

Student participation in preserving non-material cultural goods

The Republic of Croatia is a country which is rich in non-material cultural goods. Over the past few years, we have witnessed a growing awareness of a necessity for an efficient protection and conservation system of national cultural goods. Non-material cultural goods can be various forms of spiritual creation conveyed in a form of an oral history like languages, dialects, accents and toponymy. Encouraged by the importance of the Croatian non-material cultural goods, in the frame of faculty courses Slavonian Dialect and Native Idiom, we engaged students, future Masters of Teacher Education, in the process of preserving Croatian dialects, especially Slavonian dialect. The future teachers are the best protectors and promoters of the regional archaic vernaculars.

1. Non-material cultural goods

1.1. The definition

Non-material cultural goods, together with material cultural goods, make cultural heritage of a nation, thus also of the whole humanity in its variety and specificity. They are the basis of a nation's cultural identity, with a due respect for cultural heritage of ethnic diversity. Non-material cultural goods represent cultural expressions that are significant for the specific place and have historian, artistic, ethnographic, sociological, anthropological, linguistic, scientific and literary value. They also include preserving different forms of spiritual creation in music, dance, rituals and customs, conveyed in a form of an oral history. Non-material cultural goods include oral tradition and expressions, beliefs, knowledge, skills, rituals, festive events, performing arts, traditional craftsmanship, folklore and other forms of spiritual creation. Non-material cultural goods are languages, dialects, accents, toponymy, processions, dances, ceremonies and others. They provide a strong feeling of continuity for a nation and constantly change and evolve, being enriched by each new generation. It is important to safeguard them because they encourage social cohesion and sense of responsibility.

1.2. Preserving non-material cultural goods in the world

There are many ways of preserving and protecting non-material cultural goods, but the most important is transmission and communication of knowledge and skills to new generations. Preserving non-material cultural goods includes identification, documentation, research, enhancement and transmission through formal and non-formal education. To be preserved, non-material cultural good must be important to its community and must include its active participating in protection and preserving. In preserving, a major role have national Ministries of Culture. The

organization that especially takes care of non-material cultural goods at the national and international level is UNESCO, which issued in 2003 the *Convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage*. The *Convention*, besides the spiritual creation, in non-material cultural goods includes objects, artifacts and places connected with it. 142 States Parties obliged by this Convention to take measures of precaution for non-material cultural heritage present on their territory, which include non-material cultural goods enhancement, establishing suitable institutions for its protection; promotion and support for scientific, technical and artistic research, access ensuring and administrating non-material cultural goods, founding educational and information programmes for broader population, especially for the youth; non-formal knowledge transmission, raising the awareness about dangers that threat non-material cultural goods and including the whole community in its preserving and transmission. The protection is financed by the fund, in which the State Parties and donators participate. UNESCO provides help for its States Parties with staff education, creating the infrastructure needed, providing professional staff, necessary equipment and financial and technical support. The States Parties assist each other in preserving non-material cultural goods through different forums, seminars and symposiums in order to educate professional staff and other people to whom the preserving is important and to raise the awareness of its value. To be declared as protected, non-material cultural good must be suggested as the one and must pass the criterion of importance to its community.

1.3. UNESCO's Lists of non-material cultural goods

There are two UNESCO's lists concerning preserving non-material cultural goods, that are the *Representative list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity* and the *List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding* because it is threatened by extinction. Some of the most famous protected non-material cultural goods placed on the *Representative list* are urban popular song of Portugal named Fado; Mariachi, string music, song and trumpet in Mexico; the Tango in Argentina and Uruguay; Chinese calligraphy; the tradition of Vedic Chanting in India and others. In our nearer European surrounding on the *Representative list* are enlisted Ride of the Kings in the south-east of the Czech Republic, Táncház method: a Hungarian model for the transmission of intangible cultural heritage; the Canto a tenore, Sardinian Pastoral Songs in Italy; a programme of cultivating ludodiversity: safeguarding traditional games in Flanders in Belgium and others. Special importance has Táncház method, which best reflects aims and principles of the *Convention*. Táncház method or the “dance-house“ is a model of teaching folk dance and music, which combines traditional forms of acquisition and modern pedagogical methods. Participants acquire dance knowledge with the help of the more experienced members or traditional bearers through direct observation and imitation, accompanied by live music and using their own creativity in order to develop competence and dancing ability. Besides dancing, Táncház method comprises singing lessons, handcraft production and ethnographic presentations. It

is used in art schools and covers all levels of education. The aim is to create a recreational activity based on the cultural value, community bonding, entertainment and education. There is also the annual National Táncház Festival and Fair that gathers the bearers and enthusiasts and offers plenty of workshops. This method can be applied to non-material cultural goods' preserving and transmission of every community through hands-on acquisition and supporting the diversity.

In the Republic of Croatia on the *Representative list* are Nijemo kolo, silent circle dance of the Dalmatian hinterland; Bećarac singing and playing from Eastern Croatia; Annual carnival bell ringers' pageant from the Kastav area; The festivity of Saint Blaise, the patron of Dubrovnik; Lacemaking; Traditional manufacturing of children's wooden toys in Hrvatsko Zagorje; The Sinjska alka, a knights' tournament in Sinj; Gingerbread craft from Northern Croatia; Spring procession of Ljelje/Kraljice (queens) from Gorjani; Procession Za Krizen ("following the cross") on the island of Hvar and Two-part singing and playing in the Istrian scale, while on the *List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding* is Ojkanje singing, the oldest kind of singing in Croatia. About the importance of the cultural diversity and mutual cultural respect testifies the *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* and the *Convention on the Protection and the Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* issued also by UNESCO.

1.4 Preserving non-material cultural goods in Croatia

The Republic of Croatia also protects and preserves its non-material cultural goods by inscribing them in the Register following the Act of protection and preservation of cultural goods. The status of a cultural good is determined by the resolution of the Ministry of Culture based on the expert evaluation and Non-material cultural heritage committee's proposal. People who suggest the inscription of cultural goods are tradition bearers, local community and government, experts and scientists from local and national institutions. In the Register are inscribed following non-material cultural goods: the vernacular of Bednja, Glagolitic singing, vernacular of the island of Susak, the vernacular of Posavina village Siče, the vernacular of Stari Perkovci, kajkavski donjosutlanski dialect, klapa singing, the knight game moreška from the island of Korčula, preparation of the traditional Slavonian kulen, traditional preparation of cheese from the island of Pag, playing the bagpipes and craftsmanship of the Eastern and Central Croatia, embroidery craftsmanship with golden thread, falconry, the vernacular of Žminj and other non-material cultural goods.

1.5 Student linguistic research at the Faculty of Teacher Education in Osijek

From above mentioned it is obvious that the Republic of Croatia abounds with non-material cultural goods. It has been done a lot for its preservation; societies for tradition nurturing have been founded, especially at the local level, many longlasting research and documentations have been conducted, knowledge and skills have been transmitted to new generations. At the same time demographic

changes and the decreasing of the number of inhabitants in some areas threaten non-material cultural goods. The Faculty of Teacher Education at the University of Josip Juraj Strossmayer in Osijek recognized the importance of preserving non-material cultural goods, especially different dialects and vernaculars in the Republic of Croatia that are studied in the frame of faculty courses Slavonian Dialect and Native Idiom. As mentioned before, transmission of knowledge and skills to new generations is very important for preserving non-material cultural goods. Faculty of Teacher Education, especially its Dislocated graduate program in teacher training in Slavonski Brod, included its students in active and systematic research and study of the archaic vernaculars of their surrounding. The research consisted of fieldwork in places where the vernaculars are spoken; interview with native speakers and sound recording in a nice atmosphere of a mutual respect and dialogue. After collecting the data, students processed the data and carefully listened to sound recordings for several times in order to recognize, define and document vernacular properties. The research of vernacular properties included fonology, morphology, syntax, word formation, vocabulary and accentual system of the researched archaic vernacular. Except the importance of research results that have enormous impact on preserving Slavonian vernaculars, thus on the preserving non-material cultural goods of the Republic of Croatia as well, the experience that enriched students in contact with tradition was priceless for strengthening the feeling of respect, understanding and love for community, culture, nation. The research enabled students to better understand their community, and the work that was created as the result of the research is its pride and joy that reflects their grandmothers and grandfathers' tradition. The linguistic value of the research is also important because dialects and vernaculars make a language wealth, and studying them helps in their enrichment and enhancement. The quality and importance of such research is recognized, which can be seen from the Rector's prize that students won for the Brodski Stupnik vernacular research. These future teachers will be knowledge and skills carriers to future generations and that is why they have a multiple significance in their community. They are the best protectors and promoters of the archaic vernaculars of their homeland. It is also praiseworthy that the research of the vernaculars of Stari Perkovci and Siče helped in their preserving because these vernaculars are now protected and are enlisted in the Register of the non-material cultural goods of the Republic of Croatia. It would all not exist if the students did not describe previously mentioned protected vernaculars in detail using the fieldwork like real linguists. Students went in groups on the fieldwork and taped native speakers, which helped them later on when they had to describe the vernacular at all linguistic levels. Before the fieldwork, they had to ensure the necessary conditions to make the taping rational. In consultation with the locals, they found native speakers, both men and women. In selection of female informants, it was important that the women were truly from that place, and that they did not come there by marrying because in that case they would not be suitable for the research. It was also very important that those people have a good speech apparatus and are coherent in their presentation. When students

fulfilled all the conditions necessary, they could approach to conversation with native speakers. Conversation topics imposed themselves logically. The most interesting topics were about childhood, youth, customs, jobs, way of life, food, drink... After hours of conversation, students had enough material for the linguistic analysis. They were divided into groups according to these fields: PHONOLOGY, MORPHOLOGY, SYNTAX, WORD FORMATION, LEXICOLOGY AND ACCENTS. After the linguistic analysis of the each linguistic field, they consolidated the entire linguistic analyses in a whole and this way students could approach to vernaculars preserving as non-material cultural goods.

1.6 Other aspects of non-material cultural goods

Besides important pedagogical, linguistic and sociological aspect of the non-material cultural goods, its economic aspect is more and more taken into consideration. Non-material cultural goods are being more often included in tourist offers and one of the Ministry of Culture's aims is its enhancement through the realization of the various projects. In raising the awareness about the importance of non-material cultural goods, as well as in preserving and informing the publicity, important role has information technology. Information technology is used to make non-material cultural goods more visible, especially for younger generations. Croatian Ministry of Culture has developed cultural heritage information system named TEUTA used for works on protection and preservation of cultural heritage. It enables documentation review of the cultural heritage, but for now it is open for the experts only. Good organization of the cultural goods, high level of processing and availability are more and more wanted in order to enable better usage of cultural goods for economy development.

1.7 Importance of non-material cultural goods

Human is still the most important factor responsible for tradition preserving, he/she is the only one who can feel the beauty and sense of identity, which non-material cultural goods provide. Therefore, it is important that people are involved in its protection and transmission to new generations as active members of the society. Non-material cultural goods cause the feeling of responsibility and social cohesion that helps an individual to feel as a part of a community and a society in general. By identifying and emphasizing non-material cultural goods, we encourage positive feelings of family life and life in a community. By understanding and stressing creativity and individuality of our own community, we understand better creativity and individuality of others, and precisely the variety wealth is the precondition for intercultural respect and dialogue. Non-material cultural goods connect our history with our presence and future. They are traditional, contemporary and living at the same time. In what level will certain vernacular live, depends on all of us, and our students (future teachers) recognized that value and engaged themselves in the battle for the most precious thing, and that is maternal native vernacular.

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