusca, but also underlines the fact that the main objective of these institutions was merely to create colloquial speech dictionaries, however the specialized vocabulary is not less important since thanks to it science can be understood, developed and spread⁴¹. One ought to ask representatives of all domains of science for help and cooperation in elaboration of a dictionary of technical terms. Linguistic fluency which is the essential element of the ability to express clearly one's thoughts is to be achieved through knowledge of the meanings, origin and relations between expressions. This ability is developed through etymological dictionaries which enable to make a thorough study of a given nation. Since languages – as it is highlighted by Leibniz – are the oldest documents of humanity, Glossarium Etymologicum of German would permit to re-create the origins of the nation and would indicate its due role in shaping the European civilization⁴². It is characteristic of Leibniz to concentrate mainly on vocabulary, he does not devote much attention to other aspects of linguistic correctness. In his dissertation comprising 114 paragraphs only a few deal with grammar and rules of standardization of orthography. Leibniz observes that even though Germans have no room for shame when it comes to grammar, it is still nowhere near perfection. He postulates indeed simplification of its rules, he observes however that real experts of the matter are missing among scholars.

Leibniz advising to avoid barbarisms and provincialisms in formal language tolerates using them in informal language. If they are appropriately used they do not shock – in Leibniz's opinion – in the parlance of ordinary people. He is also quite liberal when it comes to the use of foreign expressions and phrases, but advises avoiding them when one is not sure the interlocutor knows their meaning. Leibniz proves to have a lot of common sense when expressing his opinion about the language of national and legal documents

⁴¹ UG, § 36, 37.

⁴² UG, § 46, 48.

for unlike purists under the banner of *Palemnorden* he admits foreign technical terms, especially Latin ones which have been functioning for ages with the same meaning in legislation of many countries⁴³.

When considering the process of naturalization of expressions of foreign origin in German Leibniz notices that it is one of the ways of enriching a language, especially when the loan-words come from the same linguistic family. A thorough historical study of these expressions would permit the reconstruction of the source of Germanic languages⁴⁴. Another way of adjusting the language to new needs is creation of new words or conferring new meanings to existing ones. Acceptance of newborn expressions by a wide circle of users depends on – according to Leibniz – ‘blind luck’⁴⁵. It appears that the author is conscious that the language is governed by its own laws and it is possible to form it by propagating certain patterns of linguistic behavior and not by administrative actions.

1.3.5. Literature in the first place provides models of such behavior. Leibniz spots exceptional role of poetry and sets certain norms of poetic language. And so poetic language should steer clear of foreign expressions and words of unsound origin should be recognized German. Their orthography should be standardized and adjusted to German orthography⁴⁶. Leibniz quotes here the example of Martin Opitz, who outlined some theoretical instructions for German poetry and who as one of the first undertook actions in favor of rebirth of national literature. Leibniz highlights an urgent need to spread such models, encouraging all who write in German to a productive attitude towards their own language⁴⁷.

The program of repair should comprise all applications of a language. Leibniz as the fervent adherent of public education, addressed scholars to present the results of their studies in their mother tongue and to undertake translations of writings of eminent authors. The nation – in his opinion – was too long kept away from knowledge. Real scientists should not fear the language of their nation, mostly because the more accessible their knowledge is the more witnesses of their grandeur. A well developed language, like a well polished glass, improves the sharpness of thought and gives mind a lucid clarity⁴⁸.

⁴³ UG, § 82, 83, 85, 89, 92.

⁴⁴ UG, § 67–72.

⁴⁵ UG, § 76.

⁴⁶ UG, § 95, 96.

⁴⁷ UG, § 111.

⁴⁸ See M. Ornstein, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

Realization of this program ought to be assisted by organized institutional actions. Leibniz the enthusiast of the idea of scientific societies, ‘academic movement’ that spread over 17th century Europe, led to creation in 1700 of the Science Academy in Berlin, the institution modeled upon the Royal Society and French Académie Française. One of its statutory goals was consolidation of ‘fame, prosperity and significance of German nation, erudition and language’. Even though creation of the Academy was Leibniz’s personal success, still his ambitions were greater. The public access to knowledge would be guaranteed – in his view – by scientific societies only – modern centers of research and popularizing work, that should be created in various cities belonging to the Empire and coordinated by the Academy⁴⁹.

1.3.6. It is difficult to underestimate Leibniz’s contribution to the rebirth of the cultural integrity of German nation, the source of which was the language reflecting both its power and its decline. Paul Hazard wrote ‘*the theory of Racial superiority had not yet come to the fore. The profound significance of the expressions ‘native land’ had not been fully gauged. No notion had been formed as yet of the dynamic potentialities of the idea of nationality*’⁵⁰, but the value of the most important binder which for people forming a society is language became visible. If we put aside Leibniz’s arguments concerning the uncommon philosophical mission and paradisiacal origins of German the *Unvorgreifliche Gedanken* appear to be a universal treatise of history and culture of a nation in a perspective of the history of its language. Writing about the intellectual potential of his nation Leibniz informs the lecturers that it is initiated through language. The improvement of minds demands continuous improvement of the language since language is the mind’s reflection and renders best creative possibilities of its users. Moreover it allows to recreate their aesthetic tastes, customs and character.

Leibniz was not privileged to rejoice at the reach of the influence of his thoughts, *Unvorgreifliche Gedanken...* were published only posthumously, but it did not take one century for Kant, Goethe or Schiller to prove the admirable power hidden in their language. Johann Gottfried Herder, one of the most eminent representatives of the German Enlightenment, referring to Leibnizian legacy wrote that the most beautiful attempt to explore the history and to characterize the diversity of human intellect and heart would

⁴⁹ Ibidem, p. 195.

⁵⁰ P. Hazard, op. cit., p. 443.

Halina Świączkowska

be *philosophical comparison of languages*, for in each of them intellect and character of a given nation is reflected. Finally the most valuable *architectonics of human notions, incomparable logic, and common sense metaphysics* would emerge. Laurel of victory is not yet awarded and another Leibniz will be honored when the right moment comes⁵¹.

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⁵¹ http://www.textlog.de/herder_menschheit.html, <http://www.odysseetheater.com/goethe/herder/ideen.html>