

# NATIONAL IDENTITY AND MULTILINGUALISM IN LITHUANIAN CITIES

**Laima Kalėdienė**

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to analyse the growing concern over the treatment of multilingualism in the main cities of Lithuania (Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda) with the focus on the population's national identity and self-consciousness identifying the prospects of preserving the language-related national identity. The main problem seems to be deciding on which language of instruction would be most beneficial to balanced communication. This is a task requiring thoughtful planning and is surrounded by debate. Somebody prefer instruction only in the official language, but some aim to foster linguistic and thus social diversity by encouraging teaching in several languages, emphatically amplifying the English.

**KEY WORDS:** national identity, language of instruction, ecology of language, language policy, multilingualism, sociolinguistic inquiry.

## ANOTACIJA

Straipsnyje analizuojamas didžiulesiose Lietuvos miestuose (Vilniuje, Kaune ir Klaipėdoje) vartojamų kalbų ir tautinės tapatybės santykis, aptariamos su kalba susijusio tautinio identiteto išsaugojimo perspektyvos. Vienas iš svarbiausių aptariamų klausimų yra mokymo kalbos ar kalbų pasirinkimas siekiant efektyvesnio visuomenės narių bendravimo. Ši problema ne tik plačiai diskutuojama visuomenėje, bet yra spėjama ir kalbų politikos, ypač švietimo planavimo, lygmeniu. Dalis visuomenės linkusi manyti, kad pagrindinė mokymo kalba Lietuvoje turėtų būti lietuvių, tačiau yra nemažai manančių, kad mokymas gali vykti įvairiomis kalbomis, ypač pabrėžiamas anglų kalbos reikalingumas.

**PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI:** tautinė tapatybė, mokymo kalba, kalbos ekologija, kalbų politika, daugialkalbystė, sociolingvistinis tyrimas.

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## Introduction

As the presence of English in Europe continues to grow, mounting interest is building in the position of national languages among European institutions, societies, and people. Lithuanian, like many national languages throughout the world is in an awkward position (cf.: Extra 2004, Grumadienė 2005, Maurais 1997, Rannut 2007, etc.). It is at the same time the only official (national, state or titular)<sup>1</sup> language with the potential to dominate other languages within national borders (cf.: Kaubrys 2002) and a potentially subjugated language with respect to English as an international language (cf.: Mettewie 2009, Nekvapil 2006, etc.). Do language policies that pertain to

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<sup>1</sup> “National language” and “official language” are best understood as two concepts or legal categories with ranges of meaning that may coincide, or may be intentionally separate. Obviously a stateless nation or minority is not in the position to legislate an official language, but their language may be considered a national language. Sometimes the term “titular language” is used in the same meaning as “official language” or “national language”, but it should be noticed, that this term was introduced in the Soviet Union to denote nations that give rise to titles of autonomous entities within the union. The language of a titular nation was declared an additional (after Russian) official language of the corresponding administrative unit. Following the latter proclamation of independence of Lithuania, previous “titular language” was denominated as “national language” (cf.: Dunlop et al. 1993, p. 1109).

multilingualism in Lithuania reflect this duality such that all languages in the Lithuanian linguistic landscape<sup>2</sup> are treated equitably? With concern increasing about the role of English in Lithuania, there is a risk that the positions of minority languages will be overshadowed by policy attempts to strengthen Lithuanian. An ecolinguistic approach<sup>3</sup> is needed to explore holistically the development of language status planning, particularly with respect to language rights, for Lithuanian's recognized minorities and their languages: the Poles and the Russians, as well as the Caraites, the Tatars, the Roma (Romani) and the Jews (Yiddish), the latter four being highly discouraged for years. Those minority language issues are situated in historical and sociolinguistic context relative to Lithuanian, and then recent language policies, are analyzed in light of this context. In all, this remark brings to light the complex tripartite inter-relationship among English, Lithuanian, and minority languages in Lithuanian language policy.

The ongoing process of globalization has substantial impact on many areas of social life; the society's ecolinguistic system also experiences its profound influence. The choice of languages used in various spheres expands and fluctuates, there are marked changes in linguistic attitudes and values and their impact on the preservation of national identity. Cities and towns experience the greatest impact of the changing variety of languages on offer; however, cities and towns are among those whose linguistic choice is most noticeable and influential for the whole of the society. Lithuania's language policy develops in the context of the EU language policy enhancing polilingualism and multilingualism. However, language policy guidelines<sup>4</sup> so far have been hardly based on research into actual language use due to the simple reason that there has been hardly any research done in the area.

### Sociolinguistic inquiry

An important parameter of linguistic life is the linguistic behaviour of urban population, reflecting the linguistic situation of a particular period as well as providing the basis for predicting the future prospects for languages. Increasing urbanization leads to faster changes in the linguistic behaviour of the population, the language spoken in major cities and towns provides basis for predicting the future situation of languages. Research into actual sociolinguistic situation in cities and towns provides scientifically-grounded basis for the decisions of the national language policy makers and language planners which is why research into urban language has become a topical issue.

Unfortunately, research into the actual language use and the national identity in Lithuania is scarce. Vilnius and its linguistic codes have received slightly more attention than other cities and towns in Lithuania. In this context, the project of Meilutė Ramonienė and Gabriel Hogan-Brun stand out. The project was focussed on the analysis into the linguistic behaviour of different complexity level and attitudes of the population in Vilnius.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The basic premises of linguistic landscape analysis is that visual language use in public spaces represents observable manifestations of circulating ideas about multilingualism (Ben-Rafael, Shohamy et al. 2006, p. 7).

<sup>3</sup> Ecolinguistics emerged in the 1990's as a new paradigm of linguistic research which took into account not only the social context in which language is embedded, but also the ecological context in which societies are embedded. Michael Halliday's 1990 paper *New Ways of Meaning: the Challenge to Applied Linguistics* is often credited as a seminal work which provided the stimulus for linguists to consider the ecological context and consequences of language.

<sup>4</sup> See: *Valstybinės kalbos politikos 2003–2008 m. gairės* [State Language Policy Guidelines for 2003-2008] [Interactive: <http://www.vlkk.lt/i/ataskaitos/gaires2003.doc>], accessed 15 07 2009].

<sup>5</sup> See: HOGAN-BRUN, Gabriel & RAMONIENĖ, Meilutė 2005. The Language Situation in Lithuania. *Journal of Baltic Studies* 36(3), Special Issue: The Baltic Sociolinguistic Review, 345-370; Idem 2005. Perspectives on Language Attitudes and Use in Lithuania's Multilingual Setting, in *Language and Social Processes in the Baltic Repub-*

In order to have chance to appeal to facts, the project *Language usage and national identity in urban areas of Lithuania (Cities and languages)*<sup>6</sup> was initiated. It was an extended representative survey into the language proficiency level and language use in public and private spheres carried out in Vilnius, Kaunas (Čubajevaitė 2009) and Klaipėda. It also aimed at identifying usage tendencies of spoken and written language, linguistic attitudes in respect to various linguistic codes and language contacts, open and hidden prestige and their relationship with the identity. The research included social factors determining the choice of a linguistic code (social environment, social status of the participants of a communicative act, age, gender, function of interaction or aim of communication, etc.). It covered the key dimensions of official/ unofficial, familiar/unfamiliar, formal/informal language. The language proficiency level and language use as well as its relationship with the respondent's national identity as declared by the respondent served as the basis for the quantitative analysis. An attempt was made to provide answers to the following questions: How many and what languages/dialects are used at home/work/in public in the cities and towns of Lithuania? What language does the urban population claim as being proficient in? When and why is the language/dialect used? Which areas by different groups of society (according to social status, affiliation with a national minority or majority, etc.) are considered highly suitable for the English language (i.e. where it would be tolerated, used and/or taught to their children)? What are the attitudes of the urban population towards dominating foreign languages – English and other competing foreign languages (German and French)? How is the use of language varieties related to the national identity and its preservation in the process of globalization?

The questionnaire was prepared by the project team, whereas the population was questioned by a centre of sociological research.

Both, quantitative and qualitative analysis was performed. The focus was done on the native tongue or dialect, or non-native languages and their use, areas or spheres of their use, forms (written and spoken), the impact of English nowadays frequently used in the cities and major towns of Lithuania. One of the objectives of the research is concerned with identifying the use and impact of languages on the national identity in ethnically mixed work environments, joint ventures and the academia. An important aspect of the present research is concerned with the selection of language varieties of national minorities for private and public use and problems of languages and national identity in mixed families.

The last population census in Lithuania provides data on native tongues of the population. In major cities the majority of the population (56,4% in Vilnius, 88,1% in Kaunas, 67,7% in Klaipėda, and 89,0% in Šiauliai) consider Lithuanian as their native tongue (cf.: Department of Statistics). However, it is not quite clear which languages or their varieties, how, when and for what purposes are actually used in various spheres (including private and public), which are transmitted from generation to generation, which are limited in use or are likely to be ousted, how they influence the speakers' identity and how identity influences the choice and use of languages. That is why a

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lics Surrounding EU Accession. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 26(5), Special Issue: Language and Social Processes in the Baltic Republics Surrounding their EU Accession, 425-441; Idem, 2004. Changing Levels of Bilingualism across the Baltic. *Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 7(1), 62-77; Idem 2003. Emerging Language and Education Policies in Lithuania. *Language Policy* 2, 27-45.

<sup>6</sup> The present research was supported by the Lithuanian State Science and Studies Foundation, it started in the fall of 2007 and has finished at the end of 2009. Vilnius University was an organizer, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Meilutė Ramonienė being manager, also other scholars from Vytautas Magnus University and Klaipėda University as well as from Institute of the Lithuanian Language being involved.

large-scale quantitative sociolinguistic inquiry was performed (2.037 respondents in three cities were questioned successfully, questionnaire consisting of 64 questions).

The qualitative analysis was integrated into the quantitative analysis. The findings from the qualitative analysis series of empirical studies present a barometer of life opportunities, social inequalities, and national coherence in a changing contemporary environment. On the basis of the research results there are recommendations to be prepared for the new language guidelines and language planning as well as educational institutions.

### **Presence of English**

According to this inquiry data, English is the most prestigious language in Lithuania, the Lithuanian being the most suitable language for business, higher education, public relationship, humour and communication.

The quantitative analysis also established the fact about 40% of respondents, who declared that they don't know English at all: nor speak, nor read, nor write.

As the main reason of their incompetence interviewed respondents specified language training in school:

I want to speak English very much, but I suppose it is too late for me to learn English. You know (...) in what way we were taught at school. English is for young people (51 female, Vilnius).

For the quality of the language training at school complained the young people as well:

The teachers of English in our school are changing three or four times every year (17 male, Vilnius).

Skilled teacher of English don't want to work at school because of money, it's impossible to live on a teacher's salary. That's why I do not know English as well as I would like (18 female, Klaipėda).

It is surprising, even some kind of revelation that every other respondent would like to send his child to the bilingual school:

I suppose, the best way to learn English is attending of bilingual school, Lithuanian-English (49 female, Kaunas).

Only at school they [children] are able to learn English properly. I would like my children to attend the Lithuanian-English school. (...) school with both languages of instruction. Children hear English all around, they know a thing or two, but they need to learn this language perfectly. For the future (71 female, Vilnius).

So for future guidelines of language policy in education there could be a very favourable attitude toward the early introduction of one foreign language in primary school as well as toward an extension of bilingual teaching (Kalėdienė 2009, p. 289). The very first steps in this direction are observable from this, i.e. 2009/2010, school year. Percentage of secondary level pupils who studied English, German or French as foreign languages at 2005/2006 school year justifies the tendency of

growing prestige of English: English studied 77,6% of pupils, German – 32,6%, French – 6,3%<sup>7</sup>. On an average the number of foreign languages studied at secondary education schools in Lithuania per pupil at the basic education level is higher (1,7) than at the secondary education level (1,4), where pupils may choose whether or not to study a second foreign language. Russian still is the most popular as the second foreign language<sup>8</sup>.

Of course, the range of foreign languages (offered and chosen) could be wider. This is perhaps to be especially considered for Nordic and Romance languages as well as for neighbouring languages other than Russian. There should be noted interdependence among the various languages in contact: State language, minority languages, and so-called foreign languages. What could be underlined is that these relations should not be seen as potentially dangerous interferences, but as a beneficial contribution to the cumulative and multiplying development of a plurilingual competence.

The other way of obtaining knowledge in English the respondents pointed out TV, movies especially:

When I was a child, I watched animated cartoons on TV in English. Then I began to understand English (21 male, Klaipėda).

Respondents have noted listening of music as substantial contribution in English language acquisition:

All my knowledge of English is from music. Many years ago I've learned all songs of Beatles by heart (56 male, Vilnius).

Everybody knows, that good music sounds only in English in the whole world. Everybody listen English songs (27 male, Kaunas).

As far as radio and television broadcasting in Lithuania is concerned the principles to be followed are laid down in the *Law on the National Radio and Television* (1996). Art. 4 of this Law stipulate that the national broadcaster must ensure a variety of topics and genres in its programs and orient them towards the various strata of society and people of different ages, various nationalities and convictions. Efforts are made by the Lithuanian authorities to increase the number of programs on radio and television in English, so as to present more material and information. On the other hand, this *Law* takes care of the Lithuanian language too: “Art. 11. Language in which Public Information shall be presented: a) Public information shall be presented and disseminated in the state language or some other language pursuant to the provisions of the Law on State Language; b) Public information producers must show concern for the culture of the language.” The other broadcasting companies are seeking out how to transmit more programs in English legally, according to the *Law on State Language* (1995), where it is declared, that audiovisual programs and motion pictures publicly shown in Lithuania must be translated into the state language or shown with subtitles in Lithuanian. All attempts are making to approve, that this regulation is not to be applied to teaching and special programs and events, as well as events and programs held for a certain occasion or intended for ethnic communities, and also to radio and television programs or texts of musical works of foreign states which are broadcast in Lithuania (Art. 13).

<sup>7</sup> See: *Education in Lithuania. Facts and Figures* 2006. [Interactive: [http://www.smm.lt/en/stofedu/docs/Education\\_in\\_Lithuania\\_Facts\\_and\\_Figures\\_2006.pdf](http://www.smm.lt/en/stofedu/docs/Education_in_Lithuania_Facts_and_Figures_2006.pdf), accessed 20 09 2009].

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

According to the results of quantitative inquiry, 20% of Lithuanians feel themselves inadequacy for lacking good knowledge of English. In spite of that, even 77% of them are not proposing to learn English in any way. It means that the role of secondary education as well as language policy in English language acquisition is enlarging to a certain degree. An integrated language policy is first and foremost a policy where languages are fully integrated as an explicit component of the educational process; but it is as well, beyond that, a policy which offers forms of integration between and across languages, while differentiating between them.

In May 2003, *State Language Policy Guidelines 2003-2008* were approved by the Lithuanian Seimas (Parliament). The Lithuanian State Language Commission (<http://www.vlkk.lt/>) was put in charge with the setting up of directions for corpus planning. One of its tasks is to foster the Lithuanian language and promote the modern development of its internal resources. Though the *Guidelines* do not specifically address the issue of whether or how the English loan words in use should be reduced, they do pay attention to the increasing occurrence of Anglicism's. In 2000, a special program was approved by the Lithuanian Government: *Concerning the Program for the Replacement of Loanwords by Lithuanian Equivalents 2001-2010*. Attempts to consolidate ideology and pragmatism are obvious in these *Guidelines*: "English is considered to be the most important medium on the material and intellectual markets of the world. Its role in Lithuania's economic, social, and cultural life is increasing. Not only is the motivation for learning English growing, it is also increasing for acquiring a trade, finding a job and engaging in creative work, whereas at the same time the prestige of the Lithuanian language seems to be diminishing in those areas. The state language policy must offset new value orientations as dictated by the process of globalization, otherwise the knowledge society of the future will lose its language and national identity in general".

Of particular importance too is education and language acquisition planning, as specified in the Seimas' legislation *Concerning the Program for the Use and Development of the State Language 1996-2005 and its Implementation*. This Program finances the teaching of the so-called language culture discipline that refers to language ecology. These *Language culture courses* last for one to two semesters and are compulsory for young people in all types of universities and colleges. The norms taught in these classes are also extended to persons working in the state administration and the media.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that in the current *Lithuanian Language Policy Guidelines* acquisition planning requires closer attention as a natural part of overall language policy. This is partly due to the fact that the *Guidelines* were drawn up by the Lithuanian State Language Commission, which is not liable for language teaching and acquisition planning, as set out by its *Law on the Amendment of the Republic of Lithuania Law on the Status of the State Language Commission* (2001).

### **Expansion of Lithuanian as a state language**

In its 1989 *Law on Citizenship* Lithuania opted for a so called "zero option". This means that any non-Lithuanian, irrespective of the duration of his or her stay in Lithuania, was granted Lithuanian citizenship. As a consequence a majority of the population (including 90% of all residents of different nationalities) became Lithuanian citizens.

In 1991, after obtaining independence, the *Law on Citizenship* was tightened. From 1991 onwards applicants for naturalization must pass an exam testing their knowledge of the Lithuanian language and the Lithuanian Constitution.

Over the past decade, an effective system for State language acquisition and testing (including certification) has been introduced, which was backed by the 1992 Seimas legislation (in *Con-*

cerning the *Qualifying Categories of the State Language Acquisition* (1992-1998), last revised in 2003 *Concerning the Restatement and Implementation of the Qualifying Categories of the State Language Acquisition*). This led to a rapid increase in bilingualism amongst minority representatives<sup>9</sup>. Consequently, plans are to introduce the same Lithuanian language capability examination for pupils of all secondary schools (including Russian and Polish schools) owing to remarkable and swift changes in the attitudes amongst the national minorities. Another revision of language policy in state language acquisition is needed because of new situation: the new wave of immigrants from the East and South is coming.

According to the results of the *Cities and Languages* inquiry, it is in demand for non-Lithuanian speakers to learn the Lithuanian: 97% of respondents declared, that it is important to know state language, 80% of them emphasizing citizenship as main motive:

Living in Lithuania it is impossible to live active life without the Lithuanian language knowledge. Try to do it in America or Germany [laughing] (36 male, Kaunas).

One must be able to make oneself understood with everybody living in the same country (42 female, Vilnius).

On my own experience I know how it is [being unable to speak Lithuanian]. You can get in a tricky situation anywhere. I am Russian. Before Landsbergis' revolution everybody could speak Russian, now the situation is rather complicated, young people really don't know Russian. (74 female, Vilnius).

The fact, that 49% of respondents took up the position, that immigrants also must take state language examinations, is quite new. The job is usually pointed out as the main reason for this decision:

There is no job enough for Lithuanian citizens themselves, why should we make easy way for immigrants? Let them know Lithuanian as well (51 male, Kaunas).

Non-Lithuanian speaking respondents specified reasons of knowing Lithuanian as such: "to make oneself understood with Lithuanians" – 71%, "to show honour to state where I live" – 38%, "for better chance in getting a job" – 29%, "because children are learning" – 17%, "other reasons" – 11%.

Three quarters of respondents do not discomfort for their speaking Lithuanian with accent, because almost nobody rebukes them for that:

My Lithuanian associates usually don't pay any attention for my mistakes. Sometimes they keep laughing, but I never take umbrage at that (48 female, Vilnius).

Of course I am speaking Lithuanian with accent, though nobody told anything about that for me (32 male, Vilnius).

On the other hand, the respondents, whose native language is other than Lithuanian, feel the need to acquire more skills in Lithuanian: 42% of Russians and 33% of Poles feel themselves inad-

<sup>9</sup> See: HOGAN-BRUN, Gabriel & RAMONIENĖ, Meilutė. Changing Levels of Bilingualism across the Baltic. *Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 7(1), 2004, p. 68.

equacy for lacking good knowledge of Lithuanian. The main reason for seeking the better acquisition of the Lithuanian language is possibility to get a better job or even any job:

Yes, I could get a better job than this one, but I am not able to write Lithuanian properly (29 female, Klaipėda).

They didn't want me because of my Lithuanian. But now I am speaking Lithuanian readily (31 male, Vilnius).

Turning of the tide is obvious among the representatives of minorities, because the language scene in Lithuania comprises a diversity of individual plurilingual repertoires, of which the state language is more and more a common denominator.

## Conclusions

Making an impetus on bilingual instruction or incorporation of different languages of instruction is quite new public decision in Lithuania, and it is made in order to help students learn better by giving them diverse perspectives.

It is noticeable, that official language policy of Lithuania leaves behind the public opinion and still is disabled to nick in time to meet challenges of changeable world. For example, Ministry of education and science began to introduce the English language learning at the primary school since 2009, but Lithuania is lacking of English language teachers, so there is no enough teachers for this decision to be implemented. Strictly speaking, there are no conditions for new policy of education to be successfully embodied.

The better acquisition of English is needful both for children and adults. The position of the latter is worse. As a result of spontaneous and indigested learning of English the Lithuanian language is being badly hurt. The motivation for learning English is increasing for finding a job in Lithuania as well as abroad, whereas at the same time the prestige of the Lithuanian language seems to be diminishing. The state language policy must offset new value proposition, otherwise the Lithuanian population of the future will lose its language and national identity in general.

Bilingual instruction is not panacea. On the other hand, according to the results of the socio-linguistic inquiry *Cities and languages*, not inconsiderable segment of the public prefers a single language of instruction in order to support national unity and homogeneity.

Given the constitution of the Lithuanian population, the language scene comprises a diversity of individual plurilingual repertoires, of which the state language is more and more a common denominator.

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## TAUTINĖ TAPATYBĖ IR DAUGIAKALBYSTĖ LIETUVOS MIESTUOSE

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### Santrauka

Visame pasaulyje nepaliaujamai auga anglų kalbos reikšmė, jos tiesioginė įtaka nacionalinėms kalboms, taip pat ryškėja jos daromas poveikis nacionalinių kalbų statusui. Būdama valstybine, lietuvių kalba yra plačiai vartojama pačioje Lietuvoje, tačiau pasaulio mastu iškilusi anglų kalbos galybė turi apraiškų ir Lietuvoje, nes ir čia anglų kalbos prestižas, kaip daug kur pasaulyje, ne vienam yra didesnis už savosios kalbos prestižą. Taigi iškilo grėsmė ir Lietuvos ekolingvistinei sistemai. Lietuvos kalbų politika, išdėstyta Valstybinės kalbos politikos 2003–2008 m. gairėse (<http://www.vlkk.lt/lit/apie/kalbos-politikos-gaires>, žiūrėta 2009-09-11), nors iš esmės neprieštarauja Europos Sąjungos kalbų politikos esmei, vis dėlto nėra pakankamai pasirengusi priimti savo laikmečio iššūkius. Visų pirma tai pasakytina anglų kalbos atžvilgiu.

Siekiant išsiaiškinti gyventojų vertybinę orientaciją kalbų vartojimo ir tautinės tapatybės atžvilgiu, 2007–2009 m. atliktas sociolingvistinis pagrindinių Lietuvos miestų – Vilniaus, Kauno ir Klaipėdos – gyventojų tyrimas Miestai ir kalbos. Kiekybinės apklausos – anketavimo būdu apklausti 2037 respondentai, taip pat atliktas kokybinis tokių pačių respondentų tyrimas laisvo interviu forma, siekiant nustatyti ir išanalizuoti per kiekybinę apklausą gautų atsakymų priežastis.

Apklausos metu išaiškėjo neatitikimas tarp realios padėties ir siekių: apie 40% apklaustųjų pareiškė visiškai nemokantys anglų kalbos, nors ją laiko prestižiškiausia Lietuvoje, daugelis norėtų ją mokėti. Kokybinė apklausa parodė, kad nemaža dalis gyventojų nėra patenkinti anglų kalbos mokymo kokybe mokyklose, mokosi jos arba yra pramokę žiūrėdami filmus ar klausydamiesi angliškų dainų. Nors norėtų mokėti angliškai, mokytiš tos kalbos dažniausiai (77 % atveju) neketina. Užtat labai norėtų, kad jų vaikai mokytųsi dvikalbėse – lietuvių ir anglų dėstomomis kalbomis – mokyklose (49 % atsakymų). Toks apklausos rezultatas dėl dvikalbių mokyklų yra labai netikėtas, bet jis rodo tikrai išaugusį anglų kalbos mokėjimo poreikį.

Dabartinės švietimo sistemos vidurinio mokslo grandies padėties analizė parodė, kad nors socialinis anglų kalbos mokymo poreikis ryškėjo jau seniau, kai vis daugiau (77,6 % moksleivių 2005–2006 mokslo metais kaip užsienio kalbų mokėsi anglų, vis dėlto Lietuvos švietimo politika nebuvo laiku pakreipta taip, kad tenkintų piliečių poreikius. Net ir šiemet įvestas ankstyvas anglų kalbos mokymas pradinėse mokyklose, nuo antros klasės, vargu ar bus sėkmingas, nes trūksta anglų kalbos mokytojų, kadangi geri specialistai dėl palyginti prasto atlygio neina dirbti į mokyklas. Taigi numatomas politikos ir praktikos neatitikimas.

Anglų kalba daro visokeriopą poveikį pačiai lietuvių kalbai: kuo menčiau mokama angliškai, tuo labiau neprognozuojama tos kalbos įtaka ir interferencija. Oficialioji Lietuvos kalbų politika yra užėmusi gynybines pozicijas, nėra pasirengta lietuvių kalbos puoselėjimui ir ugdymui naujomis aplinkybėmis: kitose šalyse jau diegiamas, todėl netruks ateiti ir į Lietuvą pakaitinis mokymas dviem ar net keliomis kalbomis per tą pačią pamoką. Nė viena aukštoji mokykla dar nerengia tokių specialistų, kurie galėtų tai įdiegti praktiškai. Tokiais atvejais bus svarbu ne tik mokėti dvi kalbas ir išmanyti dėstomą dalyką – ne kiek ne mažiau reikšminga, kaip bus saugoma ekolingvistinė sistema, puoselėjama tautos pasaulėjauta ir kultūra. Vis dažnesnės diskusijos dėl galimybės žiniasklai-

doje vartoti ne vien lietuvių kalbą (išskyrus įstatymų numatytus tautinių mažumų kalbų vartojimo ir kitus panašius atvejus): „Aš tai nieko nesuprasčiau angliškai, jei per televizorių kalbėtų. Bet gal išmokčiau, juk lenkų taip ir išmokau“ (58 m. moteris, Kaunas).

Kad kalbos statusas turi reikšmės tolesniam jos likimui, rodo ir faktas, kad lietuvių kalbą kaip negimtąją yra išmokusi absoliuti dauguma nelietuvių piliečių. Itin teigiamą požiūrį į valstybinės lietuvių kalbos mokėjimo būtinumą galima paaiškinti taip pat, kaip ir požiūrį į anglų kalbą: „Be lietuvių kalbos mokėjimo nieko gero nebus. Negausi darbo arba išmes ir iš to, ką turi. Nebent gavių šluoti“ (40 m. vyras, Vilnius).

Apibendrinant galima pasakyti, kad Lietuvos visuomenė niekuo nesiskiria nuo kitų Europos šalių visuomenių tuo, kad suvokia dabartinės Europos, iš dalies ir pasaulio, pagrindinės bendravimo kalbos – anglų – reikšmę savo ir savo vaikų gyvenime. Daugelis tų apklaustųjų, kurie pageidauja dvikalbių mokyklų, šitokį savo sprendimą padarė intuityviai, nebūdami nė girdėję apie naujausias kalbų mokymo tendencijas ir madas. Paklausti, ar prisimena, kaip buvo kovojama dėl lietuvių-rusų, rusų-lenkų ir kitų dvikalbių mokyklų panaikinimo prieš pat ir tuoj po Nepriklausomybės atkūrimo, nė nedvejodami atsakydavo, kad rusų kalba buvusi nereikalinga, primesta ir nemiela, o anglų kalbos atžvilgiu padėtis esanti visai kitokia: „Nori gauti gerą darbą, mokykis angliškai“ (61 m. moteris, Kaunas).

Kalbos pozicijų susilpnėjimas išklibina ir tautinės tapatybės suvokimą. Gal todėl keletas labai jaunų respondentų nurodė esą ne Lietuvos, o Europos arba pasaulio piliečiai.