

Changing linguistic repertoires: An analysis of the workplace discourse of adult Lithuanian city dwellers

With the opening of the borders and the increase of intercultural interaction the everyday adult speech in post-socialist Lithuania is undergoing evident changes. This is particularly true in urban surroundings where abundant multiple language resources have become widely available for use due to the influence of the spread of urbanization, globalization and new technologies. Language users draw on the linguistic resources they have available to them to achieve their communicative aims (Otsuji & Pennycook 2010), often they employ language features that are at their disposal and combine several different languages regardless of how well they know the involved languages (Jørgensen et al., 2011, Blommaert & Backus, 2011), i.e. speakers sometimes pick up phrases or words of a language that can only be used if another language is used as well. Different terms have been coined for such practices, for instance, Otsuji & Pennycook use the term *metrolingualism*, and Jørgensen et al. use the term *polylingualism*. The analysis of how adult speakers manipulate language resources in their increasingly multimodal linguistic repertoires, and the uncovering of the reasons why they prefer one linguistic variation over the other in certain social situations at work are the issues that this study focuses upon.

The paper is based on an ongoing sociolinguistic investigation of Lithuanian urban workplace discourse. The majority of the paper draws on digital audio recordings of naturally occurring spontaneous conversations between employees collected in a media-related company in Vilnius. Those recordings have been (partly) transcribed and then analysed using Interactional Sociolinguistics methods. Interactional Sociolinguistics (IS) is an in-depth qualitative approach that combines the application of the interpretive methods of discourse analysis with insights into social/cultural issues by systematically looking at how speakers involved in those issues talk about them (Gumperz & Gumperz, 2007). Elements of talk help speakers to negotiate meanings of their interaction, and some elements become symbolic signs of certain meanings. What matters is how language is used and what meanings are produced by describing something this way over an alternative way. Particular attention has been paid to the function of embedded vocabulary or inserted phrases in languages other than Lithuanian, mostly English and Russian.

The preliminary analysis of the data shows that embedded English and Russian vocabulary elements in Lithuanian workplace discourse are used as group or individual stylistic choices to construct certain social images. They are patterns of verbal behaviour that are employed in different workplace situations and serve rather dissimilar purposes. The most prominent cases will be illustrated with transcribed examples of workplace conversations.

References:

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