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What does "language" mean for its users? Constructing a theoretical model of a notion of language in the public space

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Abstract

Research into language ideologies is a fast growing field of research, especially within its critical paradigm, highlighting reproductions of dominant and often repressive ideologies about language (racism, sexism, nationalism, etc.). On the other hand, the other, cognitive paradigm has contributed to the field of language ideology by way of closer insights into the world of the speaker, providing a more subtle understanding of the cognitive processes at work behind attitudes to language and ideologies of language. Some of the studies employing the cognitive approach have also looked to how "language" is conceptualised in public discourse. In spite of the differences in the material and the foci in these studies, re-occurring patterns have begun to emerge. This paper offers a systematic review of these studies in order to answer the question "What elements of notions of language have been identified in the research on public debates about language?". The aim of this review is to create a theoretical model of the "public notions of language", which would explain differences in understanding of language in public debates. A total of 12 studies examining public notions of language have been collected, analysed and their findings synthesized into a model of a public notion of language. Three key elements construct the notion of language: (1) the function of language, (2) the identification of linguistic expertise, or who the bearer of true/good language is and (3) the identification of language variety which is representative of the language users.

Keywords: notions of language, language ideologies, language ideological debates, public sphere, conceptual metaphor, cultural model

1. Introduction

"Language ideology" has been a buzzword in sociolinguistic research since around the turn of the millennium; it was brought into focus by seminal publications such as "Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory" (Schieffelin, Woolard and Kroskrity 1998). It encompasses different methods and materials, ranging from experimental to historical studies and it also includes studies of the public sphere. The last field has been of particular interest to researchers, and it is already common

to refer to this sub-field as "language ideological debates" (Blommaert 1999). Here, researchers look at how language is perceived and understood in public discourse, as well as for which purpose it is used by the actors of the debate. These studies provide insights into issues important for sociolinguistics: they examine both "folk linguistics" (non-linguists' reasoning about linguistic phenomena), as well as the role of language in political issues, such as inequality, domination, discrimination, nationalism, etc.

There are two main paradigms of research: the critical and the cognitive. The critical paradigm recently sparkled interest in the academic world through the seminal publication "Language ideological debates" edited by Jan Blommaert (1999). The critical studies of language ideology often make use of critical theory and a particular type of discourse analysis called *Critical Discourse Analysis* (CDA). CDA is based on models which analyse power relationships and ideologies which are reinforced through language, mostly based on the works by Norman Fairclough (1992), Teun van Dijk (1993) and Ruth Wodak (1989). The cognitive paradigm is presented most broadly in two publications entitled *Language and ideology*: *Theoretical cognitive approaches* (vol. 1) (Dirven, Hawkins and Sandikcioglu 2001) and *Language and ideology*: *Descriptive cognitive approaches* (vol. 2) (Dirven, Frank and Ilie 2001). This approach makes use of cognitive tools in order to examine how language is conceptualised in text, speech or interaction (simply put − in discourse), and is not limited to public language only (nonetheless, a portion of research does fall into that category). The cognitive tools employed here can be *metaphorical conceptualisations, vantage point, frame, schemata, image schemata, cultural cognitive model, mental space* and/or *conceptual blending* (Dirven, Frank and Ilie 2001: 3-4). The advantage of the cognitive approach is that it enables an exploration of different language ideologies[1], or as they will be called here, notions of language. For the purpose of this paper, I prefer the term "notions of language" for "language ideology". Both terms are essentially a name for mental schemata, but "ideology" is preferred in most research because of the political and moral issues that shape them (Ivrine and Gal 2009: 402). I will use the term "notion of language" in this paper to talk about "how language is conceptualised", while the term "ideology" is reserved for all other systems of beliefs about religion, morals, a nation, a people that have some influence on how language is conceptualised.

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[1]The critical studies mostly explore, in depth, a single aspect of a language ideology / notion of language, such as nationalism.

The result of studies of public discussions about language from the cognitive point of view has been the emergence of patterns of *how language is understood in public discourse*. To my knowledge, no broader review of such research has yet been presented. This study reviews 12 studies from this field in order to answer the question: What elements of notions of language have been identified in the research on public debates about language?

The individual objectives include identifying the relevant studies, reviewing them, and categorizing the main factors / aspects which constitute a notion of language. Finally, the paper aims to design an integrated model of "a public notion of language".

It is hoped that this study benefit those studying overt notions of language, by providing a theoretical tool that can be used and possibly further developed. In the study of "folk linguistics" one could gain insight into how language is debated and understood by non-linguists. The study aims to bring about a more integrated view of recurring issues which influenced our understanding of language.

2.   Overview: Language ideology as a field of research

A search in the GoogleBooks digitalized library using the keyword "language ideology", results in a graph of showing a low, but stable number of mentions in the years between 1975 and 1993, followed by a 700% increase in the period between 1993 and 2008. Language ideology is definitely a buzzword that is here to stay. There is an increase in the number of approaches and methods of analysing "language ideology". There are even more definitions of the term. This section will briefly present the development of research into language ideology and will focus on the growing field of "language ideological debates"[2].

Today, the term "language ideology" is being used in sociolinguistics to refer to at least two phenomena: *a field of research* and *a research object*. As a field, language ideology encompasses a wide range of studies aiming to explore the ideological backgrounds of various conscious or subconscious beliefs about language(s). This can be done on the macro level, invoking such concepts as "attitudes, prestige, standards, aesthetics…" (Woolard 1998: 4), or on the micro level,

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[2]This is a term introduced by Jan Blommaert (1999), which has since evolved into a field of research. He defines "language ideological debates" as a "struggle[s] for authoritative entextualization", identifiable in certain space and time (Blommaert 1999).

examining connections between language, ethnicity, nationalism, etc. (Woolard 1998: 16). Different studies on language ideology build upon other fields of sociolinguistics, such as language attitudes (cf. Lippi-Green 2004, for the Lithuanian context see Vaicekauskienė 2014), or language and identity studies (cf. Bucholtz and Hall 2005), while others build upon broader studies of discourse (cf. Tamaševičius 2015 for the Lithuanian context). Due to the theoretical and methodological diversity of the field, I will only review the main concepts in language ideology research which are significant for this study in sub-section 2.1., then discuss the issues in research of language ideologies in the public sphere in sub-section 2.2. and, finally, describe the current research in sub-section 2.3.

2.1. History and terminology

Ideology has a special place in the humanities and linguistic research. The emergence of "ideology" as one of the central terms in the humanities can be traced to the "linguistic turn" in philosophy. It marks a great turn of foci towards the role of language in creation of meaning and of social reality. Works of philosophers such as Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida have raised interest in the exploration of language and power. The keywords "ideology" and "discourse" quickly emerged and revolutionized humanities and social sciences in the 1970s. The understanding of ideology in the new research was then based on Marx' notion of ideology – as *false consciousness* (a term often used by Marxist scholars, see Marx and Engels 1970), meaning that ideology is a twisted picture of the real world, twisted by interest of those in (economic and political) power. Research followed the tradition of ideological criticism, identifying reproductions of power relations of domination and submission (Purvis and Hunt 1993: 474). "Discourse" was, likewise, understood in terms of the linguistic and semiotic aspect of the reproduction of those ideologies. The words "discourse" and "ideology" were often even used synonymously in research (Purvis and Hunt 1993). What is important for this paper was that analysis of *language* became the focus of this type of study of ideology. Researchers had to look at language to identify how discourse works and produces and re-produces ideologies.

Since the trend described in the past paragraph, the study of discourse evolved into a separate field, called discourse analysis (DA). DA is by no means an exclusively linguistic field as only some directions in the research of discourse do follow a more traditionally linguistic problematic. Nikander (2008: 5) divides the field of DA by two criteria: *critical-constructivist* and *macropolitical-microlinguistic*. The traditions based on investigations of language on the micro

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level fall under the field of conversation analysis, speech acts, variational sociolinguistics, etc. Here, the a more linguistic (in the traditional sense of the word) problematics, such as communication and linguistic variation (and how it is understood), are studied. On the macropolitical side, the focus is the broader political and social aspects. The *critical* side approach has been gaining more and more popularity in recent years and has become the dominant paradigm in discourse analysis. The method emerging from it is called *Critical discourse analysis* (CDA). CDA builds upon the tradition of criticism of ideology that shares same philosophical grounds in which discourse analysis began, in social research and social philosophy. It, therefore, takes its main social-theoretical roots in works of Michelle Foucault, Jürgen Habermas, Pierre Bourdieu (van Dijk 2001: 364) and Antonio Gramschi (van Dijk 2001: 355). It starts from the idea that ideologies are expressed through all discourse, not necessarily continuously, yet that is the case most often. Power analysis and social critique are central to CDA; "regular" or "common sense" thinking about and doing of things is in the service of the powerful, and against the discriminated, according to scholar considered to be the father of CDA, Norman Fairclough (1989: 77). There is also the *constructivist* approach to discourse, which sees discourse and the ideologies it sustains as worldviews, without the negative evaluation of the term. This opposition is present in the research of language ideologies, it will be presented later in the text.

This great deal of attention on language eventually brought focus on metalanguage, or "language about language". Of course, interest in metalanguage has existed long before that, primarily in philosophy. For example in ancient Greece, Plato conceptualised *logos* (which can be translated as discourse, speech, statement) as a part of itself, as a "construct of metalanguage" (Irvine 2006: 25) and made it a central point of philosophical debates about meaning. At the very beginning of linguistics as an academic field, interest in metalanguage was also sparkled – precisely because of the need to distinguish linguistics as a new field (Jaworski, Coupland and Galasinski 2004: 18). Recent interests in metalanguage within linguistics have posed some fundamental questions about whether the metalanguage used in linguistic work is capable of describing the phenomena that are being researched. This is particularly true of "standard language ideology" (Milroy 2001), since linguists still mostly refer to "a standard variety of a language" when they write or say "a language". Some publications have called for a "disinvention" of the term *language* (Makoni and Pennycook 2005). The main task of such a project would be to develop a critical linguistic awareness that "languages" as "separate entities" are products of ideology. Bauman and Biggs (2003) have shown that the historical development of this ideology – from Locke and Humboldt to

Saussure – is a synthesis of the rationalist and romantic ideals about language (a logical, clear and rational language, combined with the idea that language is the basis of a nation-state and a spirit of the people). Linguistic standardization is a part of this development in which linguists have played a major role.

This leads us the field which studies ideologies about language itself. The term *language ideology* has been used interchangeably and often synonymously with the terms *linguistic ideology* and *ideologies about language* (Woolard and Schieffelin 1994: 58), as well as *notions of language* (used in Woolard and Schieffelin 1994: 60, 65). All can refer to a number of different things. If we go back to the 1970s, to Michael Silverstein, whose seminal paper (1979) introduced the term *linguistic* ideology, we can see that he used this term primarily to refer to a subconscious mechanism that regulated the choice of use of certain linguistic forms or words and the way it can influence language change. On the opposite side lies Jan Blommaert's understanding of the term (cf. Blommaert 2011). This is one of the leading scholars in language ideology today, who has focused on non-linguistic ideologies (such as nationalism) in his research and the conscious place and role of language in those ideologies. Silverstein's notion of language ideology raised questions of whether language ideologies regulate language use as well as how and whether they contribute to language change. These are of great importance to linguistics in general, but are beyond the scope of this article. I will review some of the terminology and definitions used in the study of language ideologies, as used in the studies of public discourse about language.

"Representations, whether explicit or implicit, that construe the intersection of language and human beings in a social world are what we mean by *language ideology*." (Woolard 1998: 3, italics are mine). It is with these words that Kathryn Woolard described language ideologies as a field of inquiry in the first edited volume on language ideology, noting that ideology has an explicit and an implicit side. However, ideology is sometimes seen as more of a subconscious than conscious system and is often defined as "shared bodies of commonsense notions about the nature of language in the world" (Rumsey 1990: 346). The keyword "commonsense" implies that ideology is generally a system that operates automatically, and influences the way we express ourselves about language. Another definition spotlights the conscious part of language ideologies, namely that they are "...cultural (or subcultural) system[s] of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests." (Irvine 1989: 255). Irvine's definition is usually considered the most fitting for research about language ideologies in the public sphere. It is

frequently the case that, apart from the general research direction that highlights the importance of language in the world or society, political issues, as well as issues of power and inequality are central issues in research. In many publications, the term "language ideology" is used as a substitute for a political or racial ideology or, more precisely, the role language plays in that ideology[3]. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this paper, I use the term "notions of language" in order to refer only to the conceptualisation of language, no matter what political or other ideologies might have influenced its formation.

Another important field dealing with language ideologies (or notions of language) is "folk linguistics" (Niedzielski and Preston 2003). Study of folk linguistics looks at overt and covert ideas, beliefs and attitudes to language, held by non-linguists. The research in this area mostly uses experimental methods to gather data on covert attitudes, but is not limited to that. In the studies of public discourse, the opinions are not just exchanges of opinions amongst experts, but also of lay users, journalists, public figures, commentators, who fall into the category of "folk".

2.2. Language issues and the public sphere

The public sphere is a discursive space in which something close to a public opinion can be formed (Habermas 1991).This space was the *agora* in Ancient Athens, where news circulated and were discussed orally. In Europe, since the end of the 17th century, this discursive space has been the press, which began bringing news in print form to the public (Habermas 1991: 16). Today, the public sphere extends beyond print media to the e-realm, and is often referred to as the "virtual sphere", with a format different from the traditional public sphere, with new possibilities and new limitations (Papacharissi 2002). The main question in both "spheres" is what makes the language a debatable issue for the print and electronic media. No subject receives media attention by accident. The media have to make their stories resonate with the audiences and be of some importance for them, which is why the language issues rarely make it to the front page of the newspapers. However, with a clever framing of language-related news, language can sometimes become a prominent, or even a top issue. From the studies on public debates about language, I have identified five topics that have so far been the subject of research on language ideologies in the public sphere. These are separated by the type of "language issue" debated in the public space. They are (in no particular order):

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[3]This is more present in the critical studies.

(1) Issues connected to a (official or non-official) minority language or multilingual language practices (cf. Blommaert 2011, Milani 2008)

(2) influence of a foreign (usually global or neighbouring) language on a smaller or a national language (cf. Vaicekauskienė 2013, Spitzmüller 2005)

(3) anew / emerging linguistic variety with a growing number of users, usually multiethnolects, mixed speech (cf. Ims 2014),

(4) language reforms (cf. Johnson 2005),

(5) sexist, racist and discriminatory language (cf. Arpinar-Avsar, Girgin and Bulgu 2014).

In relation to points 1-4, the main background for the debate is the idea that the standard language and the dominant national language(s) learned through schooling, are seen as the "normal state of things", while all other phenomena and changes are considered deviations from a "state of stability" by the media, and are thus open to debate. This dominant ideology is most commonly referred to as the 'standard language ideology', which can be simply defined as the idea that the standard language is the only correct linguistic variety (Milroy 2001).Even though this dominant view is most often reproduced in the media, different voices can be heard in the debate as well. They come in forms of statements made by professional linguists, politicians, columnists, internet commentators, and are, hence, a fruitful field for the study of different notions of language.

It is important to note that the physical and historical place of the public sphere provides some boundaries for the discussions about language. The way media works and what it decides to put on its agenda has a great influence on its consumers – not only forming opinions, but creating discursive boundaries. Some of the key effects of this function of the media studied by communication scholars are **framing** effects, **agenda setting** and **priming** (McLeod, Kosicki and McLeod 2002). When one says that news messages are "framed", it means that (since no media message can be fully objective and focus on all aspects of an issue) they "frame" the issue by focusing on a single aspect of it – and this also influences the readers' interpretation of the issue. An illustrative example is whether the "abortion" debate will be framed as a question of "woman's rights" or as "unborn life". The frame will, irrespective of the evaluation of the issue, shift the debate in one direction, thereby influencing the outcomes of the debate (in other words, it sets the "limits" of the debate). Agenda setting refers to the effect of the media having the power to decide what issues get discussed. It also describes the long-term effects of that choice on the general public

in terms of which issues are being treated as important. Priming is a psychological effect that describes how exposure to a media message activates a concept. This concept might later be re-activated, along with other ideas and feelings connected to it. The effect of agenda setting is used in research of, for example, voting choices and how voters evaluate the work of politicians.

This very short description of some of the many media effects illustrates the fact that the main discursive space for the debate of public issues (the media) already sets certain limits and selects the issues based on their agenda. It is then no surprise that the public notions of language, even when coming from a language professional, tend to lack the complexity that can be found when language is studied in a private (through interviews) or in an experimental setting. In spite of the technological, societal and historical influences on the public discourse about language, we find recurring patterns of how language is conceptualised. In turn, those patterns demonstrate differences in the notions of language.

The concept of *language ideological debates*, mentioned in the introduction, is the main conceptual framework for the research of the treatment of language in the public sphere. The analytical focus is on the social, rather than the cognitive aspects of language ideologies, such as the "ideology brokers" and sees the debate "struggle for authoritative entextualization" (Blommaert 1999). Also, these concepts are associated more with critical, rather than the cognitive paradigm. Blommaert highlights the importance of studying such debates as follows:

> *Debates about language ideologies define and redefine the language ideologies (often through conflicting representations) in the same way as debates about language define and redefine these languages.* (Blommaert 1999: 10)

With this said, I conclude that the critical and the cognitive paradigms should supplement each other, as the cognitive approach provides a more informed explanation of how language in the public space is conceptualised. The next section describes the material used in this study.

2.3. The present study

In order to collect the relevant articles for this review, a search was conducted using keywords such as "language ideology/-ies", "debate", "discussion", "language question", "language issue", "public", "comments" in the databases of subscribed journals of Vytautas Magnus University, Vilnius University and the Institute of the Lithuanian Language, along with some additional papers

from the University of Oslo (access provided during my research stay at this institution) and a few more provided by authors on personal request. The primary inclusion criterion is that the studies examine public notions of language by using cognitive tools in their research. I additionally include those studies that look at public notions of language without the use of cognitive tools, but still draw conclusions about the *conceptualisations* of the abstract domain "language". When these criteria were applied, the initial great number of studies was reduced to a total of 12. Most of the research on "language ideological" debates is done on a corpus of mainstream media news, opinion pieces etc., while one of the studies included in this paper looks also into the "virtual" sphere, including Internet commentators into the research (Reyes 2013).

Two types of research have been included in the study (see the list of primary sources for the full bibliographical information): eight studies using cognitive tools (Berthele 2008; Bermel 2007; Geeraerts 2003; Gorham 2000; Moschonas 2004; Polzenhagen and Dirven 2008; Reyes 2013; Spitzmüller 2007) and 4 other studies (Milani 2007; Milani 2010; Stroud 2004; Tardy 2009), which show how languages or certain linguistic varieties are envisioned by the language users. These studies include analysis of the discourse of lay people (comments on internet pages), experts (interviews with linguists, articles and columns published by linguists), journalists, public figures and generic news stories. In this paper, I will not make an essential difference between these actors, as notions of language held by "experts" and "non-experts" are not necessarily different in the public space.

3. Results

This section presents the findings of the review. I have looked at the results of 12 studies in order to compare and synthesize the results dealing with how the "language" is understood and conceptualised in public discourse. The results show that three main factors were of key importance to defining "language" for the language users. These are (1) the representation (answers to the question of what variety is considered to be representative of the language users – either the standard or one of the non-standard varieties of a language), (2) the language expertise (it is either the "language experts"? who determine what "good language is" or the "common user(s)"), and (3) the function of language (the main purpose of language is either communication, creation/strengthening of bonds or identification). Each of the three are discussed in further detail in the three sections to follow. The fourth section presents an integrated model and a discussion of findings.

Before proceeding to the presentation of the results, it is necessary to shortly define the cognitive tools used in the research analysed. To a large extent, similar tools were used: the *conceptual metaphor*, the *idealised cognitive model* (also *folk* or *cultural model*) and the *argumentation scheme*. The conceptual metaphor is now a one of the main tools used in studies of human cognition. It is based on the idea that metaphors exist not only in language, but are part of the human cognitive system, as well as of human culture (Lakoff and Johnson 1980) – it is very likely that all thinking is metaphorical/metonymical, i.e. we think about real-world phenomena in terms of other phenomena that are analogically linked to them. While conceptual metaphors explain how language is conceptualised, it is mostly the case that more than one conceptual metaphor (or metonymy) of language will be used in the discourse. While some metaphors are universal, others are a part of culture (Lakoff and Johnson's example TIME IS A RESOURCE (1980: 67) is an example of a metaphor present only in, for example, industrialized societies). The metaphors, combined with image schemata and their framing, form *idealised cognitive models*, which function as cognitive organisers of our knowledge. They consist of other models, but are called "idealized" because they have properties of to "prototypes", or ideal representations of concepts. For example, a stepmother, a biological mother, a donor mother and a surrogate mother can all be considered to be "mothers", because the models of each type of mother overlap by their "virtue of their relation to the ideal case" (Lakoff 1987: 76). Lots of research about the way the abstract domain *language* is conceptualised is based on such complex models, as we will see in the sub-sections to follow. The last tool employed (however only in one study) is the *argumentation schemes*, which comes from the critical paradigm of research, the discourse-historical approach. They are defined as "(…)common-sense reasoning typical for specific issues" (van Dijk 2000: 98), meaning they point to historically bound attitudes towards language and linguistic issues. They are therefore a useful tool for the aim of this paper (to identify elements of notions of language), because they point to elements of language are "sensitive spots" for the users, and consequently under constant debate.

3.1. Representation

The power that the word "language" has in context of public debates comes from the specific political development of the nation-state. Language was one of the unifying factors of the newly created states. In this sense, the role of language in a nation-state depends on how the nation is imagined: Geeraerts' (2003). That paper also discusses notions of language in connection with the notions of the **people** and the **state**, analysing in detail the role of standard languages in France and

Germany during the period of nation-building. The interesting point here is the twofold view of a "nation" in the creation of these nation states. In the French version, the "national" is equated with a citizen of France, regardless of his origin, mother tongue, religion, etc. Language there is used as a **tool of communication** and participation in the "res publica", and the ideal was that all should use the same language for this, standard French. The German view of the nation is that a group of people are bound by similar traditions, religion, customs and language – language is thus an **identity marker**. So, two views of the "people" through the lens of the nation-state have been categorized by Geeraerts as "civic" vs. "ethnic" nationalism (2003: 25).

Since a linguistic community can be imagined either on a civil or ethnic basis, societal issues arise with respect to linguistic minorities of any kind. Two studies of Sweden's linguistic minorities illustrate this perfectly. Stroud (2004) pointed out how immigrants in Sweden are attributed not only partial knowledge of Swedish, but also of their own mother tongue and consequently discredited from participation in the liberal society. This also helps create an imagined border between the ethnic and the immigrant Swede. Furthermore, Milani (2010) showed how representations of social groups are connected with the linguistic variety they speak. His study shows that the speakers of multiethnolects (linguistic varieties spoken between different ethnic groups of immigrants, mostly in the suburban areas of big cities in Sweden) are envisioned as *macho/sexist* by the actors in the debate speaking from a socially dominant position, while the speakers of this multiethnolect themselves present their own language variety as a *positive product of different cultures coming together*. Both "voices" in the debate saw a connection between the linguistic variety and the group that is **represented** by it, but the evaluation of the group via the linguistic identification is different.

Not all non-standard varieties of a language have a low status. This clearly depends on how much power in society the social group using the non-standard language has. For example, non-standard variety of spoken German in Switzerland (Schwyzerdütsch), which is considered to be a part of the national identity by the German speaking Swiss has a dominant social status in Switzerland, while "standard German" can be seen as a foreign language in debates about language (Berthele 2008)."Standard German" is even sometimes referred to as "written German", as the Swiss use it in writing (Watts 1999: 91). Much like the smaller population of immigrants in Sweden, the Swiss feel they cannot consider "German" to be a language that **represents** them, as it is spoken by a different group, the Germans. Of course, German language in Germany is seen as a part of the national

identity (Spitzmüller 2007, Geeraerts 2003), since it **represents** the dominant ethnic group in the German-speaking world and because the standard variety does not feel as foreign as it feels for virtually all German speaking Swiss.

In this section, I have tried to demonstrate that studies such as these teach us a valuable lesson of what it is in "a language" that people consider to be their own or, in other words, **what language (or variety) represents them**: it can be the codified variety of the national language (Geeraerts 2003, Spitzmüller 2007), but also can be a non-standard variety. In the study by Stroud (2004) it is a multiethnolect – a colloquial everyday language of immigrant populations (who identify with a colloquial variety of Swedish), and in the case of German speaking Swiss, it can be a dialect that the speakers feel strongly about (Berthele 2008).

3.2. Expertise

When can one claim that he or she knows a language? This question seems quite easy to answer, but in language ideological debates, this is one of the central points of the discussion. Since the late 18th and the early 19th centuries, the introduction of compulsory education (hand in hand with the standardization of most of today's European languages) has made it its goal to teach all the citizens of a nation state to read and write the standard language. This raises continuing concerns about the correctness and appropriateness of written and spoken language, which can even be a cause for the creation of moral panic (Cameron 2005: 83). Spelling mistakes, use of foreign words and the like are often used as an argument to delegitimize someone's language.

In one scenario, expertise is attributed to the "language experts", a special group of people who are formally educated in linguistics or philology. In the other scenario, expertise is attributed to the speakers of the language, leaving it to them to decide how they use the language.

Voices of experts contribute to this separation between those who "know" and "do not know" a language. Tommaso Milani, one of the leading scholars of language ideologies in the public sphere, has drawn upon Judith Butler's theory of performativity to show the performative construction and negotiation of "an expert" in a newspaper-mediated crossfire between two academic groups about

the issues connected to Swedish language competence amongst migrant societies in Sweden[4]. Performativity teaches that all identities are constructed through linguistic practices within a certain matrix of power (Milani 2007: 102). This includes the construction of both the "language expert" and the "common user", as well as those who lie beyond the borders of legitimate language, the "great other", often speakers of non-prestigious language varieties. These categories re-appear quite often in language ideological debates (and any public debate), thereby creating a framework for taking ideologically different positions.

Two studies on orthographical debates show these opposed vantage points quite clearly. Orthography (as well as changes in orthography, misapplication of its rules, etc.) provokes people to engage in fundamental debates about language. This is due to the fact that the abstract domain of ORTHOGRAPHY is also connected to the domain of LANGUAGE through a series of metaphoric networks in the public discourse. Bermel (2007) has shown this in his analysis of the debates about the changes in Czech orthography in the early 1990s. The debate was about language policy and regulation on the surface level, but essentially about language. Conceptual metaphors of language regulation, such as REGULATION IS MANUFACTURING, REGULATION IS SCIENCE (2007: 284) are related to orthography (which is being regulated), for example the conceptual metaphor ORTHOGRAPHIC RULES ARE LAWS (2007: 275). This means that all changes in orthography can be understood as linguistic engineering, a mechanical change to the "natural state of things". Also, Bermel found a "path metaphor" in the case of WRITTEN LANGUAGE IS A PATH TO SPOKEN LANGUAGE (2007: 280).All this points to the fact that the concept of "ORTHOGRAPHY" is often almost equated with the concept of "LANGUAGE" in the debates. It is safe to conclude that orthographical debates often invoke discussions about "rules of language" and "changes of orthography" are often understood in terms of "changing a language".

Antonio de Reyes (2013) analysed the internet comments that came as a reaction to an orthographic change in Spain. The new orthography was proposed by the Spanish Royal Academy, but had caused a revolt and opened a debate, in spite of the authority of the institution. Here, an interesting point is made about the power relationship between those who are given the right to control language and those who are not and how that contributes to the understanding of language. One of the findings of this research is that all the participants of the debate had to take a view with respect

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4 Another broader lesson to be learned here is that, since the general "lay/expert" divide is constructed through discourse, it is often left to the media to decide who will receive space to present him-/herself as an "expert" on certain matters (Milani 2007: 117).

to the role of the language authorities. To analyse these views, Reyes used a cognitive instrument called "argumentation schemes". They are conceptualised as '(…) common-sense reasoning typical for specific issues' (van Dijk 2000: 98). Two of these are particularly interesting for the notion of "expertise". One portion of the commentators accepted the reforms putting their trust in language institution, while others called the institution incompetent, but essentially blamed it for doing a bad job while seeking other linguistic authorities to call upon in the course of the debate (Reyes 2013: 349). A third interesting argumentation scheme is used by another portion of the commentators who deny the expertise of the authority, claiming that common language users hold proprietary rights over their own language (Reyes 2013: 347). Expertise of linguists is often brought into question when reforms are introduced, which was also the conclusion of Bermel's (2007) research mentioned above: the commentators of the reform deemed it often as a vulgarization of the Czech language (Bermel 2007: 187, 207).

The question of who the expert on language is lies at the heart of many public debates on language. The language expert usually has at least a certain level of authority in any standard language culture (Milroy 2001), but we also find the position that it is the language users themselves that decide upon the language. In my theoretical model of the notions of language, these two ideological positions will be called **expert** vs. **the common user(s)**.

3.3. Function of language

Studies repeatedly confirm that there is a great tension between the understanding of language as a medium of communication as opposed to a medium of identification.

These opposing understandings of language were discussed by Geeraerts (2003) in his historical study, where he showed how language was promoted as a **tool of communication** and a tool participation in the public sphere in post-revolutionary France, and as a **tool to express the national identity** in 19th century Germany (see **3.1**. for full description). His article discusses what roles the metaphorical representations of language played in the French and German nation-building. Geeraerts called these two models the **rationalist** (France) and the **romantic** (Germany) model, and it has been used in research of language policy, ideology, etc. Berthele (2008) compared two newspaper-mediated debates surrounding proposed language policies in the USA and Switzerland. He found metaphors such as LANGUAGE IS A KEY, and LANGUAGE IS A TOOL (in which language is presented as a key of success, tool of achieving social mobility), which would

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correspond with the ideal version of Geeraerts' **rationalist** model. Other conceptual metaphors, such as LANGUAGE IS A SOUL OF THE PEOPLE lie closer to the **romantic** model. However, a great number of conceptual metaphors is used in different contexts, and cannot be exclusively connected to either of the models. For example, LANGUAGE IS A BOND could refer to an ethnic or to a civic bond, LANGUAGE IS A TOOL could be used in the sense that language is a tool of expression of identity, or a tool of communication. He found that the civic and ethnic identities are defined through conceptual metaphors of LANGUAGE IS A TIE / BOND / GLUE that holds people together, either as a marker of origin or adherence to a nation-state. This is the **function of language as a marker of identity**, present in virtually every discussion about language.

While identity is obviously a more complicated issue than communication, the communicative function of language gets mentioned in specific contexts, when one wants to remind the public of the "primary" purpose of language. Such was the case in the *language ideological debate* (the term as used by Blommaert 1999, see section 2. for an explanation of the term) in Spain caused by an orthographic reform, which aimed at simplifying certain spelling rules (Reyes 2013). This reform was mostly criticized and was seen as a deterioration of language (see 2.2), but also was accepted by those who made the argument that the change in orthography would make **communication** more efficient, in other words, the use of language might become easier (Reyes 2013: 352). It is only in this study that we see the notions that "the sole purpose of language is communication", which would be somewhere close to the ideal version of Geeraerts' **rationalist** model.

Much more often, communication based analysis is used as a part of an argument that the function of language is to unite people. This is confirmed in Tardy's (2009) research on the US language policy and the debate surrounding the introduction of English as "the national language". The notion of **language** (and communication in that language) **as an assimilating force** has been constructed in the discourse by the use of conceptual metaphors with a long history such as the 'melting pot' (Tardy 2009: 280), and corresponds with the idea of the rationalist model of linguistic standardization. The potential of this historically-bound metaphor is seen in the fact that the discourse on language policy in the US has progressed towards assimilationism since Woolard analysed a similar debate (about the English-only movement) in 1989. Woolard showed the use of the conceptual metaphor of "imprisonment" used in the discourse of opponents of monolingual policies − this was a particularly potent instrument which highlighted how monolingualism put Spanish language speakers in a "linguistic prison". The US debate in Tardy's analysis is also

interesting because "communication" is a word used on both sides of the debate (both by the proponents and the opponents of the policy), but what lies beyond the proponents' notion of "communication" is, in fact, the notion of "Americanism", or in other words – identity. The reason for this may well be that the notion of "ethnic American" does not resonate in the USA as strongly as it does in European nation-states. An important point is to be made in this case: Regardless of the conceptualisation of language (the communicative/pragmatic or the expressive/identificational), the function of bringing language into the debate is to create a bond with members of a particular community.

One study discussed the juxtaposition of communication-identification function of language on the global level. Globalisation was studied by Frank Polzenhagen and René Dirven, where they present a new transformation of the Geeraerts (2003) model in, as they call it, "the multilingual stage". Here, we also find the metaphorical notion of language as a tool of communication, in which concerns are expressed for the role of languages in democratisation and emancipation (Polzenhagen and Dirven 2008: 240). The opposing position criticizes global languages as instruments of exclusion and presents the importance of local languages, varieties, dialects and multilinguialism as an expression of different and layered identities. English is seen as the killer of local languages and identities, or as the authors put it "The parts are clearly allocated: English on the one hand, as the "villain", the language of colonialism, imperialism, globalisation, rationalism, and the "small" minority languages on the other hand, as the idyllic princess, living in harmony with nature, full of precious knowledge and sensitive" (Polzenhagen and Dirven 2008: 281).

The much more essentialist notion of the connection between "a people" and "a language" is discussed in the work of Moschonas (2004). He gave the notion that he called "linguistic relativism"[5] a very detailed cognitive treatment. This notion originated in the ideas of philosophers such as Herder and Humboldt, who saw languages as products of reason of the people. This received a theoretical re-formulation in the linguistic ideas of Whorf: "Language determines thought and therefore different languages constitute different "worlds of thought". On the example of a number of language debates in Greece, Moschonas concluded that in this notion of language contains an imaginary "territory" and a "spirit" of the language (i.e. Greek language has a territory – Greece and all Greeks living abroad, and a spirit – the cultural uniqueness of a nation is imprinted

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[5] Moschonas uses Whorf's hypothesis, but sees it as a "folk linguistic" rather than "scientific" reasoning about language.

in the spirit of the language). He also notes that the cause of all debates about language is the perceived "disturbance" of this territory or spirit. In all cultures with a standard language, all disturbances in the spirit and territory are cause for unrest. Quantitative research by Spitzmüller (2007) analysed representations of language in a long debate about the influence of English, as well as the role of language in a reunified Germany. Spitzmüller shows that the dominant presentation of language was "organism", "substance" and "treasure". In other words, language is something that is fragile, can be polluted, diluted and needs protection. A similar debate at a similar time took place in post-Soviet Russia (Gorham 2000), where the language debate was characterized by a search for a new national identity, most importantly the revival of the "Russian spirit" (Gorham 2000: 628). Apart from the conceptual metaphor of "spirit", the arguments for a "purer language" were brought through the use of "biological / ecological" conceptual metaphors of language (such as "blood"), which attribute genetic national traits to the idea of good Russian language (Gorham 2000: 627). An interesting observation is that the rhetoric of the language guardians during the Soviet times was 'revolutionary'– language was presented as a tool or weapon for civic liberty (Gorham 2000: 628) and as a tool for democratisation in the *perestroika* period. This again confirms that, when necessary, the function of language can be creating (real or imaginary) bonds, in this case, it is a part of nation-building.

We have seen how language and identity are connected in discourse and how the monolingual nation-state is the main broker of this ideology. The principle of linguistic relativism that Moschonas talks about is fully compatible with the ideas of a monolingual nation-state ("one nation, one language"), since it draws upon the notion of the "territoriality" of a language, meaning that language has its physical location (Moschonas 2004: 195). A more liberal notion of this principle is associated with cultural liberalism, in the sense that knowing more languages means gaining insight into different cultures. This means that both liberal and anti-liberal views of the role of language in the society can be based on the same notion of the unbreakable bond between a language and a people, which is one of the findings of Berthele's article (2008: 326). In the same study, Berthele also notices the offspring of this ideology in a multilingual state, namely Switzerland. The four national languages are seen as a part of the historical heritage and consequently as a part of the national identity, each being of special importance to each of the ethnic groups who speak it. Nevertheless, the four languages serve the same function of protection against a foreign foe (English), the same way a single language would in a monolingual state. They function as a "barrier" of cultural influence and as a "glue/tie" connecting the Swiss society

(Berthele 2008: 319-320). In other words, the "cultural territory" of the national languages still exists. This ideology can be seen as the "multilingual hegemony"[6], comparable to multilingual ideology that existed in Belgium in the past (Blommaert 2011). The common grounds are that one or more languages function as a barrier and uniting force within a nation state.

3.4. A theoretical model

The model presented here shows the three aspects of the public notions of language. These are issues that repeatedly come up in debates about language, and in each, I show two ideologically opposed positions. These are (I) Representation, or the position that the language users take in terms of which language (variety) is representative of him/her, or his/hers group (social, ethnic, national, etc.); (II) Expertise, an aspect that describes how "good/correct/real" language is perceived, and such qualities can be attributed to the language experts or to the language of the non-experts; (III) Function, or how the main function of language is understood. Schematically the model looks like this:

I. Representation
   a) Standardized variety(-ies)
   b) Colloquial language, dialect, idiolect
II. Expertise
   a) The language experts
   b) The common user(s)
III. Function of language
   a) To express identity
      i. Social identity
      ii. Cultural identity
   b) To communicate
   c) To create/strengthen bonds

A more detailed explanation is needed of why I chose to present each aspect in a binary way. In the first aspect (**Representation**), the issue is whether the language user accepts standardized variety as "his own" or not. In the research reviewed, the alternatives to the standard variety are different

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[6] Blommaert does not define precisely the terms by which he understands hegemony, but from the text of the article it is clear that he is referring to an "undeniable value system" or an "unquestionably normal state of things" imposed upon the speakers. In Belgium, this "normal state" used to be a multilingual state, while today, the situation in Belgium with three official languages is not considered to be normal, because the "normal state" now would be for a single country to have a single national language.

(multiethnolect, dialect, idiolect, etc.). However, since the public discourse reproduces the ideology that the standard variety is superior to all other varieties, the participants in the debate come out either as challenging or not challenging that ideology. The aspect of **Expertise** is divided on a similar basis: the voices of the debate that often present themselves as experts (which include not only linguists, but often journalists, writers, etc.), implicitly or explicitly claim to know "better" language than the non-experts. The opposed ideological standpoint is that one does not need experts to determine what a good language is. Of course, in real-life debate, both of these standpoints are defined and redefined through interaction, and one should not look at them as binary oppositions - they can be seen as a continuum. The **Function** of language can be communication, expression of identity or creation/strengthening of bonds. In this last aspect, the differences between the notions are much fuzzier. The understanding of communication as the main function of language is rarely encountered in discourse, while expression of identity is more frequent. If the language user sees language as a marker of group identity, arguments with the keyword "communication" can also often be used, in the sense that communication itself sustains a community. Either communication of expression of identity can be keywords used to stress the importance of language in creating bonds between people (social groups, compatriots, people of the same ethnic origins, etc.). These functions are almost never "pure", meaning that one function does not exclude the other two. One could be primary, thought the others might be expressed in the discourse.

The aspect of "representation" as an evaluation of the role of non-standard varieties in creating identity is discussed in Polzenhagen and Dirven's (2008) model, where variation is seen as important in expressing different identities. This model was an adapted version of Geeraert's (2003) model in the "multilingual stage". We find a negative evaluation of this cultural model in the "20th century stage" because it is seen as a reflection of "fractured identities". In the earlier, 19th century "nationalist" stage, linguistic variation could even be seen as an obstacle to common identity (Polzenhagen and Dirven 2008: 246). This shows the trend of more positive evaluation and more acceptance of non-standard language varieties. However, insufficient cognitive studies examined debates about language variation in the public space to produce a reliable source for a complete analysis of non-standard languages in this context. Admittedly, the theoretical model presented above could have been based on the three categories described by Polzenhagen, Dirven and Geeraerts, but they are notions of linguistic variation rather than language. Yet, they should be considered when analysing the language users' ideologies about the relationship between the standard and the non-standard languages.

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Irrespective of the absence of new and original research examining this model, it is possible to sketch out a hypothesis of wider application. We may assume that, if representation is understood in terms of the standard linguistic variety, and if the function of identification is stressed, the expressed "identity" will correspond to the national or middle-to-upper class **cultural identity** (coming from "above"). If the participant of the debate finds him/herself represented by a non-standard variety, the expressed identity will be a **social** / **group identity** (coming from the "below"). This is to some degree visible when we compare debates focusing on the national language (Bermel 2007, Spitzmüller 2007) and those focusing on a minority language (Stroud 2004), but has to be confirmed in a comparative study or a more comprehensive study of a single debate.

While analysing this, I did not look at the different actors of the debate in detail. The field could benefit from a comparison of expert and non-expert notions of language in these debates as well as other, the journalist, the *vox populi,* etc. Besides, in the public sphere, the experts do not have the freedom to express their opinions in complex academic terms, but have to speak more like the "folk", which might mean they ultimately express the same notion of language as the non-experts.

For further research: This type of model could be used in research aiming to present a broader picture of language ideologies at work in different debates. It is open for new aspects and improvement, but allows more fixed codes for analysis, suitable for larger-scale and/or quantitative research. Quantitative studies have so far used metaphor theory, but metaphors are not enough to fully grasp the notion of language. Further study into elements of notions of language might reveal tendencies, such as the ones hypothesised two paragraphs above, and correlations between different occurrences of those elements could reveal which main lines of thinking about language are dominant in the public space, and which are marginal.

4.   Conclusions

This paper presents a review of cognitive studies of what here is referred to as the "public notions of language" (ways in which language is understood in the public sphere). I have looked into 12 studies (11 articles and one book) that present results about the conceptualisation of language in the public space, in order to construct a theoretical model of a public notion of language. All of the studies included either use cognitive tools or draw conclusions about the conceptualisation of

language in public debates about language. These tools are the conceptual metaphor, the ideal cognitive model, the cultural model and the argumentation scheme. The result of this research is a theoretical model of the public notion of language, consisting of three aspects: representation, expertise and function. The aspect of representation points at the variety which is considered to be representative of the language users. On the one hand, it can be the standard variety, and on the other, it can be a dialect, colloquial speech, a multiethnolect, idiolect (simply, a non-standard variety). The aspect of expertise explains the notions of propriety and ownership of language. It is either the experts that are the ones who decide upon what is correct, or the common language users themselves who decide what correct or good language is for them. The aspect of function shows three main understandings of the main function language: communication, expression of identity and creating/ strengthening bonds. The theoretical model presents each aspect.

Limitations: This research took into consideration 12 studies, all of which are from Europe and North America (the "Western world") and all are standard language cultures. I have not found relevant research based on material from non-Western communities.

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What does "language" mean for its users? Constructing a theoretical model of the notion of language in the public space

Vuk Vukotić

Summary

The aim of the article is to propose a theoretical model of the **notions of language in the public sphere**. The model might explain different ways in which language is conceptualised in the public sphere (such conceptualisation here is called a "public notion of language").This is done through a review of relevant research on the same subject and a synthesis of the results of that research. The studies included in the research are those that belong to the cognitive paradigm of language ideology research, and use cognitive tools to describe how the abstract domain "language" is conceptualised. A few studies that did not primarily use the cognitive approach, but also drew conclusions about the conceptual understanding of language were included. This amounts to a total of 12 articles. The results show three aspects of a public notion of language. The first is called "representation", an aspect which points to which language(s) and / or its varieties the actors of the public debate consider to be representative of them (i.e. answers the question what "their own language" is). It can be a standardized national language or a non-standard variety (dialect, colloquial speech, multi-ethnolect, etc.). The second aspect is called "expertise", and describes the barer of "real" or "good" language. It can be either a language expert or a non-expert – the latter can be envisioned as a single (the notion that the individual decides himself on his own language) or a multiple one (that "the people decide" / "the way the people speak is the right way"). The third aspect is called "function" and explains what might be understood as the main function of language. This function can be communicative, that of creating/strengthening bonds or of identification. The communicative understanding means that language is a tool of communication, while the function

of identification means that language is part of identity, and identity is expressed through language. Creating/strengthening bonds means that the function of language is to connect members of a community or society. The model can be used for cognitive research on language ideological debates, especially if the goal is to compare different notions of language in ideological debates about language in different countries. The articles the model is based on have analysed only language debates in Europe and North America and in environments that can be considered as "standard language cultures", and is thus open for improvement in accordance with new research.

Ką reiškia "kalba" kalbėtojams? Konstruojant kalbos sampratos modelį viešojoje erdvėje

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Santrauka

Straipsnio tikslas – sukurti kalbos sampratos viešojoje erdvėje teorinį modelį. Toks modelis paaiškintų, kaip kalba suvokiama viešojoje erdvėje (straipsnyje tai vadinama „viešąja kalbos samprata"). Modelis konstruojamas analizuojant ir apibendrinant ankstesnius tyrimus šia tema. Šiai analizei atrinkti tyrimai, priskiriami kognityvinei kalbos ideologijų tyrimų paradigmai, kuriuose, pasitelkiant kognityvinės paradigmos sąvokas, analizuojamas abstraktaus domeno „kalba" konceptualizavimas. Į analizę įtraukti keli kiti tyrimai, kuriuose daromos išvados apie kalbos konceptualizavimą viešojoje erdvėje, nors ir nėra remiamasi kognityviniu požiūriu. Iš viso į analizę įtraukta 12 straipsnių. Rezultatai rodo tris viešosios kalbos sampratos aspektus. Pirmasis pavadintas „reprezentacija": čia svarstoma, kokią kalbą ir (ar) jos atmainas viešosios erdvės dalyviai supranta kaip „savo" (t.y. kokios kalbos atmainos reprezentuoja juos). Tokia kalba gali būti bendrinė valstybinė kalba arba nebendrinė kalbos atmaina (kasdienė kalba, tarmė, kelių etnolektų pagrindu susiformavusi atmaina ir t. t.). Antrasis aspektas pavadintas „ekspertize": čia aiškinamasi, kas moka „tikrąją" arba „gerą" kalbą. Tai gali būti kalbos ekspertas arba ne, o pastarasis gali būti vaizduojamas arba kaip vienas žmogus (t. y., pats individas nusprendžia, kokia yra jo kalba) arba kaip dauguma („sprendžia tauta" / „gera kalba yra tai, kaip kalba tauta"). Trečiasis aspektas pavadintas „funkcija" ir nurodo į tai, ką viešosios erdvės dalyviai apibūdina kaip pagrindinę kalbos funkciją. Ši funkcija gali būti komunikacinė, identifikacinė arba ryšių kūrimo/stiprinimo funkcija. Komunikacinė funkcija reiškia, kad kalba suprantama kaip bendravimo priemonė, o identifikacinė – kad kalba yra tapatybės dalis ir naudojama kaip tos tapatybės išraiška. Ryšių kūrimas/stiprinimas reiškia, kad kalbos funkcija yra sieti vienos bendruomenės/visuomenės narius. Šį analizės modelį

galima naudoti kalbos ideologijų tyrimams, ypač tais atvejais, kai tyrimais siekiama palyginti kalbos sampratas viešosiose diskusijose apie kalbą skirtingose šalyse. Visuose tyrimuose, kuriais paremtas sudarytas modelis, analizuojamos Europos arba Šiaurės Amerikos šalys, kurių kalbinė aplinka galėtų būti apibūdinama kaip „bendrinės kalbos kultūra"; todėl modelį galima pildyti kitais tyrimais ir toliau tobulinti.

Raktažodžiai: kalbos sampratos, kalbos ideologijos, kalbos ideologiniai debatai, viešoji erdvė, konceptualioji metafora, kultūrinis modelis

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