

Language ideologies

A perspective from standardization

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Language ideology (LI)

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- A useful starting point by Woolard (1991) on Silverstein (1979, 1987):
 - *linguistic ideologies are shared bodies of common sense notions about the nature of language and communicative behaviour.*
- Intra-disciplinary notion in linguistics
 - operates as a level above the "language use" that intervenes in it.
- A meta-theoretical notion in linguistics
 - linguists have beliefs about languages that feed into their scientific work

A small poll

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- Linguistic standards of correctness in pre-literate and literate cultures? Same/Different
- Linguistic standards of correctness in spoken and written language? Same/Different

Estonian situation

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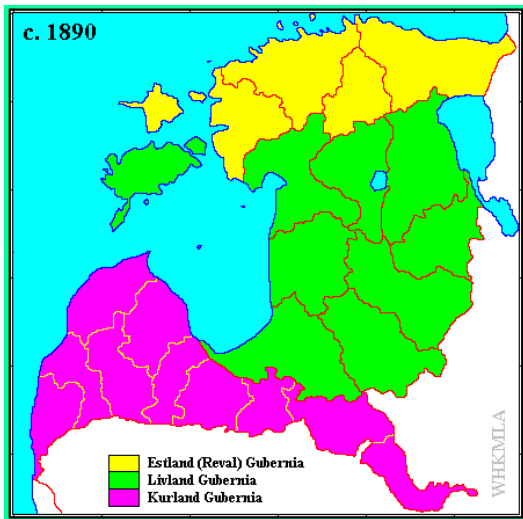
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Estonian context in the 19th century

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- ~1400-1800, native Estonians were serfs: low prestige, high degree of geographic isolation, little social mobility
- New imperial laws (1802, 1804, 1809, 1816/1819, 1849/1856) significantly improve civic and economic freedom
- increasing societal modernization, urbanization, and spread of basic education
- ~1860-1885 "national awakening" also leads increased political and cultural mobilization
- by late 19th century various communities of practice operating in spoken and written Estonian have emerged
- ~1850s-1880s - lack of a stigma written or spoken form?

Broader context

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Language interest in Europe

The changing status of language and linguistic diversity constitutes one of the most incisive shifts in the transition from Enlightenment thought into Romanticism and the nineteenth century. (Leerssen, to appear)

These models of thought travelled in correlation with societal modernization, urbanization and educational ideals all across Europe. It would be interesting to look at variations on the theme.

Methodological considerations

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- Object of research
- Theory
- Challenges in the data

Object

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Standard language culture (Milroy, 2001):
Linguistically (clean)

- Imposition of uniformity on natural variation

Culturally (social correlates)

- Enregisterment of a supra-regional variety
- Metapragmatically understood as "attention to speech/language"
- There is some codification and an expectation for it

Theory to action

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- Inter-connectedness (linguistic concerns, other social science)
- Core elements (theoretical objects should be interconnected in an explicit way that would give clear guidelines for research)
- Right level of specification (the variables we talk about are the kind that we can observe in the data)
- Appropriateness to research goals (it should take us towards a better understanding of our object)

Challenges in the materials

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Historical data is sparse

- The kind of evidence we can have nowadays (elicited reactions, live conversations, experiments with intervention), we can not have about earlier times.

Danger of anachronisms

- Readings have to be contextual, it is easy to misrepresent phenomena in terms of what they later became

The variability in the data is often unknown

- It is often difficult to even estimate the range in which the data could have varied. Extrapolation can sometimes be risky.

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- Irvine & Gal (2000)
- Agha (2003, 2005)
- Silverstein (1979, 1985, 2003)

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Linguistic differentiation

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Understanding of linguistic varieties is guided by ideas:

- *‘ideological aspects of that linguistic differentiation’ = the ideas with which participants and observers frame their understanding of linguistic varieties and map those understandings onto people, events, and activities that are significant to them. I&G (2000)*
- these conceptual schemes = ideologies (because they are suffused with the political and moral issues)

Transformation of ideologies

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Processes of semiotic transformation (Irvine & Gal, 2000):

- Iconization
- Fractal recursivity
- Erasure

Iconization

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Conclusion

- Iconization - involves a transformation of the sign relationship between linguistic features (or varieties) and the social images with which they are linked. Linguistic features that index social groups or activities appear to be iconic representations of them, as if a linguistic feature somehow depicted or displayed a social groups inherent nature or essence. NB! This process entails the attribution of cause and immediate necessity to a connection (between linguistic features and social groups) **that may be only historical, contingent, or conventional.**
- Fractal recursivity
- Erasure

Fractal recursivity

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- Iconization
- Fractal recursivity involves the projection of an opposition, salient at some level of relationship, onto some other level. [...] the dichotomizing and partitioning process that was involved in some understood opposition (between groups or linguistic varieties, for example) recurs at other levels [...].
- Erasure

Erasure

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Conclusion

- Iconization
- Fractal recursivity
- Erasure is the process in which ideology, in simplifying the sociolinguistic field, renders some persons or activities (or sociolinguistic phenomena) invisible. NB! **Facts** that are inconsistent with the ideological scheme either go unnoticed or get explained away. So, for example, a social group or a language may be imagined as homogeneous, its internal variation disregarded.

Some issues

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- Facts = from the perspective of our modern multilingual societies with an awareness of variationist studies.
 - Facts linguistic ideologies in earlier communities
- Why these three types?
 - They seem to lack a common denominator or a general semiotic mechanism as foundation.
- Language ideologies are defined against an earlier, linguistics of "non-ideological" language use.

Social life of a cultural value

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The model of enregisterment as applied to the evolution of a prestige speech register in Britain (Agha, 2003; 2005)

- Change of register formations in a society.
- This is construed as a transformation of habits of speech perception and production
- These habits travel as discursive formations through layers of the society

Enregisterment

Process through which a linguistic repertoire becomes differentiable within a language as a socially recognized register of forms.

The model of change in habit formations

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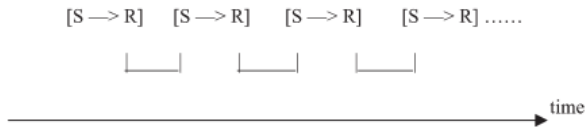
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- Speech chain (naming event + subsequent diffusion, Kripke)



- "the dissemination or spread of a register depends on the circulation of messages typifying speech."
- participants in a speech chain are irreducibly agentive, the account "sharply contrasts with any "top-down" approach to the formation of a standard language"

Process of observation

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- The loci of circulating messages give a demographic profile of members of a speech chain network.
 - "At any given point in the speech chain, we can estimate several characteristics of social persons occupying roles of sender and receiver (their number, their demographic characteristics, their relative social status, etc.)."
 - Early prescriptivist works, popular handbooks on etiquette, elocution and grammar, literary works, weekly newspapers each had their assumed audiences and reach in the society.

Messages have changing value

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Conclusion

Circulation of those messages is modified by the value perceived in them by the participants, e.g. upper class speech habits may be something to imitate for an upperly mobile individual.

- "In speaking of "cultural values" I wish to invite no metaphysics of shared belief. To say that pragmatic behaviors such as uses of a register have cultural values associated with them is simply to say that certain regularities of evaluative behavior can be observed and documented as data."

Single acts may be unpredictable, but trends exist in the macro real-time.

- "there is no necessity to outcomes at the level of individual texts, the density and institutional stabilization of particular metapragmatic genres does appear to produce relatively stable trends for certain periods."

Main argument

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- The process of enregisterment (e.g. of a standard spoken or written variety) involves a gradual sedimentation of habits of speech perception and production across particular social domains of persons.
 - This takes place via speech acts of various degrees of legitimacy by messages typifying speech among active participants.
- Description of the processes through which the values of cultural forms are formulated, maintained and communicated across social populations can be found in the spread of those messages.

Possible issues

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- Model of the speech chain is limited case of interaction
- Looking for "naming events" seems especially susceptible to errors of anachronism
 - e.g. topical case for Cultural Nationalism (Leerssen, 2005)
- values are defined primarily by a market, thus already on the aggregate level?

Indexical order

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- Indexical order (easiest: non-denotational) - value present on every linguistic interaction due to expectations connected to its context.
- Each element in an indexical order is in constant dialectic competition between its reinterpretations via ethno-metapragmatic mediation.
- Ethno-metapragmatics take the shape of a cultural construal of the usage of a particular indexical order which is shaped by ideological schemes.

Role of ideology

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- Indexical order is focussed around moments of interaction, where particular ideological schemes can intervene with a situated interaction of a language.
- These levels of schematization or naturalization of particular ethnometapragmatic perspectives can present a description of language ideologies in as far as they affect particular interactions.
- Ideology (again) exists as an assembly of events of micro-interaction that have some temporal persistence, ideology does not exist on its own.

Indexical order and language change

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Conclusion

- On each linguistic interaction, there is metapragmatic mediation with interventive powers, that may bias the situated linguistic behaviour of particular agents.
- Ideological 'oomph' - force that follows from uniformity, intensity, and sociological spread - constitutes a major vector of language change.
- Ideological engagement in intervening in language use functions characteristically as a cultural construal of the an indexical order's usage, termed ethno-metapragmatics of such usage.

Silverstein on standardization

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Based on Gumperz's dialectal vs superposed variability:

- *Gumperz posited a kind of 1st-order vs. 2nd-order indexicality, [where in dialectal variability] the formal linguistic difference is a (presupposing) index of group- or category-identity of the Speaker, a 1st-order indexicality. [...] The superposed variability is informed [...] by a group-internal expectation of alternation [...] which is characteristically expressed through an ethno-metapragmatic model of enregisterment: superposed' varieties are obviously n+1st-order indexicals with respect to n-th-order, dialectal' ones. (Silverstein, 2003)*
- *The superposed variability is a 2nd-order indexicality depending on a folk- or ethno-metapragmatics of standard register and its potential gradient availability as an alternative "way of saying 'the same' thing" for everyone anxious about indexing identity.*

Silverstein on standardization

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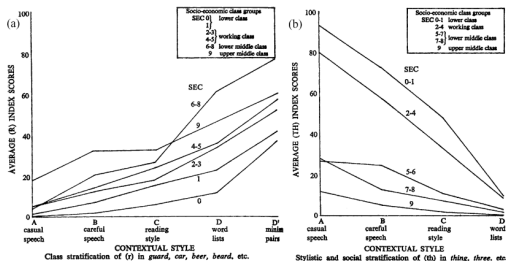


Fig. 12. Rates of "Standard" pronunciations of NYC sociolinguistic 'markers' (Labov).

Such characteristic indexical SEC X "style" rate-curves thus reveal a 1st-order indexical variation that has been swept up into an ideologically-driven metapragmatics of standard register, at the ritual center of which is, of course, the most primordial micro-context of standard pronunciation, grapheme-to-phoneme transduction in the citation-form, one-word-at-a-time mode.

Subconclusion

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- language standardization as a development of an expectation of register alternation in practice
- again, irreducibly agentive, with varying degrees of freedom
- requires fine-grained analyses of minuscule details in interaction
 - can we find this in historical records?

LI as an autonomous object

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- Language ideology could be described without its effectiveness-in-context?
- Language ideologies may rise independently from particular sociolinguistic situations.
- Perhaps quite useful in estimating the variation in their effectiveness.
- At the same time, it would be great if these opinions about language would have some sociological validity.
 - Opinions of just some people does not help so much in sociolinguistic analyses.

Collins (2000, 2005)

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Interaction ritual chains

- a sociological approach to intellectual history
- analyses ideas in terms of situations
- stable trends in allocation of community attention

Interaction rituals (IR)

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Conclusion

Based on Goffman & Durkheim:

- emphasis on micro-interactions
- causal role to situations
- individuals operate within the constraints of a situation

Interaction ritual (def.)

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An IR entails

- 1 Situational co-presence
- 2 joint attention in interaction
- 3 social solidarity (accumulates)
- 4 emerging moral obligations
- 5 participants gain Emotional Energy in proportion to the intensity of interaction

Interaction ritual chain

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Conclusion

Not transcendent, but a chain of situations

- individuals travel through interaction rituals with varying level of intensity
- individuals seek situations that would give most Emotional Energy
- objects in an IR become filled with significance, and function as Cultural Capital in future interactions

History of ideas

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"Thinking" takes place in situations.

- situations can take the form of internalized or imaginary "conversations"
- they follow the same motivational structure of IR, following EE
- EE provides stability for the focus of attention, not so much to the content of ideas

Language ideology and IR

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- A language ideology could be construed as a type of "idea" of language, as a mutual focus of attention in private interactions or public discourse.
- This "idea" provides a conceptualization of a language with varying degrees of involvement that could be able to predict its manifestations in use (but in principle would be independently describable).
- With a sociological spread of this "idea", manifested in the spread of interaction rituals that maintain it, a particular language ideology could become established as the main trend in the community.

Evidence for language ideologies

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- A sociological study into these "ideas" would just consist in gathering information on the prevalence and particulars of various interaction rituals that mobilized actors to participate.
- This data could be collected and compared across societies, where in addition to a story of events that happened, it would be easier to contrast practices that were not present in various communities.
- A prescriptive attitude towards language or an expectation towards register alternation could be for example described in terms of public practices ranging from advocacy of norms in the "imagined community" of newspapers through practices of correction in primary school education.

Spread of language ideologies

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- The theory of Interaction Ritual Chains provides predictions on the development ideas as motivated by Emotional Energy and Cultural Capital.
- A sociological story of how some ideas became prevalent in various contexts around Europe is an interesting topic on its own.
- It also provides a predictive framework to how they were received, as a function of opportunity structures in the local attention space for various actors.

Common core

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All of them are committed to

- agents' reflexive capacities in micro-interactions
- observable statistical trends on the aggregate meso-level
 - this includes the concept of value described in terms of a market
- a variety of role theory
- (behaviour depends on alignment in particular interactions to known roles and expectations of them)
- analysing loci of interest in natural discourse
- macro-level can be analysed as perduring micro-interactions, but not on its own

Possible differences

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- Meaning as joint attention (cf. Agha's stable meanings)
 - Agha separates innovation from diffusion
- Does offer a basic foundation to the objects described (cf. I&G)
 - Choices in the attention space guided by Emotional Energy is a foundation you can build on
- Language ideology can be described as an autonomous object (cf. Silverstein)
 - For Silverstein, effectiveness in use is more important, Collins allows perhaps the local targets of the participants to be better defined.

Interaction ritual chains

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- Interaction ritual chains allow the detailed observations to be tied together in a systematic way.
- "Language" in language ideologies can be defined as a joint object of focus that is attended to on community interactions.
- Interactions can lead to variable intensification and continuation of the same kind of interactions.

Some events in early 1900s

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■ Language conferences

- gatherings of language enthusiasts with the purpose of organizing parallel expressions in written language
- a day in may/june 1908 (Tapa), 1909 (Tartu), 1910 (Tallinn), 1911 (Tartu)
- ~10-11 participants on average, 18 different participants throughout.
- first collaborative events on language planning

Some events in early 1900s

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- Language renovation movement
 - 1912 Johannes Aavik had returned from a teaching position from Jalta with enough funds to concentrate on writing
 - this is followed by a large number of writings by him, some collaborators and opponents advocating increased attention to language matters
 - this includes advocating an expectation of register alternation for a supra-regional H-variety as a desirable goal for "culture building" in Estonia

Some events in early 1900s

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- The discussion quickly diversified into coalitions of language renovation (Aavik et al.), language reform (Veski et al.) and language conservatism (Jõgever et al.).
 - This even led to enregistered variants that were tied to the coalitions involved.
- Throughout the event, references to other nations that had gone through extensive language reform were made.

Discourse on standardization 1840s

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- “the Estonian language that I use, I have learned like a young bird learns his song, from the people; whether it has any sign of grammar, I can not decide or concern myself with; my aim has only been: express so, that people would understand” (1840s personal letter, F.R. Kreutzwald)
- Eesti keele, mida tarvitan, olen nagu noor lind oma laulu, rahva suust õppinud; kas selles mingit märki grammatikast esineb, selle üle ei või ma otsusta ega ole selle pärast iialgi paad murdnud; mu püüdesiht on ainult see olnud: nõnda oma mõtteid avalda, et inimesed sest aru saaksid.”

Discourse on standardization 1870s

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- 'No Estonian really speaks a common language, but each is fluent only in their local variety' (Wiedemann's descriptive Estonian Grammar, 1875)
- Wiedemann „üldtuntud ja –kasutatavat keelekuju pole olemas, igaüks oskab ainult oma ümbruskonna keelt“ (Wiedemann 1875: III)
- "Estonian language has a legion of different spelling varieties and we, the school teachers, do not know anymore what we should teach!" (Kurrik, 1876)
- Eesti keeles on terve leegion kirjaviise ja meie, koolmeistrid, ei tea enam mida õpetada. (Kurrik, 1876)

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- 'The lack of language skills among the journalists of the time of the national awakening seems to have been general. [...] All Jannsens, Jakobsons, Kreutzwalds and Koidulas [They were some of the most active 'national awakeners'] were more or less language ruiners; language instinct on their native language seems to have been rather confused and blurry' (Aavik, 1912)
- K e e l e o s k a m a t u s o l i r a h v u s l i s e ä r k a m i s e a j a kirjanikkude j u u r e s ü l e ü l d i n e . [...] kõik Jannsenid ja Jakobsonid, Kreutzwaldid ja Koidulad olivad enam vähem keele solkijad; keele instinkt näib neil emakeele kohta õige segane ja udune olnud olevat (Aavik, 1912)

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During language reform movement:

- '[Koidula and Jannsen] did not even write Estonian, as it was a specific mixture of German and Estonian' (Aavik, 1912)
- 'There is no right and wrong for Estonian, as the Estonian grammar simply does not exist yet' (Aavik, 1912)
- 'When the French go to theatre, they go there to hear proper speech, why don't we have the same habits?' (Veski, 1912)

Why go through all this trouble?

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- The research process is not so much different from regular detailed historical investigations.
 - However, comparability may increase.
 - As well, as transparency.
- In case of comparative studies on the variation in the effect of language ideologies on language use, a common framework would be useful.
- An explicit sociological theory on language ideologies would allow links between different sources of data made more robust to interpretation.
- It may be confusing to talk about language ideologies, if they cannot be given an interpretation independent of language use.

End

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Thank you!