

STANDARD LITHUANIAN IN THE CONTEXT OF POST-STANDARDIZATION OF EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

Summary

During the past few decades, the European languages and their standard varieties have experienced significant changes. The reasons of these changes (due to the political, social, economic, cultural development of European countries) are common: globalization, democratization and internetization, as well as different intensity and directions of migration.

Unsurprisingly, researchers of the European languages show considerable interest in the development of standard languages and changes in their relationship with non-standard varieties. There are a lot of theoretical and empirical studies of the convergence processes of these varieties.

Standard language is usually defined by the following attributes: commonality to society as a whole, homogeneity of norms, stable codification and prestige. Thus the scope of issues related to the dynamics of standard languages is broad:

- 1) changing relation with other varieties of the national language,
- 2) increasing or decreasing variability of public usage (especially mass-media),
- 3) changing the nature of the codification of standard language norms,
- 4) changing the ideology and prestige of the standard language,
- 5) relation between changes in usage and language ideologies.

The European standard languages are experiencing two-fold (structural and ideological) changes in different degree. In the level of usage variability and colloquialization increases, in the level of language ideology prestige of the standard language weakens or a new standard forms. According to these changes various models of the post-standardization period of standard languages are being developed, such as destandardisation, demotization, restandardisation, ect. At the same time, it should be taken into account the fact that “specific nature of these language dynamics differs from nation to nation, dependent on the (historical) context” (Ghyselen et al. 2016).

The development of standard Lithuanian has several specific features. First, its norms could not develop naturally within 50 years of Soviet occupation as they experienced a

significant impact of the Russian language and currently they are influenced by the English language and its growing prestige. Second, standard Lithuanian entered the post-standardisation process rather young in comparison with some other European standard languages (it was codified by Jonas Jablonskis in the very beginning of the 20th century). During the current development period, the gap between codified norms and real usage is growing and it can be treated as the formation of a substandard variety – an intermediate layer between regiolects and standard language. The concept of substandard was almost not being employed until now in the Lithuanian linguistics, but it can help to explain current dynamics of standard Lithuanian. Studies in this field in Lithuania are still rather fragmented and it would not be reasonable to categorize the dynamics of standard Lithuanian according to one concrete model. Although there are attempts to adapt the ongoing changes to the demotization model (when the standard language ideology stays intact and the usage becomes more and more informalized), this does not include all processes that are currently in progress.

KEYWORDS: standard language, standardization, post-standardization, destandardization, demotisation, sociolinguistics, language ideologies.

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