

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NATIONAL LANGUAGE AND NATIONAL IDENTITY WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION: THE CASE OF THE LITHUANIAN LANGUAGE

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Abstract. *National identity is usually based on certain features, which enable an individual to perceive his/her national identity. In addition to culture, customs, traditions, a defined territory, a shared history, etc., language is a strong basis for an individual's identification with a certain ethnic group. Language is considered to be the most universal means of communication as it helps us to convey the content of information when communicating. However, accelerating globalization affects even the use of a national language and, thus, the younger generation is often more focused on the dissemination of information in English. As a result, it seems that the native language is pushed aside, and little significance is given to its correctness. National identity and the use of national language are extremely important for representatives of certain professions, for example, statutory officers, soldiers, and specialists of law because clarity and logic are some of the most important elements in legal documents to comprehensively render the content. Therefore, the article aims to reveal the attitudes of the students of the Public Security Academy of Mykolas Romeris University towards the significance and place of national language and national identity in modern society as well as the importance of language skills for professional career. The survey results revealed that many young people associate national identity with their native language and culture, and find common links between them.*

Keywords: *national identity, value, globalization, language.*

Introduction

National identity is usually based on certain features, which enable an individual to perceive his/her national identity. Besides culture, customs, traditions, a defined territory, common history, etc., language is a strong basis for an individual's identification with a certain ethnic group. Language is regarded as the most universal means of communication since while interacting it helps us render information (Grigonienė, Peleckienė 2018, 46). However, accelerating globalization affects even the use of a national language and, thus, the young generation frequently pays more attention to the dissemination of information in English. As a result, it seems that the native language is pushed aside while little significance is given to its correctness. New technologies, international investment, dissemination of information as well as political and economic circumstances determine the impact of globalization on national language and culture, which in turn raises the questions of preserving national identity. These questions are particularly relevant to the young generation – do they still consider it necessary to maintain the prestige of the national language, or is it necessary to take care of the correctness of the language, to be able to express thoughts logically and clearly in it?

National identity and the use of national language are extremely important for representatives of certain professions, such as statutory officers and soldiers, as well as for legal professionals, as clarity and logic are among the most important elements for legal documents to convey the ideas they contain in an understandable way. Therefore, this article aims to find out the attitudes of the students of the Public Security Academy of Mykolas Romeris University towards the interconnection between national identity and language, and the place of the national language itself in the context of the global world. In this context, **the object** of the article is the students' attitudes towards the relationship between national identity and national language, the significance of national language, and the trends of its use in contemporary society, and **the aim** of the research is to reveal the students' attitudes towards the significance and place of national language and national identity in contemporary society as well as the importance of language skills for professional career.

The following objectives were raised in order to reach the aim:

- 1) To discuss the role of national identity and national language in the context of globalisation;
- 2) To analyse students' attitudes towards the relationship between national language and national identity in the contemporary context.

The article uses the methods of scientific literature analysis and a questionnaire-based survey. The method of scientific literature analysis was used to discuss the evaluation of national identity and national language in scientific resources and to introduce scientists' attitudes towards the issues under study. The survey was used to find out students' attitudes towards the relationship between national identity and national language in contemporary society.

Impact of globalization on national identity

The sense of belonging to a nation and ethnic group reveals a way of life and culture based on myths, symbols, and other forms of cultural behaviour and communication that contain spiritual values. Nation and ethnicity, ensuring the continuity and uniqueness of culture, especially traditional one, give the individual not only an individuality that distinguishes him or her from others but also an existential significance (Grigas, 2002). However, the increasing globalisation of recent decades has led to a different approach to the concept of national identity. The era of globalisation is one of the civilization challenges that humanity has repeatedly experienced. In modern conditions, when migration processes are intensifying and intercultural and interlingual ties are becoming more and more intense, the problem of national identity naturally attracts the attention of humanists (Yermolenko, 2021). The essential characteristic of civilization is rapid human globalisation: modernisation of living conditions of its entire expression, distribution, and consumption of general technologies, merging of nations and states, and establishment of supranational structures. (Grigas, 2002). Globalization is given more and more significance in its role. It strongly affects not only economic and technological advances but also social relations. Society is becoming more and more consumption-oriented whereas eternal values (morality, faith, nationality) are pushed to the background or replaced by temporary ones, relevant only for a certain period (Dobrzinskienė, Stepanovienė, 2021).

While there is no singular accepted definition, globalisation broadly refers to the exchange of people, technology, goods/services, culture, and information, and the resulting increased connections and interconnections that transcend geographic and cultural borders (Diamond, 2024). Contemporary globalization is a historic, cultural, and technological process, which is primarily characterized by all-encompassing integration, opening the world to every

one of us and reversedly opening us to the world (Januškevičiūtė, Čepulkienė). On the one hand, it allows us to get to know numerous phenomena that exist far away from us. On the other hand, global changes pose problematic challenges to the national identity of a society and an individual, which affects the national concept of values, religion, and culture. This process and its consequences are evaluated unanimously, which shows the controversial evaluation of the society regarding ethnicity. While traditionalists stress the importance of national identity and culture, liberals argue that identity cannot be treated as something closed. R. Kazlauskaitė-Markelienė, summarizing the conceptions of these days' philosophers, historians, sociologists, political scientists, educologists (and representatives of other sciences) claims that the contemporary identity of an individual is multi-meaningful, composed of separate parts, changing, capable of being the question and outcome of the personal choice, is open and susceptible for different external impact (Kazlauskaitė, Markelienė, 2010). On the other hand, not only identity but also the globalisation concept itself is changing. Until the middle of the 20th century economic and commercial, political, and technological factors were prevalent whereas social, cultural, and ecological factors have emerged since the middle of the 20th century. However, they are more of a consequence of globalisation and therefore different from economic, technological, and political factors, which are the cause. Separate factors and events affect each other and enhance the subsequent process of globalisation. Globalization impact is observed in various areas of socio-economic life and determines different results (Urbšienė 2011). Thus, there exist interdependent events, which we are trying to perceive and evaluate but not to limit and stop. In addition, continuous change reveals the need to observe and evaluate them.

Therefore, while the concept of national identity has been rather thoroughly analysed by numerous scientists, the intensification of globalisation has forced researchers to re-evaluate and re-discuss certain issues. National identity is a complex dynamic phenomenon, which starts developing in early childhood and is ongoing. If the social context is changing, it can change as well (Antinienė, 2002).

"The attitude of a modern person - breaking out of the limits of a small cultural space, finding oneself in the transformation of information and globalization, new social movements - towards oneself, his/her history, cultural heritage, cultural policy is changing" (Savoniakaitė, 2007). It is influenced by the changing social environmental, political decisions, and technological development. According to D. Antinienė, national identity is a complex process of identification, which is a certain relatively stable state, either acquired or created, related to more or less conscious involvement in the nation's affairs (2011). National identity is formed, changed, constructed, reconstructed, and preserved almost at the same time (Taljūnaitė, 2009). However, there are opinions that national identity is a genetically determined characteristic of a person, which he/she receives when he/she comes into life (Diržinauskytė, 2013). Perhaps some traits could be considered as such, but the nature of modern life makes even the previously revealed traits of national identity changeable. Globalisation, which is developing more and more rapidly, is erasing the boundaries of national identity traits, namely culture, territory, customs, religion, values, language, etc.

According to researchers, national identity is the entirety of clearly defined specific features that distinguish one nation from another, such as language, religion, history, citizenship, etc. The native language is considered an important feature of national identity (Diržinauskytė, 2013). Language has long been considered one of the foundations of a nation, even of statehood, although in the modern context, the language used in small territories loses its previous meaning, because, within the context of the global world, it becomes significant only for the people living in that territory. However, this is an essential sign of the nation's

survival. A language, the historical past, the common culture, and the territory usually allow people to associate themselves with their nation. The role of language as a very strong aspect of an individual's identification with a certain national group is particularly emphasised. Considering the above, it can be said that even in the global world, the native (national) language remains a very important element of national identity. A national language begins to lose its value if that language is spoken in a small territory because it limits the possibilities of a person: the national language is only needed in a certain defined territory, and it cannot be used to communicate with people of other countries, etc. (Stepanovienė, Dobržinskienė, 2017). It becomes the complete opposite of the challenges of globalisation and internationalisation. Because of this, the younger generation often fails to realise the prestige and importance of its language as well as the necessity of good knowledge of that language, despite the laws of the country, which legitimise the use of the national language, thus protecting it from being completely ignored. However, the native language is an integral part of every person's life. It is the most important means of communication, an invaluable tool of society's sociality, and an indicator of nationality. Through the native language, a person is connected not only to his existence but also to his nation and culture. Language best expresses the cultural identity of an individual (Pruskus, 2013). A nation cannot exist without its language, as well as without its history, cultural traditions, and customs (Aramavičiūtė, 2005). The responsibility for the fate of the national language is very personal, it falls to every citizen of the nation because protecting and cultivating the national language means enhancing one's nationality. However, it should be noted that the prestige of the Lithuanian language is not strong due to various reasons, especially due to the weakening of national identity and traditional values, high emigration (and immigration) (Miliūnaitė, 2010). However, it is believed that the communication factor is becoming more and more important in assessing professional competences. Every specialist needs to be able to communicate properly, which means that language skills are starting to be valued, and to communicate properly, you need to know both correct language and its nuances so that the language is clear, understandable, stylish, persuasive, etc. Thus, communicative competence - good command of the language as well as transmission and reception of information - allows every person to participate successfully in social life (Grigonienė, Peleckienė, 2018) and this presupposes the need to value and maintain one's national language and national identity because it is a certain state, a certain peculiar way of life that a person has acquired or created and which is connected with a committed, more or less conscious involvement in the affairs of the nation (Antiniene, 2002).

The relationship between national language and national identity in the modern context from the point of view of students

Characteristics of research participants. Considering the younger generation as the keystone of citizenship, the empirical study was purposefully designed and conducted with the participation of students from Law and Pre-trial Process (with a specialisation in Forensic Science) and Law and Police Activities study programmes. 78 first and second-year students participated in the study. The study was conducted in March 2024. The research instrument was a closed-ended questionnaire.

The research **aims** to find out the attitude of the younger generation – future lawyers and police officers – towards the perception of national identity, connections with the native language, and the process of globalization.

Research results. The first question aimed to find out whether, according to the respondents, speaking correctly in Lithuanian is a prestige. More than half of those who filled

out the questionnaire, i.e. 59 % of the respondents answered this question positively, while 26 % believed that using the correct Lithuanian language is partly a prestige. Only 15 % answered this question negatively (Fig. 1). Therefore, it can be assumed that for the time being, the correct use of the Lithuanian language, which is part of the national identity, is still sufficiently important for the younger generation and is valued as a certain part of prestige.

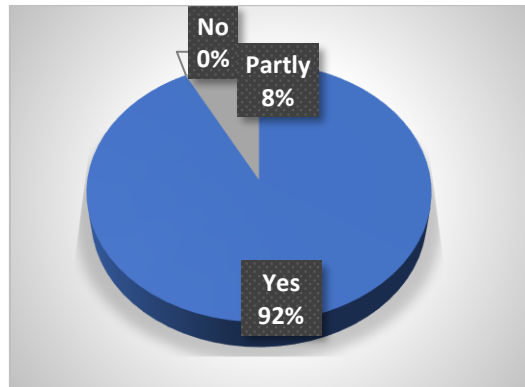


Figure 1. Is it prestige to speak in Lithuanian correctly?

Even more, respondents positively assessed the importance of the correct Lithuanian language in assessing the level of education. Even 68 % of respondents believe that correct language indicates the level of education, and 27 % argue that partially correct language is important. Only 5% of respondents did not associate language correctness with education (Fig. 2). Therefore, it can be assumed that the young generation of students, despite the impact of the global perception of the world, does not underestimate the relevance of the native language and believes that education and native language are closely interrelated.

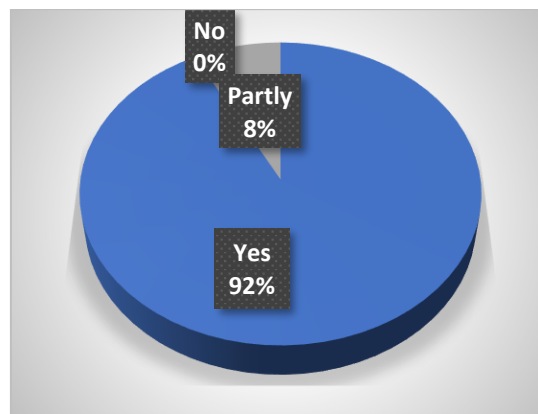


Figure 2. Does the correct language show the level of one's education?

However, the younger generation also believes that the correct use of the Lithuanian language is no longer so important in seeking professional success because many respondents chose the answer partly (56%) to the question "*Does professional success in Lithuania depend on the correct and expressive use of the Lithuanian language?*". Those who chose positive (23%) and negative (21%) answers were almost equally divided (Fig. 3). Probably, the correct use of the language has more influence on learning and studying, because speaking, writing papers, and, accordingly, the assessment received for this is closely related to the ability to express one's thoughts in a clear language. The profession is more associated with professional abilities and the language becomes an additional criterion for achieving professional success.

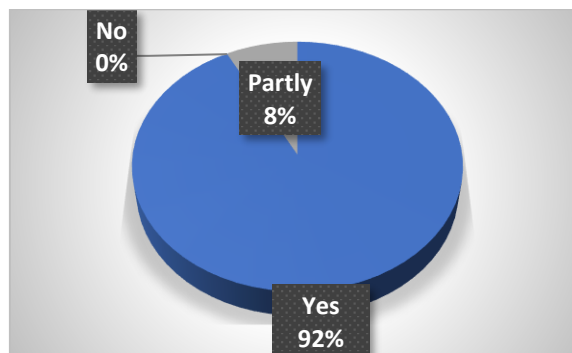


Figure 3. Does professional success in Lithuania depend on the correct and expressive use of the Lithuanian language?

The fourth question sought to find out the respondents' attitudes when they try to speak their native language correctly. There were several options to choose from. The option “I always try to speak correctly” received the majority of votes (40%), followed by the option “I only speak correctly in an official environment” (37%) (Fig. 4). This choice does not indicate that the younger generation does not want to speak correctly, but sometimes in an informal environment, it is actually possible to deviate from the correct usage, to create neologisms that are understandable only to this group of people, etc. Of course, this will no longer be correct language usage. The most surprising thing was that even 33 % chose the statement that they use the correct Lithuanian language in social networks – this is a rather high result and shows that social networks are no longer a place where you can write anything. The least frequently chosen options were correct use of language in both formal and informal settings (19%) and correct speaking in the family (15%). The latter option also reveals a certain social aspect, that the family is relaxed and thinks less about how to say one or another thought correctly.

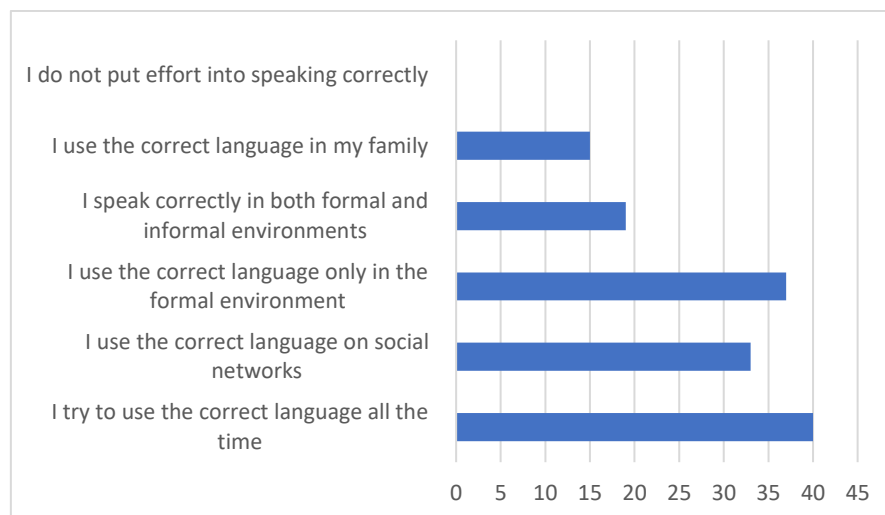


Figure 4. In what situations do you try to use the Lithuanian language correctly?

The fifth question sought to find out what characteristics the respondents attribute to national identity (several answer options could be chosen). After summing up their answers, it can be seen that the majority of respondents associate national identity with language, as many as 77% of respondents marked this feature (Fig. 5). Hence, for many, nationality, identifying oneself as a member of a nation, is associated with language. Language can be seen as the main element that allows us to identify ourselves as a nation. Such results only confirm the idea

mentioned in the article by V. Diržinauskytė (2013) that language encourages a person to identify himself/herself with a certain nation. Anthropologists also support this position and claim that language helps to preserve and transmit the collective (nation) experience (Antinienė, 2002). Slightly fewer respondents identified culture (75%), customs (69%), history (57%) and citizenship (43%) as traits associated with national identity. It is obvious that ethnicity, self-association with the nation, is based on ethnic and historical aspects. These are some of the main features that distinguish nations. Observation of customs and common culture are becoming distinguishing features, allowing differentiation of people according to their belonging to the nation. These aspects, as well as the language itself, are developed from an early age and, therefore, they become an inseparable part of a certain nation whereas history, although it is a given virtue, that a member of a nation has to accept, unites and connects the individuals by the past. One can start to speak the other language and accept the customs and culture of the other nation but it is hardly possible to possess the history of the other nation. Geographic position (24 %), education (20 %), and religion (12 %) for respondents seemed to be the characteristics least related to national identity. On the one hand, one can claim that religion, though it is a characteristic acquired at an early age, does not affect the youth so deeply and they do not value this characteristic as essential for identifying national identity. On the other hand, the main religions are widespread and Catholicism cannot be regarded as a distinguishing characteristic of the Lithuanian nation.

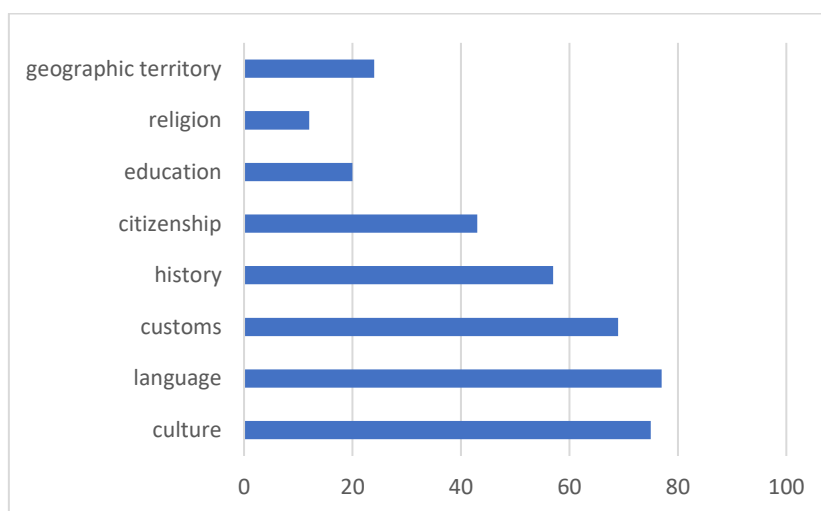


Figure 5. Characteristics of national identity

When evaluating the impact of globalisation on national identity characteristics, respondents most frequently chose the native language (63 %) (Fig. 6). Thus, even though the young generation values its language and is trying to speak and write it correctly, it feels that globalisation mostly affects the preservation of one's native language. Culture was also frequently mentioned (61 %). This option must be regarded as important because culture affected by globalisation is rarely mentioned but respondents' answers lead to concerns that this part of national identity must be preserved and fostered more. Besides language and culture, national values, affected by globalisation, are listed (53 %). The very national identity was mentioned by slightly fewer than half of respondents (46 %), whereas customs were chosen the least frequently (40 %). Thus, one can assume that the young generation regards customs as least affected by globalisation and customs remain sufficiently original and unique.

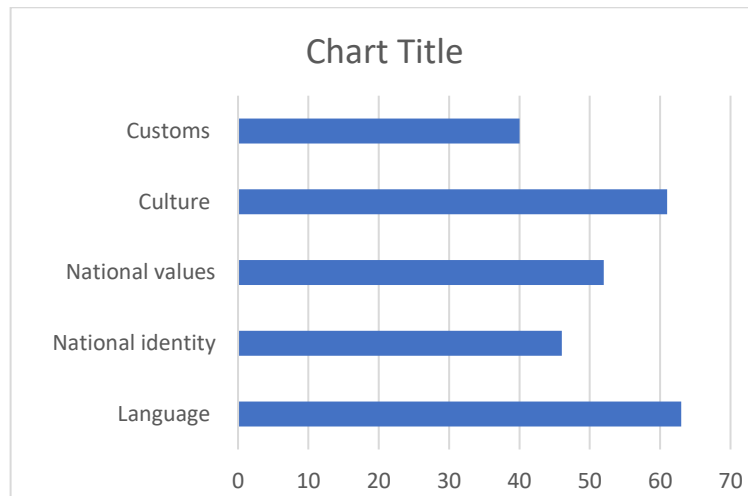


Figure 6. What does globalisation affect?

The last question asked if it was worth preserving Lithuanians’ national identity. Even 92 % of respondents claim that it is worth preserving national identity and fostering it (Fig. 7). Nevertheless, it is the uniqueness of our nation, that does not allow the nation to disappear in the global environment. There were no respondents who chose the answer NO whereas the remaining 8 % claim that national identity must be preserved in part. Such results lead to the conclusion that the younger generation does not tend to disappear in the global world, but rather understands the importance of national identity and has a firm opinion that national features must be preserved.

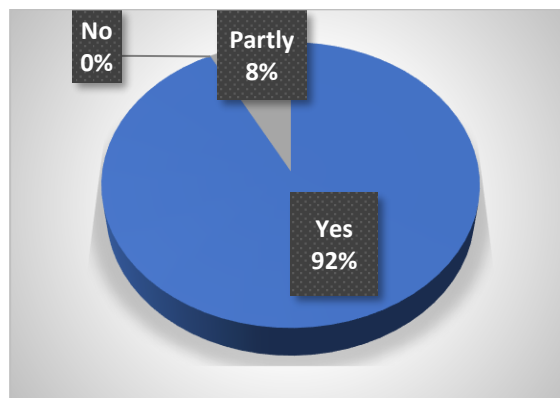


Figure 7. Is it worth preserving Lithuanians’ national identity?

Having summarized the obtained results, one can claim that the majority of respondents relate the national identity with the native language while the selection of the latter reveals the attitude of the youth that national issues especially language, culture, and customs are highly important for preserving the uniqueness. They must be fostered and preserved most.

Conclusions

Nation and nationality, by ensuring the continuity of culture and its uniqueness, not only give individuality and existential meaning to the person. National identity is a complex, dynamic phenomenon that changes together with the changing social context. Modern globalisation makes it possible to know many things that are far away from us; on the other hand, global changes pose problematic challenges to the national identity of society and the

individual. This process and its consequences are evaluated ambiguously, which shows a contradictory evaluation of globalisation in relation to nationality. The native language is considered an important feature of national identity, which needs to be preserved, maintained and valued in a global context.

The results of a survey conducted among students of the Law and Pre-trial Process (with a specialisation in Forensic Science) and Law and Police Activities programmes of the Public Security Academy of Mykolas Romeris University revealed that many young people associate national identity with their native language and culture, and find common links between them.

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