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KALBA IR IDENTITETAS

SPROG OG IDENTITET

LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY

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Loreta Vaicekauskienė:

English Borrowings and Social Identity in Lithuania

INTRODUCTION

The new stage of the global influence of English language which started in the 1990s has impacted methodological variety of the research on this topic. Together with traditional research on the adaptation of traditional phonetic, morphologic and semantic English borrowings, new studies analysing linguistic globalization from the perspective of language policy and works on the influence of English language on certain domains of language usage started to emerge. This research is also complemented by one of the most recent views by which the English language is seen as a part of social identity.

The formation and expression of identity is not a new topic of study/research topic, but today the globalization of the world and the dominance of the stronger culture allow us to talk about the English language as one of the indicators of identity in contemporary society or in its particular groups.

Identity as a social phenomenon can be analysed from two perspectives: 1) as a self-perception or self-expression of a certain social group different from others and 2) as an attitude of society towards a different social group (Tajfel 1978: 7; cited from Quist 1999: 26). In sociological literature such groups are also called subcultures; they differ in certain attributes of the dominating culture, e.g., their looks, common interests and, of course, language. Moreover, dynamism is characteristic of identity and therefore the process by which it is formed (which is especially visible in the behaviour of new members seeking to assimilate into a group) can also be analysed.

This article examines the attitude(s) of Lithuanian society towards the language of two conditionally defined subcultures and does not involve the process of identity formation, but considers English borrowings as the indicator of already formed identity. The objective of the research is to relate the frequency of English borrowing to language-user-type.

The identity of certain social groups expressed by English borrowings has been noticed by some Lithuanian linguists and some minor studies

have been carried out, but practically, there is no in-depth Lithuanian research on this field (see also Talutyt 2003, Vaicekauskien 2004: 52-60).

This article presents a survey of language attitudes based on the theory of the social psychology of language²³). The main point of this linguistic branch is the assumption that attitudes towards a person are determined by his/her language, since his/her social status, personal characteristics, etc. are judged by his/her language. Like attitudes in general, language attitudes are traditionally considered to be comprised of three components: 1) *affective* (showing how a language user values language and what emotions it arouses in him/her); 2) *cognitive* (revealing what a language user knows and thinks about language, i.e. on what his/her values of language are based); and 3) *connotative* (expressed by the behaviour of a language user – the choice of or reaction to a certain language variety, i.e. the visible expression of values). Thus, the attitudes of a language user can be judged by what he/she knows, his/her values and behaviour. Although this classification has been criticized (for examples, see Eagly and Chaiken's criticism of the obscure differences between the components (Eagly, Chaiken 1993, according to Haugen 2002)), it is still used.

The research into language attitudes is carried out directly (conducting a poll and an interview) and indirectly (observing and conducting an experiment). It is thought that direct questioning helps to find out stereotypical, set and often officially accepted norms, and indirect questioning helps to reveal deeply hidden convictions or even what a language user may have not realized himself/herself. Therefore, this would be an argument for combining different methods because directly expressed attitudes do not always coincide with actual behaviour. It should also be noted that attitudes towards language (its varieties, etc.) are formed by and revealed in society by the status given to it, for example,

23) The roots of this linguistic branch are in psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and social philosophy. It was also influenced by anthropology, the ethnography of communication, and the mass media. The social psychology of language also deals with various aspects of linguistic communication and language usage, and personal and social identity. Language attitudes or attitudes towards language varieties and their users were started to be analysed in 1950s. One of the first and most famous experiments was the survey of the attitudes towards Canadian English and French speakers conducted by W. E. Lambert, R. C. Hodgson, R. C. Gardner and S. Fillenbaum (for more, see Lambert et al. 1960, Giles, Robinson 1990).

official language policy, mass media, and language chosen for the education system, etc. Therefore an analysis of the official attitude and of language policy in society would be another approach to researching language attitudes. However, whatever method is used to analyse language attitudes, respondents' opinions or reactions should always be evaluated very critically and according to the many other factors that inevitably influence the results of a survey, in other words, to the broader context of the situation (for more, see Giles et al. 1980; Ryan 1980; Ryan et al. 1982; Baker 1995).

Users of the new English borrowings have never received as much attention from the researchers of language attitudes as the members of bilingual (multilingual) societies, or the users of different language varieties (accent, sociolect, and register). Nonetheless some already existing results may be used.

It is known that mostly the urban population, especially the younger ones, are confronted with the English language and that they favour it. Registered according to gender and education, English is mostly favoured by men and people with a lower level of education (see Ljung 1988: 129-135; Jarvad 1995: 115-135; Vaicekauskien 1998; Heidemann Andersen 2004: 36). There are also facts which show that the youth subcultures of non-English societies that develop according to certain models of American subcultures consider English language an especially important feature of identity as it reflects values with which they want to identify themselves (Preisler 1999a, Preisler 1999b, Graedler, Johanson 1995).

Some surveys show that English borrowings in students' speech convey indirect information about their identity and that borrowings are especially used by group leaders who want to secure their superiority (Quist 1999: 24-25). An interesting experiment according to the classic indirect survey method created by W. E. Lambert and his colleagues (called *matched-guise*) was conducted in several schools in Denmark. Students were asked to listen to and evaluate the same text retold by 5 young men in their own words. The first and the last narrations were spoken by the same person whose narrations differed, since in one of them he deliberately used English words. The results of this experiment reveal that the user of English words is considered to be a more interesting, modern and younger person (Heidemann Andersen 2004: 181).

Method

The article presents the survey carried out in Vilnius in February–March 2005. Questionnaires were distributed and respondents were asked to read two texts and answer the questions about the authors of those texts. The traditional method of playing the text on the tape was not used because it would not have been possible to register the gender and, to some extent, the age of the speaker. In an attempt to divert the respondents' attention away from the purpose of the investigation, in the distributed questionnaires it was indicated that the information was needed by a student of sociology from Vilnius University who was writing a Master's thesis on "Civil Society and Social Changes in Lithuania"; thus, there was no direct focus on the language.

In the first part of the questionnaire, the cognitive component of attitudes was measured: respondents had to choose the correct answer from a few possible ones and answer what they thought the education, general social status (a child, a student, a working person, a retired person, or an unemployed person), family status, age (could be chosen from 5 different age groups: 15–24, 25–34, 35–44, 45–59, 60 and over), gender, and residence (city or province) of the author of a text were. This survey only analyses the answers about age, gender and residence.

The second part of the questionnaire was intended to measure the affective or evaluative component of an attitude. Respondents were asked to describe the author of the text: by assigning one of five indicated grades (the highest grade means the largest quantity of a personal characteristic), they had to evaluate the 14 given characteristics of the author of a text – intelligence, ambitiousness, honesty, reliability, generosity, humour, independence, wisdom, activity, skills, interest, appearance, youthfulness, and modernity. Just half of these characteristics are analysed in this article: intelligence, ambitiousness, independence, honesty, reliability, youthfulness, and modernity.

The above-mentioned characteristics are summarized in the research on the social psychology of language in different ways. For example, Lambert has singled out three categories: *competence*, *personal integrity* ("honesty", "reliability" and the like) and *attractiveness* ("friendship", "humour"). According to other authors, such characteristics are mainly divided into two basic categories: the stable *social status* (related to language "standardization", social prestige, because a higher status is usually associated with a standard, "civilized", and "prestigious" language) and varying *group solidarity* (it is mostly seen as the indicator

of the “liveliness” of a variety of a non-standard language and the “sociability”, “attractiveness” and “reliability” of a speaker), but they can also be divided into smaller categories (see Ryan et al. 1982, Bradac 1982, Edwards 1982).

At the end of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to indicate their own age, gender and education.

To sum it up, 113 questionnaires were filled out; during the survey all the respondents lived in Vilnius and their origin was not analysed separately. Since women usually are more active in surveys, this time more answers were also from female respondents – 72 women, 40 men; one respondent did not indicate personal data. Distributed according to age, the answers were as follows:

- a) 15–24: 34 answers
- b) 25–34: 16 answers
- c) 35–44: 24 answers
- d) 45–59: 30 answers
- e) 60+ : 8 answers
- f) Personal data not indicated: 1 answer.

As we can see, it was especially difficult to contact the oldest age group and therefore the number of their answers is the smallest. Generally speaking, it was noticed that older people were unwilling to participate in the survey; there were cases when people refused to fill in the questionnaire and were annoyed about the unclear content of the texts (it is interesting that the similar reaction of older people, who are provoked and annoyed by borrowings, has been noticed in other surveys; see Heidemann Andersen 2004: 32).

EVALUATED TEXTS

As it was mentioned, the respondents had to evaluate the authors of two texts. The material was collected from the Internet randomly entering different borrowings in *Google* in February 2005. The texts were compiled from extracts of different length and from different texts. Thus, unlike their components, the texts as a whole are not authentic because they were composed especially for this survey.

At first glance, it may seem that the texts are unnaturally full of borrowings, but this concentration of borrowings is necessary for the purpose of this survey. Moreover, it is thought that such a large number

of English words can be also found in authentic speech. Among borrowings there are older and newer, common words and product names. Most of them are morphologically adapted (they have Lithuanian endings mostly added without an apostrophe) and their spelling varies – both authentic and Lithuanized according to the pronunciation (for example *hakeriukas, e šop, pogo, pasvordas, membership, instalint, cool geimas, laifas, funky, hardrock, progressive, saundas, bad nails, party, very well*). One text is about IT and contains 114 words, and the other text is about music and consists of 178 words.

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

As was mentioned at the beginning of the article, the respondents were asked to evaluate the authors of the texts in many respects, but here only the results of the partial analysis which has been carried out so far are presented. The external features of the authors of the texts were analysed – guessing their age, gender and residence, and 7 internal characteristics, divided into 3 categories: “competence“, “sociability“, and “modernity“.

I. Guessable Information about the Authors of the Texts

I.1. Gender of the Author of a Text

The gender of the author of a text raised least doubts on the part of the respondents. The majority of them (94 %) think that the authors of both the texts are male (Table 1).

Table 1. Gender of the Author of a Text

IT	Music
Male – 94 %	Male – 94 %
Female – 5 %	Female – 4 %
Did not indicate – 1 %	Did not indicate – 2 %

Similar data can be found in other surveys: it is a known fact that there is a statistically marked difference between boys and girls being interested in computers and it is related to the influence of the English language

(see also Preisler 1999a: 156-172, Heidemann Andersen 2004: 105).

1.2. Age of the Author of a Text

Unlike the evaluation of the gender of the authors of the texts, the answers of the respondents about the age of the authors differ slightly. Although the majority of the respondents class the authors of both texts in the youngest age group (15-24), many of them think that the author of the text about music could be older (25-34). Actually, only a few think that the authors of the texts could be older than 35 (Table 2).

Table 2. Age of the Author of a Text

IT	Music
15-24 – 88 %	15-24 – 64 %
25-34 – 11 %	25-34 – 35 %
35-44 – 1 %	35-44 – 1 %

It is difficult to say to what extent the answers of the respondents were determined by the specification of the interests of the authors of the texts, and to what extent by the authors' language characteristics. Later it will be seen that the attitude towards the authors of the texts as young people can be gleaned by evaluating the author's linguistic competence and degree of social integration.

1.3. The Residence of the Author of the Text

Although the residence of the author of a text raised less doubts among the respondents than his age, the answers here also differed. According to the majority of the respondents, the authors of both texts are believed to be urban people (this is especially true about the subculture with common music interests); however, they could also live in a province (Table 3).

Table 3. Residence of the Author of the Text

IT	Music
City – 84 %	City – 92 %
Province – 15 %	Province – 7 %
Did not indicate – 1 %	Did not indicate – 1 %

The fact that more respondents believe that a young person who is more interested in IT than music is more likely to live in a province is probably related to the specification of these interests: interest in the Internet and relationships with fellow groups can be maintained at home, and the meeting places are much more relevant to music.

2. Guessable Characteristics of the Authors of the Texts

As was mentioned, the respondents were asked to describe the authors of the texts in many characteristics. In this research, three characteristics were chosen for the analysis: "competence", "sociality" and "modernity". *Competence* is analysed by evaluating intelligence, ambitiousness and independence, *sociality* by honesty and reliability, and *modernity* by youthfulness and being up-to-date.

2.1. Competence

Below are the averages of the evaluations of the characteristics showing the competence of the authors of the texts: *intelligence*, *ambitiousness*, and *independence*, and the overall average of the evaluations of every age group of the respondents and every characteristic (Table 4).

Table 4. *Competence of the Author of the Text*

IT		Music		
Age distribution	Average	Average	Age distribution	
Intelligent	15-24 - 1.52	1.49	2.13	15-24 - 2.20
	25-34 - 1.50			25-34 - 2.43
	35-44 - 1.54			35-44 - 2.00
	45-59 - 1.36			45-59 - 1.93
	60+ - 1.66			60+ - 2.50
Ambitious	15-24 - 2.41	2.62	2.80	15-24 - 2.79
	25-34 - 3.00			25-34 - 3.18
	35-44 - 2.62			35-44 - 2.70
	45-59 - 2.60			45-59 - 2.73
	60+ - 3.00			60+ - 2.66
Independent	15-24 - 3.29	3.19	3.43	15-24 - 3.47
	25-34 - 3.62			25-34 - 3.81
	35-44 - 3.37			35-44 - 3.54
	45-59 - 2.62			45-59 - 3.06
	60+ - 3.50			60+ - 3.50

The competence of the authors of the texts was not evaluated very well, and the average of all evaluations is: IT - **2.43**, music - **2.78**; thus evaluations are almost in the middle range of the scale.

Evaluating a youngster interested in IT and music, intelligence was given the lowest grades and independence was given higher grades. The comparison of the overall averages of the evaluations with the Student criterion (t-test) shows that there is a significant difference in the evaluations of different characteristics.

The averages of characteristics evaluations by separate age groups according to the t-test differ significantly only in the case of independence; there is a significant difference between the two averages of the evaluations by the 45-49 age group.

Although the author of the text about music was almost always given a higher grade, the overall averages of the evaluations are significantly different only in the case of intelligence: the author of the text about IT is thought to be much less intelligent than the author of the text about music.

A comparison of the evaluation distributions with the chi-square criterion (chi-test) reveals only a few significant differences: the empirical meaning of chi-square differs significantly only in two cases, i.e. comparing how the 25-34 age group and the oldest age group (60+) evaluated the intelligence of the author of the text about IT and comparing how the 25-24 and of 45-59 age groups evaluated the ambitiousness of the author of the text about music.

2.2. Social integration

Below are the evaluations of characteristics showing the *honesty* and *reliability* of the author, and the average of the evaluations of every age group of the respondents and every characteristic (Table 5).

Table 5. *Social integration of the Author of the Text*

IT		Music		
Age distribution	Average	Average	Age distribution	
Honest	15-24 - 2.52	2.51	2.70	15-24 - 2.70
	25-34 - 2.87			25-34 - 3.25
	35-44 - 2.58			35-44 - 2.62
	45-59 - 2.20			45-59 - 2.43
	60+ - 2.66			60+ - 3.00
Reliable	15-24 - 2.20	2.10	2.55	15-24 - 2.61
	25-34 - 2.12			25-34 - 3.00
	35-44 - 2.29			35-44 - 2.62
	45-59 - 1.83			45-59 - 2.13
	60+ - 2.00			60+ - 2.83

Comparing the average of all the categories, the social integration of the authors of the texts was given lowest grades (IT – 2.30, music – 2.62). However, this evaluation is very similar to the one on competence and it is almost in the middle range of the scale. The comparison with the Student criterion shows that the author of the text about IT is considered less reliable and the overall average of the evaluations of the honesty and reliability of the author of the text about music is almost the same. The author of the text about IT is also thought to be less reliable than the author of the text about music. The answers of the respondents from different age groups were almost the same when it comes to evaluating the author of the text about IT, while the author of the text about music seemed more honest to the respondents of the 25-34 age group and less reliable to the respondents of the 45-59 age group.

A comparison of the evaluation distributions with the chi-quadrante criterion (chi-test) revealed no significant differences.

2.3. Modernity

Below are the evaluations of the characteristics showing the modernity of the authors of the texts: *youthfulness* and *modernity*, and the average of the evaluations of every age group of the respondents and every characteristic (Table 6).

Table 6. *Modernity of the Author of the Text*

IT		Music		
	Age distribution	Average	Average	Age distribution
Youthful	15-24 - 4.35	4.17	4.08	15-24 - 3.93
	25-34 - 3.87			25-34 - 4.00
	35-44 - 4.25			35-44 - 4.16
	45-59 - 4.06			45-59 - 4.16
	60+ - 4.16			60+ - 4.33
Modern	15-24 - 4.00	4.33	4.37	15-24 - 4.52
	25-34 - 4.00			25-34 - 4.25
	35-44 - 4.62			35-44 - 4.58
	45-59 - 4.30			45-59 - 4.30
	60+ - 3.62			60+ - 3.62

The semantic category modernity received the highest grade, and the average of all the evaluations of modernity is: IT – 4.25, and music – 4.22; thus the evaluation is close to the highest grade on the scale, i.e. 5. The comparison of the overall averages according to the t-test shows that the authors of both texts are considered almost equally youthful and modern. Evaluating the characteristics of the author of a certain text, they differ only in the case of the text about music: the respondents think that the author of this text is more modern than youthful. The low average of the modernity evaluation by the oldest respondents (60+) differs most compared to the evaluation averages of the other age groups.

A comparison of the evaluation distributions with the chi-quadrante criterion (chi-test) revealed only a few significant differences: the empirical meaning of chi-quadrante differs significantly only in two cases, i.e. comparing how the respondents of the youngest (15-24) and oldest (60+) age groups evaluated the youthfulness of the author of the text about IT and the modernity of the author of the text about music. The differences of the evaluations could be because of the respondents' different ages; however, another reason could be the effect of the very low participation of respondents from the oldest age group on the statistical calculations.

Summary

The results of the analysis of the data about the authors show that the language with a high concentration of English borrowings is fairly unanimously related (by all age groups) to males under 35 living in a city. The analysis of the separate characteristics summarized by semantic categories showed a kind of regularity – the average of the evaluation of the author of the text about music was almost always higher, although it is not always statistically significant. Table 7 below provides the comparison of the seven analysed characteristics.

Table 7. *Evaluation of the Characteristics of the Authors of the Texts*

	IT	Music
Intelligent	1.49	2.13
Reliable	2.10	2.55
Honest	2.51	2.70
Ambitious	2.62	2.80
Independent	3.19	3.43
Youthful	4.17	4.08
Modern	4.33	4.37

The averages of the evaluations of these two texts according to the t-test differ only when intelligence and reliability are evaluated: the author of music is considered to be much more intelligent and reliable.

The biggest difference in the results was noticed not from comparing the evaluations of the different interests of the authors of the texts, but from comparing the evaluations of their different characteristics. The authors of both texts seem to be least intelligent and most modern to the respondents.

The high evaluation of modernity (youthfulness and being up-to-date) is also seen from the average of the evaluations of the general semantic categories (Table 8).

Table 8. *The Average of the Evaluations of the Semantic Categories*

Semantic category	IT	Music
Social integration	2.30	2.62
Competence	2.43	2.78
Modernity	4.25	4.22

The respondents gave the lowest grade to the social integration of the authors of both texts (although the author of the text about music was given a higher grade than the author of the text about IT). The competence of the authors was evaluated basically the same as the social integration and the highest grade was given to the modernity.

It should be indicated that the data of this experiment are not purely quantitative and that only the vaguely defined evaluations of averages are interpreted here, although the tendency towards more positive or more negative evaluation can be seen.

Conclusion

The distinct feature of both texts is the rather plentiful and concentrated usage of English borrowings. The results of the investigation show that the use of such language in Lithuanian society is related to a young man living in a city. This fact is not unexpected, judging from the point of view of classical sociological and sociolinguistic theories: most often just men are the formers of subcultures which are typical of cities and their speech in particular is mostly characterized by non-formality and deviation from norms (non-standard language is accordingly associated with "masculinity"). It is likely that the evaluation of certain characteristics of such a speaker is related to the predictability of their age: he/she is neither considered very competent nor socially attractive, but undoubtedly modern (youthful and up-to-date).

The analysed texts were composed especially for this survey. By and large, they are not authentic, and their real author is unknown. It also has to be mentioned that, as in many similar surveys, the answers of the respondents could be affected both by the topic of the texts which reveals specific interests and by the content (e.g., the author of the text about music could have been given a higher grade and could have been considered older because the phrase "consulting a colleague" was used in one sentence of the text), and that attitudes were not analysed in their natural environment.

The theorists of the social psychology of language often emphasize the importance of the context to the interpretation of the results of surveys: it is stated that if evaluators think that the speaker is relaxed, speaks informally and does not compete with the interlocutor, his/her social attractiveness/solidarity will be given a higher grade than his/her competence/status (see Giles, Ryan 1982: 217, 220). In the given case, it is thought that the very content of the texts should have given the respondents the impression of informal communication; however, there was no essential difference between the evaluations of social integration and competence.

It is possible to check whether the results are really correct by carrying out a similar experiment involving a larger population and seeking a better representation in age groups. For example, an analysis can be made of how an older person or a young woman using borrowings would be evaluated. If such usage of borrowings is really considered to be the norm of the language and identity symbol of youngsters, especially males, its use by other speakers should then be evaluated negatively.

It is also important to determine the impact of borrowings on linguistic identity in language planning: this could form the basis for language politicians to evaluate the influence of the English language. If this hypothesis is accepted as valid, it is possible to assume that the borrowing of English words which is due to socio-psychological reasons takes place within a certain context and age group. In other words, it is not universal and therefore cannot affect standard usage or a standard language system.

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SAMMENDRAG

Engelske ord og den sproglige identitet i Litauen

Artiklen behandler det litauiske samfunds holdninger til sprogbrugere som anser engelske lån som en del af deres identitet. Undersøgelsen af sprogholdninger tager udgangspunkt i social sprogpsykologien og har som formål at afklare med hvilken type sprogbrugere man forbinder relativt koncentreret brug af engelsk i litauisk. Undersøgelsen er foretaget vha. et eksperiment som blev udført i Vilnius i 2005 hvor svarpersonerne blev bedt om at vurdere to skribenter ud fra en tekst som de hver især havde skrevet (den ene tekst handler om IT, den anden handler om musik).

Tydelig ensartethed i svarene betyder at den sproglige identitet som finder sit udtryk i en stor koncentration af engelske ord, identificeres ganske entydigt. Resultatet af undersøgelsen viser at en sådan sprogbruger i det litauiske samfund forbindes med en ung mand (ikke ældre end 35 år) som bor i en storby. Hverken hans kompetence (intelligens) eller sociale tiltrækningskraft tildes nogen højere vurdering. Til gengæld anses han som værende særlig moderne (ungdommelig og up to date). At definere den rolle som engelske ord spiller i vore dages sproglige identitet, kan bl.a. have betydning for sprogplanlægningsarbejdet. De sprogpolitikere som fastsætter sprognormerne, kunne anvende denne viden i deres vurderinger af påvirkning fra engelsk. Man kunne formode at indlån fra engelsk som skyldes bestemte socialpsykologiske årsager, ikke overskrider en bestemt kontekst og alder i sprogbrugen, og ikke er almengyldigt.