Cultural Schemes of Research within the Paradigm of Lithuanian Geolinguistics in 21st Century

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VIIth Congress of Dialectology and Geolinguistics, Vienna
23rd – 28th July 2012
PROJECT “Modern Research of Geolinguistics in Lithuania: The Optimisation of the Network of Points and Interactive Spread of Dialectal Information”

• Code of project VP1-3.1-ŠMM-07-K-01-028

TIMELINE:

• 24 March 2011 – 23 March 2014

BUDGET: Lt 1 377 557

• Supported by EU funds
THE OBJECT OF DISCUSSION

» the cultural schemes of research within the paradigm of Lithuanian geolinguistics
The theoretical model worked out by Lithuanian dialectology in the 20th century is heterogeneous; it did not embrace all the possible strategies.

All the strategies focus on the systematic and objective features of the dialects, yet did not actualize the cultural value of the dialects.
The 20th century dialect research

The main strategies

- The works that constitute and analyse the apparent state of the dialects
- The investigation that checks and estimates objectively the apparent state of the dialects
- The works which focus on the factors that do ground the apparent state of the dialects
The project “Modern Research of Geolinguistics in Lithuania: The Optimisation of the Network of Points and Interactive Spread of Dialectal Information” legitimates the adequate cultural schemes important for the development of the dialectal discourse.

The cultural dimension of dialect research is implied in the model of the informants questionnaire.

The theoretical background for such methodological solutions regarding the research instrumentarium was the paradigm of perceptual dialectology.
The informants questionaire
Questionnaire segments forming the cultural characteristics of the dialectal code

Questions related with domain distribution:
public/private; official/unofficial

Questions related with the stereotypization of a dialectal speech representative

Review of an informant created discourse
From the initial project data such tendencies are distinguished that will be confirmed or rejected by the data obtained from all the analysed (735) points. Hence:

➢ A dialect user is found as partially ‘delocalised’, yet he/she still remains ‘the other’, i.e., a person representing a different culture, social status, or even extending a different mode of behaviour.

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In Lithuania, dialects are connoted positively, since, according to ordinary members of a speech community, dialects are spoken by:

- patriotically oriented people;
- people who respect their native dialect.
The portrait of a dialect user in the 21st century created by the respondents still reflects the antinomies city/country; young /old.

In the sociolinguistic portrait of the 21st century dialect user the education component is insignificant.
The varying images of a dialect user presented by the respondents are determined by the following factors:

- the factor of the real dialect user;
- the factor of possessed knowledge;
- the factor of language identity.
The initial results of the project have shown that in Lithuanian consciousness, the opposition between dialect and Standard language from the point of view of domain distribution (private vs public) remains clear and strictly determined.

- There is an interesting tendency that the respondents extending a positive evaluation of a dialect user consider the dialectal code suitable exclusively as the possibility to create a private discourse.

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Having received the questionnaires from all the informants participating in the project (i.e., over 4,500 questionnaires from all the regions of Lithuania), the cultural values of the dialectal code from the point of view of ordinary members of speech community will be determined.

Such data will serve as an additional parameter allowing for the prognosis of the dialect distribution and vitality of dialect usage at the beginning of the 21st century.
Thank You!

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