

ПРОБЛЕМА НАЦІОНАЛЬНОЇ ІДЕНТИЧНОСТІ В КОНТЕКСТІ ПОЛІЛОГУ КУЛЬТУР

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LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND YUNUS EMRE INSTITUTES: A NEW TYPE OF DIPLOMACY

Abstract:

Language is one of the core elements that countries build up their cultures on and is a very significant tool to provide insight for the nature of their way of life. Since language has strong relation with culture, common definition on culture describes it as: “shared beliefs, values and behaviors of a social group”. It’s clear to see that language and culture are two core elements for understanding and defining relations with a country. Until the dissolution of USSR, world system was consisting of bipolar nature which in effect almost for 40 years. And during those so called bipolar world years, relationship definition between states described on bloc politics and most importantly on hard power elements. However, after the end of ‘Cold War’ era, definition of the relationships got into change; countries started to create new destinations all around the world. For doing so, ‘cultural centers’ (like Goethe Institute, British Council, Confucius Institute etc.) played a crucial role for introducing their language and culture towards to foreign audiences. Most importantly, thanks to ‘Cultural Diplomacy’ concept, this type of introduction recognized as exportation of a country’s positive image towards international area. Yunus Emre Institutes, working on this manner all around the world; introducing Turkish language, art and culture towards to foreign audiences, teaching Turkish language and providing insight about Turkish art and culture is quite important for exporting Turkey’s positive image. In other words, Yunus Emre Institutes carrying on activities under the Turkey’s cultural diplomacy approach. In this paper, its aimed to explain ‘Cultural Diplomacy’ concept with Language and Culture point of view through Yunus Emre Institutes that

now acknowledged as one of the main tools for Turkish diplomacy understanding.

Key Words: Cultural Diplomacy, Soft Power, Language, Culture, Yunus Emre Institutes.

LANGUAGE, IDENTITY AND CULTURE: NEW TOOLS IN FOREIGN POLICY

During pre-1990s, politics had been implemented as a single faceted structure: constructed on political ideology and most of all, aligned with dedicated bloc's definition of identity. Those two points; political ideology and bloc's identity were the main stones for a state's definition of self-expression towards to World. Furthermore, countries interaction with each other also effected with this strict bloc-based definition too; hence, Mr. Churchill's so called "iron curtain"¹ term defined the division of Europe (and World) with bloc politics. However, dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) removed the strict politics of blocs for West and East, and enabled communication and interaction between states that had been lost contact for almost more than five decades. During this new introduction of newly independent states and rest of the vice versa processes; identity, language and culture played a crucial role for both sides. Therefore, it can be said that identity, language and culture concepts in International Relations have become more focus oriented at the end of Cold War. With the dissolution of USSR in early 1990s, while international system got into transition due to shift of power; ideology-based politics weakened and value, culture and identity prioritizing approaches aroused.²

Hence, according to this "language, identity and culture" based approaches aroused in various regions such as: Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), BRICS, Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and many different others. Nonetheless, thanks to the gaining high importance of language, identity and culture in international politics; new definitions for regions are also being made. Undoubtedly, one of the most recent and

¹ For details, please check: "Iron Curtain", Britannica, (Access), <https://www.britannica.com/event/Iron-Curtain>, 20.02.2018.

²Alexander Wendt, **Social Theory of International Relations**, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003.

newest re definition of a geographic region in terms of international politics in the Central Asia region known as the Turkic World. It is the concept that mainly implies six independent Turkish speaking Turkic states namely as; Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. As it can be noted from the explanation, with 1990s, World politics has been changed into a new way in which self-expression has a vital importance.³ Therefore, countries started to focus more on exporting language, identity and culture in various ways.

In literature, there is a vast amount of variety definitions of identity. A definition describes identity as a term that defines an individual or an object due to his/her/its uniqueness.⁴ Another view implies that identity term is heavily related with socio-psychology that refers a process of relations that an actor gets in touch with it's others; and in this process, definition of idea images and differentiate insight.⁵ One another view describes identity as a being's sense of belonging.⁶ All beside to those definitions; as Wu suggests, if one thinks of identity as being concerned with either belonging to or not belonging to a group, since it is shared by a group, its needed to be considered culture as something that differentiates people from one another.⁷

On the other hand, culture concept has many definitions and discussions, such as it being a set of shared norms, beliefs, and collective thoughts. Knowledge of how to belong to a group is what culture represents or suggests, culture is "the norms, attitudes, values and beliefs" that individuals hold and share within a group.⁸ Culture is "public" because its meanings are shared.⁹ Meanings are "inherited" and expressed in various "symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward

³ Erman Akıllı, **Türkiye'de Devlet Kimliği ve Dış Politika**, Nobel Yayınevi, 2nd Edition, Ankara, 2016.

⁴Şaban H. Çalıř, "Ulus, Devlet ve Kimlik Labirentinde Türk Dış Politikası", **Liberal Düşünce Dergisi**, Cilt 4, Sayı 13, Ankara, 1999, s. 9.

⁵Yücel Bozdağhođlu, **Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach**, New York-London, Routledge, 2003, s. 22.

⁶Atilla Eralp, "Soğuk Savaştan Günümüze Türkiye-Avrupa Birliği İlişkileri", (ed.) Atilla Eralp, **Türkiye ve Avrupa: Batılılaşma, Kalkınma, Demokrasi**, İmge Yayınları, İstanbul, 1997, s. 19.

⁷Chao-Jung Wu, Look Who's Talking: Language Choices and Culture of Learning in UK Chinese Classrooms. **Language and Education**, 20 (1), 2006, p. 62.

⁸Wu, *ibid*, p. 62

⁹Clifford Geertz, **The Interpretation of Cultures**, New York: Basic Books, 1973.

life”.¹⁰ Communities acquire similar views about topics and the world. These “cultural” views and behaviors are “solidified” over time which makes it seemingly like “natural behavior”¹¹ which becomes internalized through socialization.

Definition of the Concept: Cultural Diplomacy

Culture is on a higher plain than institutions, values, or efforts to secure a greater say in international affairs and to play a greater role in shaping World discourse in so far it imbues all these things and many beyond.¹² If one considers Soft Power concept as a body of a tree; branches of the tree should be Cultural Diplomacy, Public Diplomacy, Foreign Aids, Nation Branding and Digital Diplomacy. All these alt concepts are related to the Soft Power concept. Joseph Nye, who coined the Soft Power concept into International Relations literature with his famous book “Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power”, explains “The ability to persuade through culture, values and ideas, as opposed to ‘hard power’, which conquers or coerces through military might”.¹³

Cultural Diplomacy can be described as course of actions, which are based on and utilize the exchange of ideas, values, traditions and other aspects of culture or identity. Through this exchange, relationships between states could be strengthen, socio cultural cooperation between states may be enhanced or mutual national interests could be promoted. Cultural Diplomacy can be practiced by either the public sector, private sector or civil society.¹⁴

Another description of Cultural diplomacy as following is; “*Cultural diplomacy represents a facet of diplomacy that has not been utilized completely in building better relationships and although it could serve as a linking bridge toward better relations...*”¹⁵ According to another definition of Cultural Diplomacy; “*it is an actor's attempt to manage*

¹⁰ Geertz, *ibid*, p. 89.

¹¹ Claire Kramsch, **Language and Culture**, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, p.7.

¹² Guozuo Zhang, **Research Outline for China's Cultural Soft Power**, Springer, 2017, p.44.

¹³ Joseph S. Nye, **Bound To Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power**, Basic Books, New York, 1990.

¹⁴ Akilli, p. 153-154.

¹⁵ Sofia Kitsou, “The Power of Culture in Diplomacy: The Case of U.S. Cultural Diplomacy in France and Germany,” Ionian University, p. 21. (Accessed at: <http://www.exchangediplomacy.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/3.-Sofia-Kitsou-The-Power-of-Culture-in-Diplomacy-The-Case-of-U.S.-Cultural-Diplomacy-in-France-and-Germany.pdf>, 16.03.2013)

international relations by transferring its cultural resources and achievements abroad.” The underlying assumption is that the political interaction will be easier between those who are close to each other in cultural terms. Because of that, the scope of the term is hard to be determined correctly.¹⁶ Generally speaking, it is accepted that cultural diplomacy owned by a state is mostly related to that state’s government.¹⁷ It is said that cultural diplomacy is one the most important instrument to advertise positive image facilitating diplomatic affairs.¹⁸ Cultural diplomacy, according to another definition; is the strategy of developing mutual understanding between states through human communication and exchange as a concept of international relations.¹⁹

Apart from that, Cultural Diplomacy is defined as a behavior introducing cultural advantage to audiences.²⁰ In this context, the importance of the message and the perception that is intended to transfer to audiences are revealed. So, having the potential to awaken curiosity and interest to the targeted state, messages given to audiences will in the future cause a barrier for a potential prejudice to targeted state.²¹ More precisely, it is easy for a country you can influence with your cultural values to make it easy to accept the legitimacy of your foreign policy decisions.

As Sancar emphasizes that the power of directing the masses without resorting to crude powers and persuading them to certain issues has risen in “language”.²² In this context, countries using the Cultural Diplomacy instrument have two main elements on which they stand; namely language and education. It is much easier for a country to be effective in the target country or countries where it spreads its own language compared to other countries. On the other hand, education is used as a

¹⁶“Kültürel Diplomasi”, Uluslararası İlişkiler Sözlüğü, (Ed.) Faruk Sönmezoğlu, Hazırlayanlar: Deniz Ülke Arıboğan, Gülden Ayman, Beril Dedeoğlu, 4. Basım, İstanbul, Der Yayınları, 2010, p. 438.

¹⁷Gaye Aslı Sancar, Kamu Diplomasisi ve Uluslararası Halkla İlişkiler, Beta Yayınları, İstanbul, 2012, p. 169.

¹⁸Harry Hillman Chartrand “International Cultural Affairs: A 14 Country Survey”, Journal of Arts Management, Law and Society 22, Number: 2, 1992, p. 134.

¹⁹Fırat Purtaş, “Kültürel Diplomasi ve Türksöy, Medeniyet ve Kültür Araştırmaları Merkezi. (Accessed at: <http://mekam.org/mekam/kulturel-diplomasi-ve-turksöy>, 21.02.2013)

²⁰Ali Fisher, “Four Seasons in One Day: The Crowded House of Public Diplomacy in the UK”, (ed.) Philip Taylor ve Nancy Snow, Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy, Routledge, New York, 2009, pp. 253-254.

²¹Sancar, *ibid*, p. 170.

²²Sancar, *ibid*, p. 170.

means of supplementing the language. Beyond the classical meaning of education, areas of arts and culture are also implemented into the definition. Countries that make the most use of cultural diplomacy are former colonialists; or, countries those of which can afford such activities in terms of their foreign policy goals.²³

Implementers of the Cultural Diplomacy Concept

It can be shown as an example of how to use Cultural Diplomacy in terms of language and education. For France, Cultural Diplomacy is a way of implementing her policies to other states under the name of “the Francophone” by establishing international school networks and French Culture education centres.²⁴

Cultural Diplomacy foresees the promotion of written works (books), television and radio programs, art exhibitions and concerts as well as language. The purpose here is to ensure people of a state to establish ‘acquainted’ to another country in terms of culture and language it has, and try to establish positive feelings towards that country.²⁵ It is foreseen that the countries that are “acquainted” culturally in the spirit of Cultural Diplomacy will bring political interaction and communication among them as a natural extension of this acquaintance. It is thought that among the “acquaintance” countries, the legitimacy of the foreign policy action of one of the countries in question will be recognized and if necessary supported by the other country.²⁶

However, since the interaction will be bilateral, the items to be used in the Cultural Diploma must be bilateral; in fact, academic and cultural exchange programs are examples of this vision.²⁷

A generally accepted understanding that the US is the most effective country in the world benefiting Cultural Diplomacy as a foreign policy instrument. International educational and cultural exchanges, sponsored by the United States, use information in an important way.²⁸ However, in

²³“Kültürel Diplomasi”, *ibid*, pp. 438-439.

²⁴Nicholas Cull, **The Cold War and the United States Information Agency**, Cambridge University Press, 3. Basım, New York, 2010, p. 33.

²⁵Firat Purtaş, “Cultural Diplomacy Initiatives of Turkic Republics”, **Perceptions**, Spring 2017, Volume XXII – No: 1, pp.91.

²⁶Purtaş, *ibid*, p. 93.

²⁷Helena Kane Finn, “Public Diplomacy: Effective Strategies for the Future”, **Council on Foreign Relations**, (Accessed), <http://www.cfr.org/world/public-diplomacy-effective-strategies-future/p5076>, 16.02.2018.

²⁸Nancy Snow, “Valuing Exchange of Persons in Public Diplomacy”, (ed.) Philip Taylor ve Nancy Snow, **Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy**, Routledge, New York, 2009, p. 239.

the American Cultural Diplomacy reports, the other dimensions of thought, knowledge, art, and culture are defined as the names given to all of the changes that are made to feed and grow mutual understanding among states and their peoples.

Arkansas Senator William Fulbright spoke to the US Congress in 1945, referring to "encouraging international goodwill through student exchange programs in education, culture and science". Educational and cultural exchanges that the US government sponsored gained momentum in 1961 by the "Law on Mutual Educational and Cultural Change", also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. With this Act, support for American studies outside of the United States, presentation of US schools and universities were formalized. ²⁹

The Fulbright Scholarship Program, which many students and academics around the world have benefited through the exchange, explains their mission as follows: "*The Fulbright Program is the United States Government's most prestigious grant program. The U.S. Congress created the Fulbright Program in 1946, immediately after World War II, to foster mutual understanding among nations through educational and cultural exchanges. Senator J. William Fulbright, the sponsor of the legislation, saw this legislation as a step toward building an alternative to armed conflict. The Fulbright Program enables U.S. students and artists to benefit from unique resources in every corner of the world and allows students, teachers, and academics from all over the world to study in the U.S.A. The Fulbright Program provides individuals with the chance to gain international competence in an increasingly interdependent world.*"³⁰

If one looks at the other examples of Cultural Diplomacy, the UK is the country that uses Cultural Diplomacy most effectively after the United States. England conducts its Cultural Diplomacy through the British Council centres. The British Council was established in 1934 to ensure that the way of life and ideas of the British people are better known abroad and to coordinate the strengthening of common cultural traditions with the colonies. The main aim of the British Council is to increase the attractiveness of the UK by building relationships between people in the

²⁹ Purtaş, *ibid*, p. 98.

³⁰ About Fulbright Programme, (Access), <http://www.fulbright.org.tr/tr/fulbright-programi>, 16.03.2013.

UK and people in other countries on the basis of mutual benefits.³¹ In line with this, every year thousands of people, by contacting the UK, participate art and education activities for the purpose of learning British Culture and language. As a result, it seems that Britain has been effectively using the Cultural Diplomas for seventy-nine years.

The most important tool that Germany uses in its Cultural Diplomacy is the Goethe Institut (Goethe Institute). The Goethe Institut, Germany's most effective instrument of cultural activities around the world, was established to teach German to the foreigners. It was founded in 1951 in the name of "refreshing" the image of the international public opinion so that Germany's relations with her enemies in the World War II could be re-established in the ground of good faith and Germany could re-enter into good relations with her neighbours. As it is mentioned in the above lines, the institution, which was set up to teach German to foreigners, is now carrying out its activities in order to encourage understanding and dialogue among cultures and peoples in harmony with other soft power elements of the German Government.³²

The institution, however, is organizing various aspects of the German government's foreign culture and education policy. The Goethe Institut has three main objectives to convey the German image to the entire world public; (1) to conduct German language education abroad, (2) to encourage international cultural co-operation, and (3) to increase Germany's attractiveness by providing information on German culture, society and politics.³³

The Japan Foundation was established in 1972 as Japan's cultural diplomacy tool. The foundation was established to cooperate with international agencies such as UNESCO. In 1987, the "Japanese Exchange and Teaching Program" was initiated under both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of National Education. The program, which serves about thirty thousand participants from forty different countries since its establishment, implements the logic of working in a similar way to the Fulbright Program of the USA.³⁴

³¹Sancar, *ibid*, p. 175.

³²Oliver Zöllner, "German Public Diplomacy: The Dialogue of Cultures", (ed.) Philip Taylor ve Nancy Snow, **Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy**, Routledge, New York, 2009, pp. 264-265.

³³Tatiana Lanishina, "The Goethe Institute and Soft Power", **International Organisations Research Journal**, vol. 10. No. 1, 2015, pp.86-88.

³⁴Sancar, *ibid*, p. 176.

Turkish Cultural Diplomacy: Yunus Emre Institutes

The Yunus Emre Institute, established under the Yunus Emre Foundation, carries out education and training activities and scientific research and applications in order to realize its aims stated in its law. The Institute conducts research in order to better introduce and teach Turkish culture, history, language and literature in the direction of its institutional aims. It cooperates with different institutions to support scientific studies and to carry out activities aimed to publicize the results through various publications. The Yunus Emre Institute aims to contribute to the training of qualified academicians and researchers in Turkish language, history, culture, art and music. Yunus Emre Institute also aims to implement education and training programs with certificate programs. By means of Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Centers (YETCC) that are the products of Yunus Emre Institute, the Institute has been working to present the Turkish language, Turkish culture, Turkish art and Turkish history across the World.³⁵

While scientific projects, cultural activities and courses are being carried out in order to promote Turkey's popularity, on the other hand, it is aimed to improve cultural interaction and consolidate friendship between Turkey and other countries. Thanks to the Turkish language courses that will be conducted in YETCC, Turkish language learning opportunities are provided for those who want to learn Turkish as a foreign language. Turkish citizens in the countries concerned also will have the opportunity to get to know more closely their language and they will be able to preserve cultural ties with Turkey.³⁶ The essence of YETKM's activities is -by grasping the heart of historical and cultural deepness in the Turkic spoken countries- to revitalized the standing heart by the collapse of the Ottoman Empire; same as TİKA's.

In this context, YETCCs started to work in the Balkans in the first place, then moved to the Middle East. It started activities by organizing Turkish teaching courses and cultural events. A large number of YETCCs have been opened in the Balkans, in Albania (Tirana and Shkodra), Bosnia and Herzegovina (Sarajevo and Foyntsa), Kosovo (İpek, Pristina

³⁵ Şeref Ateş, Şaban Köktürk, Melih Barut (ed.) **Kültürel Diplomaside Sınırların Dışında Düşünmek**, Yunus Emre Enstitüsü Kültürel Diplomasi Akademisi Yayınları, İstanbul, 2016.

³⁶ Yunus Emre Enstitüsü. (Access),

http://yunusemreenstitusu.org/turkiye/index.php?lang=tr&page=68&anlIcat_1=0&anlIitm_1=1, 14.02.2018

and Prizren), Macedonia (Skopje) and Romania (Bucharest and Constance), Podgoritsa, Zagreb, Komrat; in Central Asia in Kazakhstan (Astana), Karachi, Kazan, Lahor, Moscow, Kabul; in the Caucasus in Georgia (Tbilisi) and Azerbaijan (Baku); in Europe, Belgium (Brussels), Holland (Amsterdam), Germany (Berlin and Köln), Austria (Vienna), Poland (Warsaw), Italy (Rome), France (Paris), Hungary (Budapest), United Kingdom (London) and Ukraine (Kiev); in the Middle East, Lebanon (Beirut), Egypt (Cairo and Alexandria), Jordan (Amman), Palestine (Jerusalem) and Iran (Tehran); TRNC (Lefkoşa) in the Mediterranean; in the Far East in Japan (Tokyo), Kuala Lumpur and North America (Washington DC).³⁷

Yunus Emre Institute has taught Turkish to more than 99 thousand people in 40 countries and has introduced Turkish culture since its establishment in 2009. The interest towards Yunus Emre Culture Centers that aims to introduce Turkish culture and language to the world in 54 centers in 43 countries, steadily increases. Henceforth, in 2018 new 12 centers are expected to be opened in various regions around the globe. Yunus Emre Cultural Centers are providing many courses in extend of a diplomacy approach to create close relations with local people. Such as in Kiev, Yunus Emre Cultural Center, that founded in 2017, provides free Turkish courses to Ukrainian citizens besides promoting Turkish culture and arts. Yunus Emre Cultural Center will also step up cultural exchange and consolidate friendship between Turkey and Ukraine.³⁸

³⁷Yunus Emre Enstitüsü, Yunus Emre Türk Kültür Merkezleri. (Access): <http://yunusemreenstitusu.org/turkiye/index.php?lang=tr&page=53>, 14.02.2018.

³⁸“Yunus Emre Institute in Kiev to consolidate friendship between Turkey and Ukraine”, FTN News, (Access), <https://ftnnews.com/news-from-turkey/31238-yunus-emre-institute-in-kiev-to-consolidate-friendship-between-turkey-and-ukraine.html>, 28.02.2018.