

Jolanta Zabarskaitė

How does your institution track language? The case of the Institute of the Lithuanian Language

Santrauka (Abstract in Lithuanian)

Lietuvos pažangos strategija “Lietuva 2030” numato idėjų, skatinančių visuomenės ir kiekvieno jos nario kūrybiškumą, plėtrą, kuri padėtų Lietuvai būti veržlia, atvira pasauliui, puoselėjančia savo nacionalinį tapatumą šalimi. Lietuvos tapatumas neatsiejamas nuo kalbos. Lietuvių kalbos išsaugojimas ir stiprinimas yra strateginis Lietuvos valstybės uždavinys. Lietuvių kalbos paveldo puoselėjimo, išteklių gausinimo, kalbos prestižo, vertybinės svarbos, ugdant jaunąją kartą, sklaidos ir žinomumo pasaulyje poreikiai didele dalimi priklauso nuo Lietuvių kalbos institute atliekamų fundamentinių ir taikomųjų kalbos tyrimų, jų tarptautiškumo ir tarpdalykiškumo, socialinės ir kultūrinės plėtros efektyvumo.

Lietuvių kalbos institute veikia centrai, kurie tarp savo mokslinių tikslų turi išsikėlę uždavinius stebėti, vertinti ir tirti lietuvių kalbos pokyčius. Tai – Bendrinės kalbos centras, kuriame mokslinius tyrimus atlieka fonetikos, semantikos ir ekonominės lingvistikos, bendrinės kalbos žodyno, mokyklinės lituanistikos (raštingumo), standartinės kalbos variantų ir normų tyrimo grupės. Lietuvių kalbos tarmių raidos stebėseną vykdo instituto Geolingvistikos centras. Vertybinės ir ideologinės nuostatos ir jų pokyčius tiria Sociolingvistikos centras. Šiuolaikinės terminologijos problemas ir iššūkius sprendžia Terminologijos centras.

Lietuvių kalbos raidos procesai stebimi postmodernių pokyčių aspektu: vertinama globalizacijos, naujųjų medijų, daugiakalbystės įtaka. Kalba stebima apimant jos postmoderniuosius būvius: taktąją kalbą ir tvariąją kalbą. Šiuo požiūriu incijuojami moksliniai tarpdalykiniai projektai, rengiamos monografijos, kaupiami kalbos ištekliai, kuriamos kalbinės technologijos.

Kalbos pokyčiai nuolat fiksuojami lietuvių kalbos naujažodžių duomenyne, Šiuo metu kuria kalbos paslauga “E-sąvoka”, kuri padės fiksuoti teminologijos pokyčius tokiose srityse kaip informacinės technologijos, finansai, sveikatos apsauga. Siekiant panaudoti naujas žinias apie kalbą, kurti kalbos įrankių inovacijas, kalbinius kūrybiškumo konstravimo metodus, kalbinio naratyvo analizės taikymą ir kt., Lietuvių kalbos institute įkurtas Socialinių, kultūrinių inovacijų ir rinkodaros skyrius.

Abstract (English)

“Lithuania 2030”, the strategy for Lithuania’s advancement, provides for a set of ideas to promote the creativity and development of society and its individual members in order to help Lithuania to be a country which is dynamic and open to the world, and fosters its national identity. Lithuania’s identity goes hand in hand with its language. The preservation and strengthening of the Lithuanian language is a strategic objective of the Lithuanian

state. The requirement to nourish the heritage of the Lithuanian language and to replenish its resources, to maintain the prestige of the language and its importance as a value in the education of the younger generation, and to promote its dissemination and recognition around the world, is heavily dependent on the fundamental and applied linguistic studies conducted by the Institute of the Lithuanian Language, and the effectiveness of the expansion of their international, interdisciplinary, social and cultural development.

The Institute of the Lithuanian Language operates several centres that, in addition to their academic goals, have as an objective the observation, evaluation and study of changes in the Lithuanian language. These are the Centre for the Standard Language, with its academic groups conducting studies of phonetics, semantics, economic linguistics, the vocabulary of the standard language, scholastic linguistics (literacy), and the variations and norms of the standard language; the Centre for Geo-linguistics, tasked with monitoring the development of Lithuanian dialects; the Centre for Sociolinguistics, researching attitudes relating to values and ideologies; and the Centre for Terminology, dealing with the problems and challenges of modern terminology.

The developmental processes of the Lithuanian language are observed in terms of postmodern changes, assessing the influence of globalisation, modern media and multilingualism. The language is monitored in all of its postmodern states: the liquid language and the sustainable language. These are the subjects of interdisciplinary academic projects, monographs, linguistic resources and technologies.

Changes in the language are constantly being recorded in the database of new coinages in Lithuanian. The linguistic service E-savoka (E-term) is currently being developed to help register terminological changes in areas like information technology, finance and healthcare. The Institute of the Lithuanian Language has established a Social, Cultural Innovation and Marketing Department to (among other things) facilitate the use of new language knowledge, develop innovative linguistic tools and linguistic methods of developing creativity, and apply linguistic narrative analysis.

1. Introduction

Processes that alter the role of language and people's attitude towards language are a feature of the 21st century. Linguistics and other humanities subjects are going through changes due to the rapidly changing environment that affects linguistic processes. Language is under the influence of a number of new extra-linguistic factors such as globalisation, multilingualism, the multimodality of new media, and so on. The creative and regulatory power of language and the need for the use of language technologies and multilingual digital resources is increasing, which means that a new aspect of linguistics – the competitiveness of language – is emerging. Global virtualisation and the influence of the media are driving a shift in the role of language. This enhances the direction and methodology of linguistic research. The world is now evolving in a semi- and/or fully virtual way and this inevitably affects linguistics; it has resulted in linguistics and other humanities and social sciences turning back to cognitive methodology (Pinker 1994) and neurosciences.

New processes of social development create changes in the functions of language. With a creative society and a creative class taking shape in the 21st century (Florida 2002), the role of language has gone beyond the ordinary function of conveying information to embrace the function of being the primary source of competitive creative ideas (for more, see Augustinaitis/Zabarskaitė 2015a, 110-113). Language has become:

- the material (semantic structures, the layers of associative networks, and so on);
- a tool for creative work (the methodology, instruments, and methods of linguistic impact);
- a method for constructing creativity (for example, linguistic methods of constructing creativity such as the dialogue seminar (Ennals/Göranzon/Nelson/Alvunger 2016)).

The virtual space towards which the tangible world is moving combines what is ideal and what is tangible in such a way that any boundary between them is erased (Augustinaitis/Zabarskaitė 2015b). The new approach to language, involving inter-field and inter-disciplinary methods of linguistic analysis, is having a major impact on modern linguistic research and is expanding the functions of the traditional institutions of linguistic research (such as the institute of language) and the scope of language monitoring and assessment.

2. Background

The Institute of the Lithuanian Language was founded in 1930 as the editorial office for the academic Dictionary of the Lithuanian Language (20 volumes),¹ and in 1939 was reformed to become the Institute of Lithuanian Studies of Antanas Smetona. The Institute was set up by the government, and the fact that it was named after Lithuania's first president shows the importance of the Institute in Lithuania's development (Mačiulis 2003, 129-133).

The Institute of the Lithuanian Language has the classical structure of this type of academic establishment. The Institute's mission is to create new fundamental and applied knowledge of the Lithuanian spoken and written language; to compile, systematise and disseminate its intangible linguistic heritage; to solve problems

¹ Lexical collection of the data for the great *Dictionary of the Lithuanian Language* was started in 1902. Since then several generations of lexicographers of LII have been engaged in the preparation of twenty volumes of the DLL over six decades (the Dictionary was published between 1941 and 2002). The DLL aimed to present words and illustrate their usage by quotations culled from all kinds of writings and dialectal records from the period 1547 (when the first Lithuanian book was published) to 2001. The twenty volumes of the Dictionary make up about 22,000 pages, comprising half a million headwords and over 11,000,000 words of text (www.lkz.lt).

relating to the development and functioning of language that are relevant to the state and the public; and to support Lithuanian studies around the world (source: www.lki.lt).

Being a national academic institute, the Institute of the Lithuanian Language supports the “Lithuania 2030” strategy. Lithuania 2030, the strategy for Lithuania’s advancement, provides for a set of ideas to promote the creativity and development of society, and fosters its national identity. Lithuania’s identity goes hand in hand with its language. The strengthening of the Lithuanian language is a strategic objective of the state of Lithuania (see more at <https://rio.jrc.ec.europa.eu/en/library/national-progress-strategy-lithuania-2030>).

The vision of the Institute of the Lithuanian Language, rooted in the 2030 strategy, is to:

- accumulate the resources of the Lithuanian language;
- maintain the language’s prestige and its importance as a value in the education of the younger generation;
- promote the dissemination and recognition of the Lithuanian language around the world.

The need to foster the heritage of the Lithuanian language, to enrich its resources, to disseminate and raise awareness of the prestige and value-based importance of the language in the process of educating the young generation, relies heavily on the fundamental and applied linguistic research carried out at the Institute of the Lithuanian Language, its international and interdisciplinary nature, and the efficacy of its social and cultural development. The Lithuanian language needs to undergo fully-fledged development to ensure its modern evolution and long-lasting functioning, to enhance its sphere of usage and influence in a multilingual and multicultural environment and in the field of international liberal studies, and to ensure the level of the usefulness of its usage in the sphere of culture, science, and business. The Institute of the Lithuanian language creates new knowledge of the Lithuanian language that serves as a basis for the formation of a setting for efficient social and cultural development, linguistic innovation and creativity. By way of tertiary studies, the ILL educates linguists who form the future potential of Lithuanian scholarship (source: www.lki.lt).

The need for the monitoring of changes in language is shifting and expanding just as the interdisciplinary field of linguistic research is growing and the role language plays in society is increasing. National languages are evolving in an environment of globalisation and multilingualism and, thanks to linguistic technologies and language industries, are becoming an important element in creating a competitive society of wellbeing. The changing forms of 21st century economic and social development – artificial intelligence, cryptocurrencies, blockchain, smart society, social innovation – are linked to an ‘inevitable’ linguistic factor in digital and social technology. Apart from the traditional monitoring of language (its

variation, changes in norm), there is now a need to track the semantic processes in language, to identify relevant changes in the boundaries of conception, to observe the dynamics of dialectal development both from the geo-linguistic and socio-cultural perspective, to assess changes in classical and digital literacy, and so on.

What does it mean in practice? The Institute operates several centres² that, in addition to their academic goals, have as their objective the observation, evaluation and study of changes in the Lithuanian language, both traditionally and using the latest methods.

The Institute of the Lithuanian Language conducts traditional and innovative studies of linguistic monitoring at four centres:

- the Centre for the Standard Language, conducting monitoring and research into phonetics, semantics, grammar variability, the vocabulary of the standard language, the shift and variation of literacy;
- the Centre for Geo-linguistics, tasked with monitoring the development of Lithuanian dialects;
- the Centre for Sociolinguistics, researching attitudes relating to values and ideologies;
- the Centre for Terminology, dealing with the challenges of modern terminology.

3. Changes in linguistic monitoring and variation research: from traditional to new goals, approaches, and methodologies

3.1 Traditional linguistic monitoring in terms of the norm and variation

Before the 21st century, linguistic monitoring was understood as managing the processes of codification by describing the diversity of variants and choosing the ‘best’ one on the basis of established principles. This approach has retained its significance in terminology, in the linguistics of literacy, and in some other fields of public language usage. There is a group for the investigation of the norm of the standard language at the Institute, which actively cooperates with the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language. Researchers at this group are engaged in

² The Institute of the Lithuanian Language has 6 academic centres: the Centre for Research of the Baltic Languages and Onomastics, the Centre for Geo-linguistics, the Centre for the Standard Language, the Centre for Terminology, the Centre for Sociolinguistics, and the Centre for Research of Heritage of Writing, which studies the heritage of Lithuanian writing in Lithuanian, Ruthenian, Russian (the heritage of Old Believers’ writing) and Polish (the heritage of Tartars in Lithuania). This article only discusses those centres that are relevant for the monitoring of the modern development of the Lithuanian language.

analysing the processes of occurrence and proliferation of variations of language and providing expertise to the Language Commission for the purposes of establishing norms of spelling, punctuation, accentuation, and to some extent lexis and semantics, which are the most relevant to schools, considering students' level of literacy.

3.2 Monitoring and predicting change in semantic structures

In the 21st century, however, with the role of language shifting against the background of the knowledge economy and creativity (Florida 2002), linguistic monitoring has been expanded. Digital technology, which replaces the traditional functions of language in a digital landscape, and the 3D method of understanding culture (and the world in general) which drives change in linear communication (Augustinaitis 2017, 82-83) make it increasingly relevant to monitor changes in semantics. Changes drive the need to expand and research the understanding of language, and form new methods to reveal the creative potency of language and harness its power. Language becomes an independent element that, when understood and organised correctly, creates a widely understandable **added value** in its own right (Maijgaladze/Zabarskaitė 2016, 9-23). The ILL conducts new research into semantic changes in language. This differs from the traditional approach in that, in addition to its communication function in the broad sense, language first of all has value as a cultural artefact when a nation's culture is revealed through its national language. The *real-life* action of language can be recognised through recognition of the hierarchy of notional elements of concepts with the help of social, economic, cultural, and political contexts. One way to conduct this type of analysis is to assess the contexts/discourses³ in which a concept is used and its notional elements that are underlined (Zabarskaitė 2017, 377-386).

Case in point: The ILL research group of semantic and economic linguistics has analysed the shifting dynamic of the lexical concept of *creativity* (Lith. *kūrybiškumas*). This course of analysis was chosen because the purpose is to see how (and whether) the predominant semantic elements of the concept of creativity change – both in the marginal structure (at the level of meaning) and at the deep level of the consciousness of the user of language – when the traditional semantic network of the verb *create* becomes connected in language (just as in the black box) to the new ties that modern life dictates, ties which are perceived by every active user of language unconsciously and/or semi-consciously. The theoretical presumption is that language creates value in the modern world (ergo, it is a subject of economic linguistics). Therefore checks must be made to see whether new semantic attributes (such as constructed creativity) which have emerged in the

³ The 'double' term discourse/context is used here intentionally in order to highlight the linguistic dimension (discourse) and the *real-life* dimension (context) of it as a text.

21st century are able to exercise sufficient action through language for post-modern creativity to potentially generate activities and lifestyles that would mirror the logic and prospects of changes in a successful future. The analysis of the lexical concept of creativity shows that on a cognitive level, semantic features that would allow us to effectively organise processes of the creative economy in socio-cultural life have not yet been fixed in the concept. The mapping of the semantic features of the lexical concept leads to a conclusion that the conformity of this lexical concept to the modern process could be achieved via adjustments to the linguistic narrative (Gaidienė/Gritėnienė/Stunžinas et al. 2017, 115-118).

3.3 Monitoring and researching the rapidly shifting literacy in school students

Another field of research is trends in language and literacy among school students. The ILL operates an academic group looking at the linguistics of literacy, which deals with the rapidly changing trends of literacy among school students, identifies groups and causes of mistakes, and issues advice to Lithuanian language teachers in secondary schools.

Case in point: The ILL research group of literacy linguistics is permanently monitoring the written language of school students, tracking changes and identifying groups of mistakes. For example, the vanishing opposition of long:short vowels in the speech of the younger generation allows us to determine the causes of problems in writing.⁴ Having identified a group of mistakes and its underlying causes and potential consequences, the ILL specialists issue the results of their research to the SCLL and teachers, who then look for ways to address the problem, for instance by designing new teaching methodologies and approaches.

3.4 Monitoring, assessing, and predicting new developments in dialects

Efforts are made to monitor the shift in Lithuanian dialects and their influence on regional development.⁵ Traditional dialectology has transformed into geo-linguistics. The transformation of traditional dialectology into geo-linguistics affects the monitoring of the development of Lithuanian dialects. The Centre for Geo-linguistics has conducted a large-scale study that has demonstrated the dynamics of dialects and their changes in the 21st century. The changes in dialects and the way

⁴ The Lithuanian language has a complicated system of accentuation of long:short vowels, which is disappearing from the spoken language; hence, students cannot aurally distinguish the letter they are supposed to write without making a mistake, and mark the sound within the word correctly.

⁵ Dialects are a major sociocultural asset in Lithuania, with the Lithuanian Parliament proclaiming 2013 as the Year of Dialects.

they are received enable an approach based on their focused hands-on application in integrated regional development (as tourism strategies, place branding, dialectal souvenirs, and many other things). There are plans to design a linguistic index to pinpoint social and business innovations as well.

Case in point: The Centre for Geo-linguistics has conducted a large-scale study of Lithuanian dialects in the 21st century (more at www.tarmes.lt). The study has identified new dialectal formations which have emerged from the foundations of the traditional dialects and which match their ethnographical distribution in many aspects. In the 21st century, the local language variant has probably become the most distinct attribute of ethnography, which means that regional identity correlates with the continuity of the local variation of language – and vice-versa, an absence of continuity of the local variation of language presupposes identity fractures in the ethnographical region, with a destructive effect on local communities. Therefore, strengthening this regional aspect has become a major factor in developing and maintaining continued ethnography or local identity. When it comes to preserving and developing local identity, several aspects come into play: (1) mustering and motivating the local community to uphold its local culture; (2) promoting identity-related competences in the local community; (3) shaping an understanding of identity as an object of value; (4) expanding the perception of identity as a unit of measure of the region's added value. This, for all practical purposes, is a scientifically-grounded recommendation for local governance in its bid to mould a development strategy and approach that will have acceptance and support from the members of local communities (Augustinaitis/Rudokas/Kiškienė et al., 169-195).

3.5 Monitoring and assessing linguistic attitudes

The revolutionary exploratory pillar of the Institute is the Centre for Sociolinguistics. Research at the Centre for Sociolinguistics explores Soviet heritage in the landscape of linguistic ideologies, and investigates how these ideologies evolve in society. The results of the studies are sometimes received very emotionally by the media, the locus where (as with many other modern societies), ideas about the standardisation and the 'launch' of language clash.

3.6 Monitoring and planning terminology

The 'traditionalists' at the Institute of the Lithuanian Language are the Centre for Terminology. The Centre for Terminology focuses on the variance of terminology and its evolution through time. Researchers at this Centre are experts for the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language, whose function is to approve terminology against the norm on the basis of the Law of the State Lithuanian Language. This Centre publishes the academic journal *Terminology*.

Therefore, as we can see from the examples, the paradigmatic transformation of traditional linguistics creates a new field of scientific inquiry, relevant alternatives to traditional academic research, an enhanced inter-field approach, which in its own right opens up new avenues for linguistic monitoring and interpretation.

4. Language monitoring and infrastructure

Infrastructure plays an important role in linguistic monitoring. The analysis and assessment of changes in language relies heavily on the Database of Lithuanian Neologisms (<http://naujazodziai.lki.lt>). This Database was launched in 2011 in line with the European Commission-funded project META-NORD, and its development continues to this day.

The goal of this work is to create a database for continuously storing new lexis of the Lithuanian language and eventually issuing a systematic image of this lexis, as well as presenting users of the Lithuanian language with hands-on information that is not available in other lexicographic sources. In association with the Institute of Mathematics and Informatics of the University of Vilnius, it has designed an automated speech recognition tool that supports the pronunciation of neologisms.

In addition, LKIIS, the largest information infrastructure of Lithuanian language resources (www.lkiis.lki.lt), is being continuously expanded and developed. Within the framework of this infrastructure, a search engine for systemised digital resources of the Lithuanian language has been developed. A total of 11 thesauruses and bilingual dictionaries and 5 catalogues of various linguistic data have been digitalised, the geo-informational, surname, and other electronic databases of the archive of Lithuanian dialects and of Lithuanian toponyms and their management tools integrated, public access interface for these resources designed, and electronic services (e-training, e-catalogue, e-dictionary) integrated. This linguistic infrastructure mirrors the changes in language monitoring and supports its processes.

5. Outlook

The ILL researchers are entering a new phase in the development of the information infrastructure of Lithuanian language resources, LKIIS. A webnet of words (meanings) is being developed on the basis of the dictionary of the modern Lithuanian language, subject to the integration of additional resources (the great Dictionary of the Lithuanian Language (DLL), the Dictionary of the Standard Lithuanian Language and the Database of Neologisms), and the development of tools to allow identification of notional ties and using them to connect and visualise words. Considering the EC's call to develop technological solutions for the European digital single market, the network of Lithuanian words will also be linked to the English and French semantic networks. Once developed, the webnet

of the Lithuanian language will have extensive application in designing and/or improving various systems of semantic search, semantic analysis, data management, machine translation, and linguistic monitoring of the Lithuanian language. The innovative aspect is that the webnet will reflect the Lithuanian worldview through unique ties between archaic Lithuanian words from the DLL and data from the Databank of Neologisms.

The first steps are being taken in the direction of designing a webnet of the Lithuanian language to serve as a basis to develop an **e-concept service**. Users of the service will have visualised concepts delivered on the basis of ontologies of the field. Concepts will be linked to multilingual dictionaries. The semantic structures of concepts will be continuously enhanced with new words added. This will be a next-generation innovative tool to monitor language changes and variability.

6. Conclusion

Next to classical linguistic monitoring, which aims to study variations of language and identify its norms, monitoring semantic changes and literacy, and registering and analysing geo-linguistic changes – among other things – are gaining an increasing theoretical and applied value. The conceptual divide between the concepts of the monitoring of classical and postmodern language is the primary factor behind new problems for an academic institution. An ideological and methodological dichotomy that embraces the classical and the postmodern approach affords us more precision in identifying the course of the shift and development of language, its intensity and predictability. This opens the applied perspective to tie language to the economic space of information, communication, knowledge, and creative work, and to transform the traditional linguistic paradigm into neo-linguistic media-based approaches. The role of the national language institute therefore expands from analysing and planning the use of language to identifying the needs of language **application** and offering practical recommendations in that area within sociocultural and business contexts.

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