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**Social Meanings of English Language: An Ethnographic Study of
Teenagers**

Master thesis

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Abstract

A continuous flow of English into various spheres of contemporary life has initiated scholars to research the social meanings the youth attributes to English elements. This ethnographic study aims to unravel the social meanings attributed to English by distinct friend groups of grade 5 pupils in a private school of Vilnius. The language use and metalinguistic comments of 21 participants are analysed by implementing Eckert's (2008) notions of indexical field and persona style as well as Leppänen's (2007) model for the analysis of mixed language use. The findings reveal the differences in the mixed language use among the distinct friend groups in the two investigated classes: the selected target groups of girls incorporate English to signal changes in stance or role which is not the case with the others. Furthermore, the pupils negotiate various identities through the use of English elements: they position themselves as active media users, members of friend groups or global communities. Social meanings of media user, globalness, normalcy and youth are found among others. The study provides valuable insights into the stylistic practices of contemporary Lithuanian youth. However, the findings can be generalised only to a certain extent as the study of social meaning is highly context-dependent.

Keywords: social meaning, indexical field, global English, mixed language use, code switching, language mixing.

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1. Introduction

tai gal dėl tos pačios mados kaip kaip anglų kalba yra jo jo daugiausiai naudojama kalba pasaulyje

[maybe it's because of the same fashion as English language is yeah yeah the most used language in the world]

- 5th grader girl

The importance of English language in today's world is undoubtable – as demonstrated above, even a 5th grader shows awareness of the crucial role English plays in the contemporary society. In Europe, the rapid spread of English dates to the end of the Second World War when various factors such as increased migration had created favourable conditions for such process (Hoffmann, 2000). Nowadays, English language having the status of *lingua franca* is the language of tourism, business, entertainment etc. Due to its popularity and importance, English is often chosen as an object of study. It is a broad research field which can be divided according to its speaker communities. Braj B. Kachru distinguishes three circles or categories of 'world Englishes': the "Inner Circle", that is, the native speakers of the language, the "Outer Circle", which is the second language speakers and the "Expanding Circle" – the speakers who consider the language as foreign or other (see Hoffmann, 2000: 6; Vaicekauskienė, 2020: 185). English language in the Expanding Circle is relevant for this study as it is carried out in Lithuania. Early investigations on such speakers have mainly focussed on the lexicon and the influence on a speaker's mother tongue, thus not taking into account the complex relationship between English and national languages which is apparent today (Androutsopoulos, 2013). The discussed popularity of English language and the increase of its use hint at the expansion of communicative functions and social values that it could have. Accordingly, later studies within the field have shifted towards the spread of English in various domains, mixed language styles and the pragmatic and social value of English language (Vaicekauskienė, 2020: 185). Therefore, it could be said, that the analytical focus has shifted from the analysis of language forms towards the meaning of its presence in a certain discourse. In other words, an eminent area of study is the social meaning of variation.

According to one of the scholars of the field of social meaning, Eckert (2008: 454), language variants span multiple potential social meanings in different contexts and the meanings

constitute, what she terms, an *indexical field*. To clarify, it is a constellation of meanings of a certain variant. Meanings are seen as ever changing and the variables as indicative of personal styles (Eckert, 2008: 472). The research carried out in the field supports this theory: the scholars have reported various social meanings of English related to media and youth among others (Vaicekauskienė, 2020). The former positions English as the language of media and the latter ascribes the language to the style of a broad social group. It is, therefore, not surprising that a number of scholars investigate these links. In other words, the social meanings youth groups attach to English variants, which are often encountered and used in media, become objects of study (see, e.g., Leppänen, 2007; Zenner et al., 2020).

English language is found common and customary in youth discourses across different communities (see Leppänen et al., 2009; Roos & Nicholas, 2019; Vaicekauskienė, 2020). Discourses containing elements of different languages are termed *mixed language use* (Leppänen, 2007) or *mixed speech style* (Vaicekauskienė & Vyšniauskienė, 2019) in the field of study. The former term can be applied more generally as it encompasses both spoken and written discourses. The analysis of mixed language use dives into the context-dependent relationship between different languages and social implications of language choice. As the choice of variables signals personal style, they also indicate identity-work: speakers use English to construct flexible identities to gain certain social advantages, such as, acceptance in a community (see Leppänen et al., 2009; Song, 2007). However, due to the context-dependence of social meanings, the findings of the field can only be generalised with caution. There is a need to investigate the meanings of English in a number of various communities. Moreover, persona style is the best level to approach social meanings of language variation as it is the level where different stylistic systems, such as language and clothing, meet (Eckert, 2008: 456). Thus, small-scale qualitative studies are of high value. Taking these reasons into account, the present study aims to enrich the knowledge in the study of social meaning of English language by investigating youth mixed language use and metalinguistic comments in Lithuania, an under-represented community of the Expanding Circle.

This ethnographic study which is grounded in Eckert's (2008) theoretical work on social meaning investigates the 5th graders of two classes in a private school in Vilnius. The pupils were observed during the English lessons and breaks, provided with various tasks (more in chapter 3) and notes were taken for determining their friend circles. It was initially noticed that a group of girls in each of the classes stand out from the rest in their incorporation of English elements: they seemed to use more English in their friend-circle conversations when compared

to their classmates. It hints to disparate persona styles, thus, identity. To the best of my knowledge, such clear disparity was not reported or taken as a primary focus in previous studies – this will become evident from the discussion of previous studies in chapter 2. Moreover, such young pupils are rarely an interest of study in this field. This thesis seeks to reduce these insufficiencies. As variation signals persona style, hence identity, this incorporation of English is considered as socially meaningful. These two groups were selected as target whereas other classmates were perceived as ordinary participants. The latter were examined as well and contribute to the understanding of context and common tendencies in the classes. The access to the participants' mixed language use and metalinguistic comments is gained from friend-circle discussions and semi-structured interviews. It is noteworthy, that the global pandemic of Covid-19 has influenced methodology: the data was gathered during “Zoom” meetings. The thesis addresses the following blocks of questions:

1. What friend circles could be distinguished based on the existing relationships among the participants? What aspects of group identity become clear from the interests they share?
2. How are English elements incorporated into Lithuanian discourse? Do various groups of pupils incorporate English elements differently, if so, in what way?
3. What social meanings of English language could be derived from the mixed language use and metalinguistic comments by the participants? Are there identifiable differences between ideology of target groups versus the others? How, if so, do the attitudes correlate with their mixed language use and identity?

Chapter 2 of the thesis delves into the scholarly work on the social meaning of English language. Chapter 3 explores the gathered data and applied methods. In chapter 4, the results of the study are discussed. Finally, chapter 5 summarises the study and draws conclusions.

2. Theory and Previous Research

The first part of this chapter explores the scholarly work done in the field of social meaning and the theoretical premises the present study builds on, namely, Penelope Eckert's notion of indexical field. Then, the chapter turns from theory to scholarly practice, that is, the studies carried out on youth language in the Expanding Circle of English which is of high relevance to this study. The investigations will be categorised according to their methodological approaches, namely, language use and metalinguistic comments. Both of the approaches will be adopted in the present study.

2.1. The social meaning of variation: theoretical underpinnings

The social meaning of variation is a broad and dynamic concept which has been a subject of academic discussions for decades. One of the possible concise definitions is proposed by Robert J. Podesva: 'the stances, personal characteristics, and personas indexed through the deployment of linguistic forms in interaction' (Podesva, 2011: 234). However, to fully comprehend what lies behind the social meaning of variation some background knowledge is necessary. For this reason, this chapter explores the history of research in this field, the key theoreticians and perspectives.

One of the most prominent scholars in this field – Penelope Eckert – categorises all the research done in the field of sociolinguistic variation into three waves (Eckert, 2012). The first wave of variation studies dates back to early work by William Labov and these studies are most frequently quantitative, e.g., surveys and interviews are conducted (Eckert, 2012: 88). Such methods are chosen in pursuance of the correlation between a linguistic variable and macro social categories which are allocated by the researcher, in example, sex, age and social class (Llamas et al., 2006: 102). Thus, the social meaning of variables was interpreted on the basis of the social categories the speakers were assigned to and not so much on the knowledge of the speakers themselves and their communities (Eckert, 2012: 90). In order to grasp the local dynamics of variation the second wave studies are frequently ethnographical. The aim of these studies is to investigate the social categories appearing locally and relate them to the more general macrosocial categories (Eckert, 2012: 91; Llamas et al., 2006: 102). Eckert's (1989) investigation of Detroit adolescents can already be perceived as a study of the third wave of variationist studies. The investigation in the suburban school shows distinct social categories – Burnouts and Jocks – and more importantly, these categories are interpreted as flexible: to

illustrate, the features constituting a Burnout found in one school may not match the ones found in another (Eckert, 1989). These findings correspond with the ideas in the third wave studies. Social categories are no longer seen as stable and identity cannot be equated with the existing macrosocial categories. Variation is not seen as a mere reflection of social meaning rather as a force in its construction and social change (Eckert, 2012: 87). Hence, the study of social meaning of variation has shifted towards the analysis of speaker practices without preassigning them to certain stiff social categories.

For a better understanding of contemporary work on social meaning in sociolinguistics a closer look into Eckert's (2008) theoretical work is advantageous. The scholar builds upon Silverstein's (2003) notion of indexical order and linguistic-anthropological theories of indexicality. Language variants have not only referential but also social meaning: variants may attain additional meanings in certain contexts. This quality of language is called *indexicality* (Silverstein, 2003). The researcher argues that there is a specific arrangement of meanings which he calls *indexical order*. According to Silverstein (2003) it is possible for variants to continually be assigned social meanings depending on the context (in Eckert, 2008). This idea of fluidity or context-dependence of the social meaning ascribed to language variants is further developed by Eckert (2008) as she proposes the notion of *indexical field*. The notion is defined as '*a constellation of meanings that are ideologically linked*' (Eckert, 2008: 464). In other words, language variants are seen as a manifestation of ideology and their social meaning is ever-changing due to the process of reinterpretation of each variant in different contexts. Thus, all of the meanings constitute a field of interrelated meanings. Each time a certain variable is used it might invoke a pre-existing value or create a new one (Eckert, 2008: 464). Therefore, it can be concluded that there are no set categories of variants for the speaker to use and variation is a process of meaning-making.

The notion of identity has an important place in the area of social meaning research. According to Eckert (2008), variables are components of styles and, thus, the meaning of variables can only be derived in relation to different styles. Styles or *persona styles* signal different ways of being in a certain context (Eckert, 2008: 456). In other words, a person using a variant in a situation signals inclusion in a social group or category, hence it points to the person's identity. A person is able to use linguistic resources to create styles and consequently identities – language is an integral part of one's identity (Llamas et al., 2006: 106). This constant process of creating and interpreting styles is called *stylistic practise* (Eckert, 2008: 456). What is more, it is argued that the meaning of variation is best accessed through persona style as it is in this

level that all stylistic systems including, for instance, clothing and language itself can be connected both to one another and with the relevant ideological constructions (Eckert, 2008: 456). Put in a nutshell, when language users operate their linguistic resources the uttered message has multiple and ever-changing meanings including the social ones which index their identity to various degree.

This study on 5th graders in a private school could also be seen as a third wave study. Employing the notions of indexical field, persona style and stylistic practice proposed by Eckert (2008) the investigation views social categories and a person's identity as flexible. Moreover, the meanings ascribed to variants are context-dependent and constitute persona style. Therefore, a close attention is paid to each member in a target group – their relationships, hobbies, language use and ideology which is accessed through comments on language. This allows to comprehend the specific context a variant appears in and leads to conclusions about social meaning also person and group identity.

2.2. The social meaning of language variation: studies on English language

There are several methods to investigate the social meaning of linguistic variables. While reading on the topic, two prominent methodological approaches became clear from the studies on English in the Expanding Circle. First, several studies access the social meaning of English language through attitudes and ideology. These studies investigate social meaning through metalinguistic comments in, e.g., interviews and questionnaires. Second, a part of the studies researches the actual language use as the means to examine social meaning. Naturally, there are scholars who use both methodologies in a single study – as it is the case with the present research on 5th graders. Therefore, both methods are relevant for this study and research employing them will be discussed. The following section presents the research done on youth and social meaning of English by categorising the studies according to their methodological approach: first, the ones investigating metalinguistic comments; then, language use. The studies which employ both methods are presented according to the main focus as the methods of data collection allow to draw different conclusions.

2.2.1. Social meaning through metalinguistic comments

One of the approaches to the study of social meaning is the investigation of metalinguistic comments. In most cases, it allows to make certain conclusions about language ideology, since, according to Eckert (2008), variables are embedded with it. There has been a great deal of this kind of research done in recent years (see Akyol, 2019; Bejaoui, 2018; Lee, 2018; Mohammadi, 2017; Somblingo & Alieto, 2020; Zenner et al., 2020). Social meanings of English related to higher authority, internationality, educational and socioeconomic benefits are reported in schools across various countries. A study on 10 – 11th grade students in an international school in Korea has provided evidence that the students emphasize the skill of English language (Lee, 2018). To explain the findings briefly, the better English skills the smarter a student is perceived which leads to higher authority in peer groups. To add, the inquiry of the parents' ideology revealed a tendency to choose private international schools for their children in pursuance of educational and socioeconomic benefits (Lee, 2018). The meaning of economic capital also arises in the study of the social value of English in Turkey (Akyol, 2019). The study of 209 students in different secondary schools shows that English is seen as a means to become rich. Moreover, it has social value as well – it is the language of international communication (Akyol, 2019). It becomes clear from these studies that mostly positive values are associated with English language. It is also reported by the study of 1054 Filipino beginning teachers (Somblingo & Alieto, 2020). The presented studies approach the investigation of attitudes quite directly – the participants are asked about English language and its use. The present study applies this method at the very end of data collection with target groups.

There is a portion of research which avoids such direct approach to the issue (see Leppänen et al., 2009; Roos & Nicholas, 2019; Zenner et al., 2020). The investigators distract the participants from language to some extent by asking them to comment on, to exemplify, a photo or a character. In a study of 174 Flemish children, three age groups watched two animated videos – in one of them the main character spoke only Dutch, in another – some English words were included in the speech of the main character (Zenner et al., 2020). In this case, the participants comment on the features of the character. Such studies tackle the unconscious social meanings attributed to language and require great preparation. Additionally, there are studies which make use of photographs when approaching the comments on language indirectly. For instance, in a study of Finnish teenager perceptions on media practice, the participants were asked to take photographs of English language encountered in their daily lives and later comment on their media practices with the help of the pictures they had taken

(Leppänen et al., 2009). Similar methodology was applied in an investigation of German learners in terms of perceptions of English (Roos & Nicholas, 2019). Pupils aged 8 – 11 were asked to photograph English language in their environment, in other words, to reveal a part of their linguistic landscape. The pupils were later asked to reflect upon the photographs explaining what they depict, why they chose to photograph it and interpreting why English was used in that context (Roos & Nicholas, 2019: 98). In these studies, the participants' focus was shifted from language to captured objects. Particularly, from commenting on language directly to commenting on photographs and the objects in it. The present study employs a similar method.

The studies introduced in the previous paragraph attest to a strong relation between English and the media. Finnish adolescents' reflections on the taken photographs reveal that the flow of English in media is perceived as natural, normal. English as a resource together with various media provide them access to diverse social spaces (Leppänen et al., 2009: 1086). A value of group membership is signalled. Similarly to Leppänen's (2009) study, the findings from German pupils also suggest the normalcy of English language in their environments: they perceive it as 'foreign' however not some strange 'other' (Roos & Nicholas, 2019: 109). Moreover, it becomes apparent, that English has various social meanings, e.g., modernity, coolness, youth. Analogous meanings have been found in Flemish schools where the characters of a cartoon were described. The study revealed that English has a higher prestige among the participants of the study. The character using English elements was interpreted as more modern, youthful and cool in comparison to the Dutch-only character (Zenner et al., 2020: 15). The findings could also be interpreted as indexing a relation between English language and the media which was also apparent in the previously discussed studies (see Leppänen et al., 2009; Roos & Nicholas, 2019). In other words, pupils are generally used to English in contemporary media, in this case, animated videos. The frequency and normalcy of English in youth surroundings hints to a field of possible social meanings attached to the language variants.

2.2.2. Social meaning through language use

Investigation of language use is another methodological approach which is applied when researching social meaning. As Eckert & Labov (2017: 476) claim, a study of speakers in different social contexts provides explicit demonstrations of social meaning. There is a fair amount of research which find identity an important aspect in relation to the social meaning of

English (Ng & Lee, 2019; Leppänen, 2007; Leppänen et al., 2009; Moore & Podesva, 2009; Podesva, 2011; Song, 2007). The present study poses questions regarding identity as well; therefore, the following paragraphs pursue the aim of highlighting the scholarly work on the aspect of identity in the field through language use of the youth.

As discussed in the theory section of this paper, Eckert (2008) describes persona styles in relation to different forms of being which could be interpreted as a direct index to identity. These arguments are supported by studies across different countries. For instance, the analysis of the bilingual practices of Korean children in USA led to a conclusion that it represents the ongoing construction of identity (Song, 2007). It was found that these children are able to adapt their linguistic resources to various contexts and in this manner construct their “bilingual” identities (Song, 2007: 256). Similar identity-work is reported in Malaysian context: university graduates are able to flexibly construct temporary identities for social purposes by using language (Ng & Lee, 2019). In general, the results of the studies find identity flexible, changing and context dependent. In other words, people are not seen as having one identity rather as having multiple in different social contexts. It could be said that language becomes an instrument of identity-work.

Non-stable identity is reported in numerous studies carried out in the Finnish context as well. Sirpa Leppänen’s work on social meaning and the youth is notable. A paper by Leppänen et al. (2009) investigates youth behaviour in media, such as, web activities of a young Finnish woman (Leppänen et al., 2009). Her activities included writing fan fiction, commenting and similar. Various linguistic resources were operated: Finnish, English and Japanese. The investigation of language commentary was unproductive: the participant could not explain her use of English - it was deemed an unconscious decision (Leppänen et al., 2009: 1090). Moreover, it was discovered that the participant took on different roles, to exemplify, of a commentator or a writer, however did not change who she actually was, that is, she provided real information about herself (Leppänen et al., 2009: 1089). The results verify the flexibility of identity – people may not change their names; however, they alter their identity by taking up certain roles in different social situations. Another study was done in an online discussion forum of Christian Finns (Leppänen et al., 2009). The inclusion of English elements into the Finnish discourse was an instance of identity negotiation in a translocal community of snowboarders (Leppänen et al., 2009: 1100). In other words, by using certain English words the users attached or identified themselves with the global community of snowboarders. The

findings of these studies reveal the link between the youth, English language variables and media which was also apparent in research of metalinguistic comments.

An earlier article of Leppänen (2007) investigating the functions of English in young Finns' language noticed a link between identity-work and globalness. Language of a gaming session, hip-hop lyrics, fan fiction and weblogs was investigated through the lens of code-switching and language mixing (Leppänen, 2007). One of the findings was that the number of English elements and the manner of their use differed in these contexts or, as the scholar terms it – youthspheres (Leppänen, 2007: 166). English may appear in small insertions to a Finnish discourse and, in other instances, be chosen as the primary means of communication. This is viewed as an indication of not only linguistic but also social and cultural change (Leppänen, 2007: 166). English use in these cases may be an index of a broader, exceeding-the-local community and signals, consequently, the negotiation of identity. The social meanings of expertise, Western culture and globalness are found. In other words, the use of English in youth discourses put the users in expert positions and they can identify themselves with the western world. In general, the youth seek to occupy positions in global rather than solely local community through English use.

There are several studies investigating youth language in relation to identity in Lithuanian context (see Čekuolytė, 2017; Čubajevaitė, 2013; Lėgudaitė, 2009; Vaicekauskienė & Vyšniauskienė, 2019). Two of the studies investigate adolescents in Vilnius and touch upon the meanings of English language. First, Čekuolytė (2017) ethnographically investigates the social dynamics of adolescent pupils in a typical school through the analysis of language variation and social relationships. The pupils are grouped according to Wenger's (2007) *communities of practice*, that is, groups that mutually engage in an enterprise and share a repertoire (Čekuolytė, 2017: 36). Consequently, she distinguishes several persona styles, such as, *good girls*, *cool girls*, *ordinary urban boys*, *streetwise boys* etc. Her investigation addresses both language use and metalinguistic comments. The commentary part, particularly, swearing and attitudes towards it, revealed that adolescents generally ascribe more positive meanings to English swearwords in comparison to Russian ones (Čekuolytė, 2017: 198). Moreover, swearing in English is seen as mild when compared with swearing in Russian. In general, English swearwords are recognized as an innovation of Lithuanian adolescent speech, therefore, no specific indexical value is found (Čekuolytė, 2017: 201). According to the author, due to English resources being new in Lithuanian context, contemporary youth contributes to their spread and the construction of the social meaning that these resources attain (Čekuolytė,

2017: 226). Therefore, it is valuable to investigate Lithuanian youth language further to enrich the knowledge on the social meanings attributed to English resources.

Another study in the field was carried out by Vaicekauskienė & Vyšniauskienė (2019). A part of this corpus-based study dealt with adolescents' *mixed speech style*: a style where Russian and English resources that appear in an otherwise Lithuanian discourse (Vaicekauskienė & Vyšniauskienė, 2019). The main focus of the study was to investigate the relation between social meaning and social types or group styles at the interactional level and expressed through various means, e.g., performance and stylization or enacting different characters (Vaicekauskienė & Vyšniauskienė, 2019: 339). Similarly to the previously discussed study by Čekuolytė (2017), this study also notices the presence of English swearwords and they are found to indicate toughness. Moreover, English elements span a variety of other meanings. Identity-work is reported as it was the case with studies in other countries. In an instance of a computer game session English contributes to creating an identity of an expert player and affiliating with the character of the game (Vaicekauskienė & Vyšniauskienė, 2019: 343). To specify, as English is the language of games, the incorporation of its elements during a game attains positive social meanings. For example, it is perceived as expertise. Moreover, adolescents' metalinguistic comments reveal that English elements are associated with smartness and the playful use of these elements signals the meaning of entertainment and fun. Furthermore, English elements or phrases may sometimes be used as silence-mitigators (Vaicekauskienė & Vyšniauskienė, 2019: 345). The qualitative research reports a wide range of functions and meanings that English variables may attain in youth discourses in various contexts.

The studies on the social meanings of English language and the youth in the Expanding Circle have uncovered various meanings: globalness, media, youth, group membership, expertise and so on (for more see Vaicekauskienė, 2020). To put it briefly, English elements incorporated into another language are found socially meaningful and can be instruments of identity negotiation. However, the presented studies scarcely consider the multifaceted nature of this incorporation - various different identities could be expressed via specific uses of English elements as styles are linked to identity. The noticed inclusion of English to differing extent among 5th graders should be studied closely in terms of social meaning and identity in order to enrich the knowledge in the field of social meaning. Moreover, as the English language continuously spreads and maintains its position of importance in the contemporary society, there is a need to study its social implications to young people further.

3. Data and Methods

The present study was carried out on two grade 5 classes from October 2020 until February 2021 in a private school in Vilnius. The two classes I teach English to were chosen for the study since I had previously witnessed mixed language use among them. I will hereinafter refer to myself as the researcher-teacher. In order to start the process of gathering data, a permission to conduct research in the school was obtained from the school's principal. Next, each pupil's parents or legal guardians were contacted and their permissions to record and investigate their children were received. In total, 9 pupils from grade 5-1 and 11 pupils from grade 5-2 participate in this ethnographic study. All of them are 11–12 years old and live in Vilnius district. 3 pupils in each class constitute a target group as they were initially noticed to stand out in their use of English. There is one pupil in each of the classes to whom parents did not give permission to participate in the study. Another mentionable detail is a girl in 5-2 who is diagnosed with a mental disorder; however, she is capable to reflect on her interests with the help of her assistant or the researcher-teacher. Overall, the process of gathering data consists of class observation, group discussions and semi-structured interviews. It is important to note that due to the global pandemic of Covid-19, the observational part of the study was carried out only partly in a physical school: it proved to be more fruitful to observe students both during the English lessons and breaks. The discussions and interviews were organised via Zoom platform as a result of the physical schools being closed. Due to these circumstances, the students participated in the study from their own rooms. The total of 6 h 30 min 11 s of data was recorded: 2 h 8 min 50 s of interviews and 4 h 21 min 21 s of discussions.

3.1. Collecting data

First stage of the data gathering procedure and the study itself was observing the pupils during English lessons and breaks with a particular focus on friendships to later distinguish circles of friends. The students were also asked to write a text about their life in school identifying the people they spend time with and choose desired teammates during a lesson. These activities contributed to the distinction of friend circles as well. The second stage of data gathering was recording a discussion about pupils' free-time activities in the distinguished friend circles via Zoom. In the beginning, the teacher-researcher provided the participants with some background information: explained the importance that scholars attribute to lessons which keep in line with pupils' interests. The participants were offered a role of experts, that is, the researcher sought

to leave the position of authority by asking for adolescents' help in understanding their interests for improving the lessons. Due to ethical concerns, it was briefly mentioned that the information they provide will be recorded. The groups were then given a task to write down their ideas about the most important free-time activity, share and discuss them with one another and choose an activity which is the most important to their group. It was agreed that the researcher-teacher comes back after an amount of time, about 20-30 min depending on the size of the circle, and the group will reflect on their conclusions in a moderated discussion. As a result of pupils being left alone, it is expected that the retrieved data represents common speech of the friend circle. Moreover, all the investigated friend circles had conversations unrelated to the given task which could be seen as an indication of pupils not feeling supervised by the researcher-teacher. The part of the discussion where students reflect on their conclusions was researcher-moderated and provides insights into the groups' identity through their interests. At the end of the discussion, the participants were assigned a task – to play a role of detectives and photograph the English language they encounter in their environment. Sadly, the pandemic limited this part of the study as well, as the pupils stayed at home for most of their free time. This task is related to the following stage of data collection.

The third stage of the data collection was semi-structured group interviews about English language in the participants' environments. This part of the study investigates the ideology behind English variables through teenagers' metalinguistic comments on the collected photographs and, consequently, the language they had found. This particular activity was inspired by a previously mentioned study of pupils' linguistic landscapes in Germany (Roos & Nicholas, 2019). The compositions of target friend-circles were left unchanged whereas the rest of participants were regrouped into groups of 3-4 as they were only seen as contextual. However, this is not seen as a disadvantage to the study, since the ordinary participants were regrouped paying attention to their friendships. Firstly, all of the participants were asked to share their photos commenting on what it is and why they think English is used in that context. While one was presenting others were encouraged to share any interpretations they had as well. Second, the researcher-teacher showed the photos that she had taken in Vilnius and asked the participants to interpret English use in those cases. The final picture presented was of a tag - a type of graffiti. Some background information was provided: the tag was found in Vilnius near a certain school; hence it is possible that it was painted by a pupil. For approaching identity directly, the teenagers were asked to interpret the fact that a person has chosen to identify themselves in English despite being, most probably, Lithuanian. After the reflections of the

participants, the researcher asked about their nicknames and self-identification online. In the cases of the target groups, at the very end of the study, the participants were directly asked about their English language use during the breaks which had initially inspired this study.

3.2 Analysing data

As the present study devotes more attention to the target groups all of the recordings made with these groups were transcribed. Concerning the ordinary participants, the transcriptions of their discussions without researcher-teacher were made and notes of the moderated-discussion and interview data were taken. Transcriptions do not reflect short pauses, overlaps etc. as the study focuses on language mixing and code switching rather than conversation analysis. The names of the participants are changed in the thesis to protect their anonymity. Out of consideration for the reader, target-group participants, who all happened to be female, were named popular Lithuanian names starting with letter M. Names of the ordinary participants from class 5-1 were chosen to start with letter A and class 5-2 with letter K.

The retrieved data was qualitatively analysed in order to distinguish friend circles, analyse mixed language use and interpret the social meaning of English elements. Nonetheless, some clear tendencies in frequency came to light without quantitative calculations. They will be discussed in this paper. As already mentioned, the friend circles were distinguished based on researcher observations, pupils' texts on life in school and teammate choice. Their seating arrangements proved to be relevant as well – pupils often chose to sit near their friends. The distinguished circles have similarities with what scholars term communities of practice – groups of people engaging “in a shared domain of human endeavour”, such as a group of pupils establishing identity at school (Wenger, 2011: 1). However, considering the retrieved data, there are instances where a friend circle consists of two people which could hardly be considered a community. In order not to deviate from the traditional definitions of community of practice it was chosen to call these pupil groups friend circles. Characterising labels based on the participants' expressed interests were attached to each friend circle. The distinction of friend circles proved to be challenging due to constant development and change of social relations. Some pupils prefer to spend time alone, however, it cannot be accounted for when organising discussions. Hence, one of the groups consisted of pupils who did not normally spend time together. Therefore, some language use was excluded from the analysis as it did not

represent a conversation between friends. The results of this stage of the analysis will be presented in section 4.1.

For the analysis of mixed language use only the parts of friend-circle discussions without the researcher-teacher present were used. A model of English element categorisation proposed by Leppänen (2007) was adapted. The scholar differentiates between language mixing and code-switching. Language mixing is seen as an inclusion of lexical and phrasal elements from one language to the grammatical frame of another (Leppänen, 2007: 153). Code switching is perceived as lexical and phrasal elements as well as clauses of one language occurring in the matrix of another (Leppänen, 2007: 152). The major difference lies in their function in a certain discourse: code switching instances mark a change in stance or role, relationship or topic, whereas language mixing indicates a general mixed strategy or a hybrid style (Leppänen, 2007: 153). Nevertheless, the border between these categories is quite fuzzy, e.g., in a context of a gaming session English elements which are directly related to the functions and actions of the chosen characters are categorised as code switching, that is, taking the role of an expert. I would argue that it could also be a case of language mixing as it is similar to general mixed style common to youth language. Similarly, the identified cases of language mixing in hip-hop lyrics could be interpreted as signalling a certain stance, e.g., positive views upon American hip-hop culture. Hence, various interpretations are plausible in different contexts. Taking into account the retrieved data, the notions are defined as follows:

Language mixing – lexical elements or short phrases of one language appearing in the matrix of another. This type of mixed language use shows an overall mixed or hybrid style. These elements are most often adapted to the grammatical or phonetic framework of the language they appear in. For instance:

*Migle tu **užsimjūtinus***

[*Migle you 're **muted***].

Code switching – phrases or clauses of one language appearing in the matrix of another. This type of mixed language use shows a change in stance, relationship, role and similar. These are usually not adapted to the grammar and phonetic rules of another language. To exemplify:

<...> *aš norėčiau visą vakarą visą rytą kiekvieną valandą **twenty-four seven** valgyti nagetsus*
<...>

[<...> *I would like to all evening all morning every hour **twenty-four seven** eat nuggets <...>]*

Leppänen (2007) also differentiates between alternational and insertional uses of mixed language. Alternational means that there is no dominant language: all languages are used to similar extent. However, all instances of English in the analysed data were interpreted as insertional, as Lithuanian language dominated in pupils' conversations. For this reason, this differentiation is not reflected in the categories distinguished for this study. The results of mixed language use are discussed in section 4.2.

The last stage of the analysis was qualitative as well. The target participants' transcripts and the ordinary participants' recordings of semi-structured interviews on linguistic landscapes were analysed. The metalinguistic comments were investigated to grasp the attitudes the pupils hold towards English. The target groups were analysed in comparison to the rest of the class. The findings of this stage are presented in section 4.3.

My position as both the teacher of the classes and the researcher should also be briefly discussed. In my firm belief, the philosophy and culture of the school the research was conducted in grants the possibility of a teacher undertaking valid scientific research in spite of their role in the classroom. This private school devotes a significant deal of attention to psychological well-being of the pupils. Therefore, the philosophy of the school views teachers as pupils' friends and mentors and in this manner aims to put the teacher in line with the pupils. For instance, in the beginning of the lessons the pupils and teachers share their news and feelings in order to form emotional bonds. No rules are imposed solely by teachers: in the beginning of a semester a discussion is organized where pupils share their views and decide on rules together with the teacher of a certain subject. Additionally, it is not out of the ordinary to address teachers by their first name which indicates equal positions – it appears in this study as well. Nevertheless, the methodological part of the study needs to be carefully deliberated to avoid the influence of the researcher-teacher as much as possible. Accordingly, the activities of the study did not resemble any of the previous classroom assignments, the instructions were given in Lithuanian language to prevent English vocabulary activation by the researcher-teacher. Lithuanian is never used during English lessons as means of instruction or during activities. However, the analysis of the data exhibits the researcher-teacher having some

influence on the behaviour of the participants. There was a pupil who was not certain which language, Lithuanian or English, to choose for the in-group discussion and asked for friends' clarification. Another started the discussion with an English word before switching to Lithuanian. One more pupil made the list of free time activities in English. These particular instances are interpreted as the influence of the researcher-teacher. To specify, the pupils given a task by their English teacher assume that the task should be done in English despite the measures of precaution taken by the researcher-teacher, namely, informing that the activity is not a lesson and instructing solely in Lithuanian. Nevertheless, the retrieved data is considered to be valid for scientific research as none of the participants carried the conversation in English and stayed on the provided task throughout the duration of the discussion.

4. Results and Discussion

First subsection (4.1.) of the findings presents the discoveries of the first stage of the study – the two investigated classes and the existing relationships in them will be discussed to show how friend circles were distinguished and acquaint the reader with the participants. Their shared interests will also be presented as it indexes their identity. Second subsection (4.2.) dives into the language use – the meanings of English elements in the discourses of friend circles. As already mentioned in the methodological part, these discussions are interpreted as conversations between friends in a familiar environment, thus are expected to reveal spontaneous informal language of a certain friend circle. The third subsection (4.3.) explores ideology through language commentary, hence, the interpretations of English elements in Lithuanian context. In addition to comments on linguistic landscapes, this section explores participants' commentary on their own language use, specifically, self-identification online and the target groups' reflections upon their use of English in conversation. Finally, in all stages of the study, the findings are accounted to draw conclusions about the social meanings of English elements and the target participants' identity work.

4.1. Social life in school

Various kinds of relationships are noticed in school: peer to peer, pupil to teacher, pupil to administration etc. These relations are in constant and simultaneous development and constitute the social life of a certain school. A particular social order can be found among pupils learning in one classroom. This order is quite noticeable – teenagers often spend time in small groups during the breaks, wish to be grouped with certain classmates when provided with an assignment, choose their seating based on their social relationships if allowed to do so. All of these point to various friend circles. There are cases where a hierarchical order emerges not only from school regulations but also is established through the social relationships among pupils (see Čekuolytė, 2017: 73). It shows how central relationships in school environment are where adolescents seek to find their place in a group and negotiate identities.

Grade 5 can be considered an important stage of pupils' life. Observations of the school life reveal that after graduating from primary school, pupils are no longer considered and do not consider themselves children but rather teenagers. The educational system changes, that is, instead of having one teacher for all subjects except English pupils have different teachers for every subject. Consequently, new kinds of relationships between pupils and teachers are

formed. They gain greater independence in this school – they are allowed to stay in the classroom and schoolyard without direct adult supervision. To clarify, adults are usually around them but not with them during their free time in school. Moreover, it is quite the usual practice to change schools before starting each new level of education in Lithuania. Hence, after finishing the primary level some pupils leave and others join in grade 5 as it was the case with the observed classes. It is vital for the group dynamics: the new pupils form and transform relationships in the class while searching for their place in the group. Maturity processes and the described circumstances, namely, changes in perceptions, school system and the group, create a window of opportunity to redefine one's identity through the establishment of the new and maintenance of the old relationships. Furthermore, context is highly important to understand the peculiarities of groups' social life. For this reason, the social dynamics of each class were thoroughly explored.

4.1.1. Relationships in class 5-1

There are 10 members of this class in total: 6 girls and 4 boys. 7 members continue education in this school from primary level and 3 members joined the class in the beginning of the 5th school year. The atmosphere in the class was quite tense in the beginning of the school year. Several pupils struggled to find their place and role in the class, consequently the class manager together with school's psychologist had several meetings concerning the social environment of the class. The new members struggled to fit in and often recalled old classmates and school during the breaks and lessons to me. For instance, during a morning circle, Andrius shared a prank that he and his old classmates had pulled; Akvilė kept noticing the similarities between the teachers in the old and new schools. The old members felt betrayed and abandoned by the classmates who had changed the school. There was an instance where one of the boys – Adas – was asked about this tension in the class. He explained that the old class was joined at the hip [*kaip vienas kūmštis*] and now the old members feel abandoned. As already mentioned, teenage relationships are in constant creation and reconfiguration, thus, it could be said that under the course of the study members of class 5-1 became closer and several friend circles came into light.

The seating arrangement is chosen as a carcass of the figure below since a chosen seat is found to indirectly index a pupil's place in the social order of the class. It is noteworthy that the classroom is the pupils' space: pupils stay in the same classroom for the majority of the lessons except the ones they need special equipment for, namely, IT. The pupils keep their belongings

and spend breaks in this classroom – as required by Covid-19 regulations. Hence, the teachers are the ones entering their space.

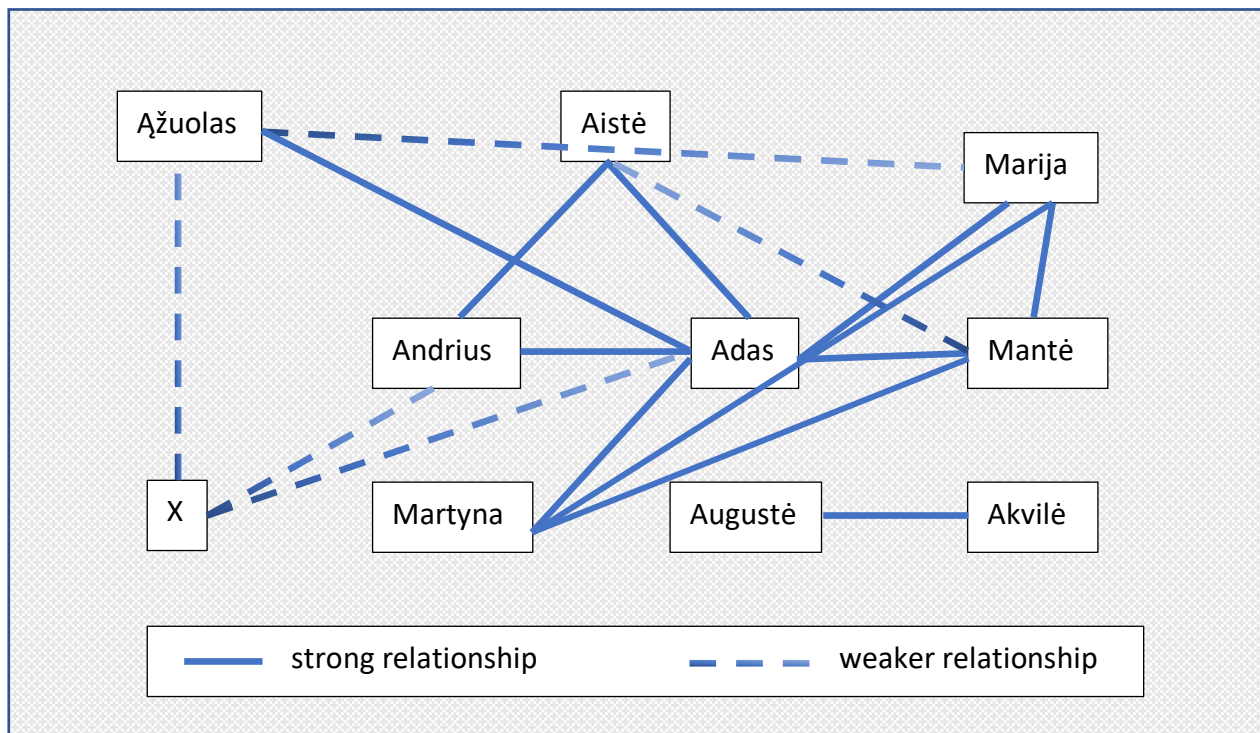


Figure 1. Significant relationships in class 5-1

Figure 1 shows social relations which are considered significant for this study. The determined relationships in class 5-1 served as basis for the distinction of friend circles. It was chosen to represent the relationships between all members of the class instead of friend circles solely to visualise the complex nature of social life in a class. X in the figure represents a pupil who did not participate in the study but is nevertheless vital for understanding the social life of the class. Solid lines represent strong relationships, meaning that these participants often spend time together in or even outside school as, e.g., in the case of Martyna and Marija. The dashed lines represent weaker connections and less common interactions with each other. Several teenagers do not have lines connecting them; however, it does not indicate that there is no interaction between them. Classmates do communicate with one another on a daily basis, but this communication is minimal, coordinated by the teacher or similar. Thus, these interactions are insignificant for the purposes of this research. The figure reveals the leader or, as others might interpret, the most socially powerful or popular (Čekuolytė, 2017) – Adas has most connections with other classmates. As already noted, the nature of teenage relationships is multifaceted and complex, thus some challenging cases of categorization were encountered. In such cases, the

precise distinction of the targeted friend circles was prioritized. The observed relationships revealed the following friend circles and the analysis of their interests arising from group discussions allowed to assign certain labels to each group for analytical purposes. It is noteworthy that active media use is a characteristic of all groups.

(1) Martyna, Marija and Mantè – the “good girls”. This group gets good grades in school and shares an interest in anime, reading books, LGBT movement. Regarding relationships, Martyna and Marija attend music school together, thus spend time after school. Marija and Mantè meet after school as well. Marija could be interpreted as a central or holding member of the group as Martyna and Mantè sometimes compete and have disagreements. Nevertheless, Martyna, who often starts the disputes, when asked about the preferred teammates has indicated a wish to be with Mantè. A great use of English elements in comparison to the rest of the classmates was noticed among this group even before the study, thus they were chosen as one of the target groups.

(2) Aistè, Andrius and Adas – the “entertainers”. The members are talkative and active – they often engage in activities which could be described as performances. They shared with me that they often work together successfully. Aistè and Andrius – the new members of the class – have a close bond as they always spend time together during the breaks, pull pranks on other classmates, talk during the lessons and prefer to have each other as teammates. When asked to indicate a desired teammate Aistè wrote Adas name among others. Adas, being the leader of the class in terms of relationships, has good relations with both Aistè and Andrius, often sits together with them during breakfast and lunch and indirectly participates in their pranks, thus is considered a member of this friend circle.

(3) Augustè, Akvilè – the “beauty girls”. Augustè struggled to find her place in the class in the beginning of a new school year: several students have expressed their irritation with her to me. After some time, she and a new member of the class – Akvilè – became close: they spend time in and after school and prefer each other as teammates. They also share an interest in beauty and fashion.

Ažuolas is the “outsider” of the class: during the breaks he usually draws in his seat. However, no confrontations between him and others were ever noticed, he seems to have good relations with everybody and is allowed to most friend circles. Only Aistè and Andrius were never seen talking to or together with Ažuolas. Thus, he was grouped with the “beauty girls” for discussion of interests due to prioritising the precise composition of the target group.

4.1.2. Relationships in class 5-2

There are 12 pupils in class 5-2 in total. 8 pupils have attended this school from primary level of education whereas 4 pupils started attending this school from grade 5. The overall atmosphere of the class is quite neutral: there were no concerns about the dynamics of the class from the administration. Hence, it could be assumed that the new pupils have successfully adapted in the group and the old members of the class have successfully readjusted their roles in the classroom. Nonetheless, some disagreements or personal crises do arise as they continuously develop their relationships. When compared to pupils from class 5-1, members of class 5-2 appear to be more conforming and have less confrontations with each other and their teachers. On the whole, the pupils of this class seem to struggle with adapting to new learning system on an individual level more than they do with relationships between one another as observed from their behaviour during the lessons.

As in the case with 5-1 the pupils' seating arrangements revealed a great deal about their relationships. The students preferred to sit close to the people they spend time with during the breaks, as it was observed. The data revealed that quite a few classmates spend time together after school, to exemplify, Kajus and Kipras play a computer game online, Kornelija and Kamilė often spend time at each other's homes. It is important to note, that the gathered data had some interesting cases which advocate the variety of methods in determining communities of practice. When asked to identify the desired groupmates it was initially expected to get results reflecting participants' friendships. However, a girl named Milda indicated a wish to be grouped with Kristupas among the people she usually spends her time with. She did not mention Kristupas as her school friend in the written task, moreover, was not seen spending a significant amount of time with him. Observations of their interactions on Zoom, where students cannot distance themselves from one another physically, shed some additional light on the issue. Whenever Kristupas would tell a story or perform in any other way for the class, Milda would be the main recipient, that is, she would react sooner and participate more actively than any other classmates. This is perceived as Milda's indication of a desired relationship and interpreted as a significant relation. Thus, the described situation serves as an example how the task of choosing teammates allows access to a different type of relationship – aspired rather than existing one. This type of relationship was not noticed in class 5-1.

Analogously to the previous subsection, the significant relationships of the whole class are provided in a figure below. The seating arrangements provide the basic structure of the figure. X marks the classmate who did not participate in the study. Nevertheless, their presence is significant in understanding the general dynamics of the class. As in the case of previous figure, the solid lines represent close communication and relationship while dashed lines show a more distant and less frequent interaction.

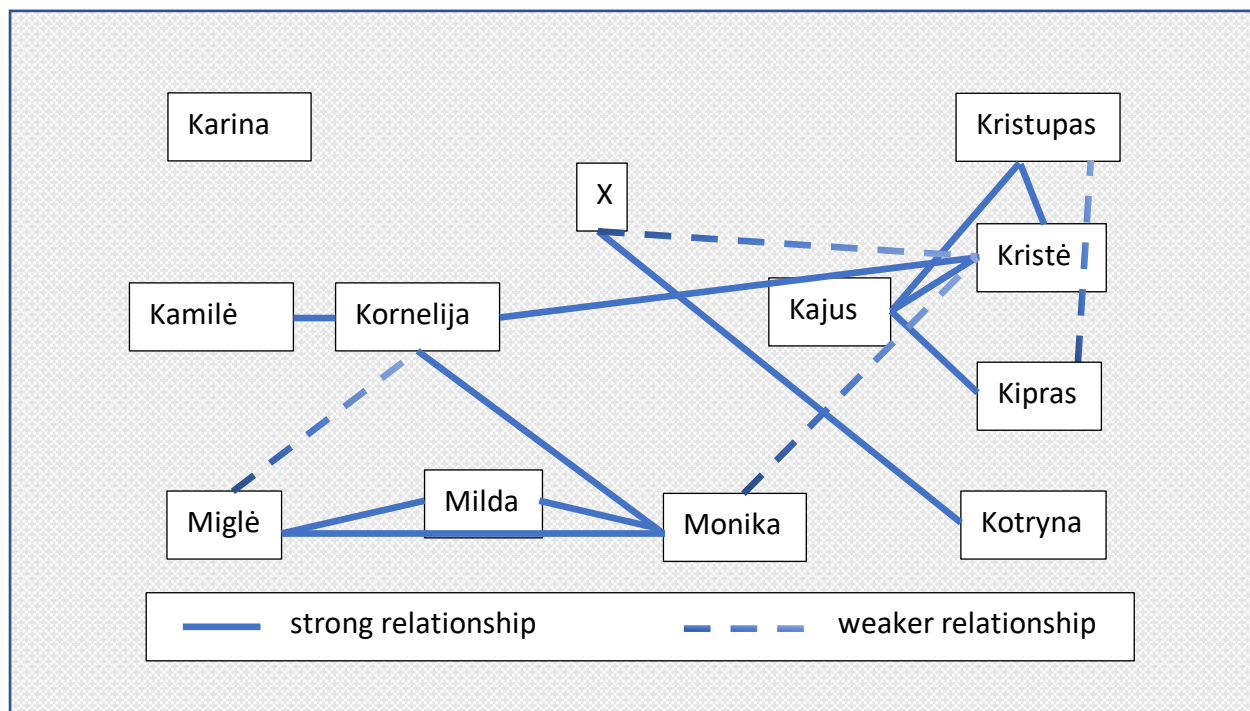


Figure 2. Significant relationships in class 5-2

Apparent from the figure above, friend circles are quite easily distinguishable. By way of explanation, the members have significant relationships with only a limited number of people which often form a type of a closed circle. This could explain why the aspired relationships were discovered in this class – members typically interact within rather than outside their circle in closed groups of friends. Therefore, the desired relationships may become more visible or easier distinguishable for an outsider. The figure also reveals the leader of class relationships which is Kristè. She has relationships of various closeness with members from every friend circle. Moreover, she is the headman of the class, to explain, in the beginning of a year pupils elect one pupil to be a representative of the class for various issues related to pupil-administration communication. A special feature of the class is that Kristè and Kajus are siblings, thus have a different kind of a relationship. Nevertheless, their relationship is not

noticeably different in the context of the class: they are not found communicating with each other the way they would not communicate to others. Another special feature of the relationships in class 5-2 which was not found in class 5-1 is a participant with no significant relations to other members of the class. A girl Karina is found to be an outsider in the social life of this class: she has little to no communication to her classmates due to a mental disorder that she has. She has a personal assistant who takes care of her during the lessons and breaks. Nevertheless, the members of the class are used to having her and her assistant in the classroom since this has been the case for 4 years. After taking everything into account, 4 friend circles were distinguished:

(1) Milda, Monika and Miglè – the “good girls”. The members share an interest in reading books and get good grades. Their communication exceeds the borders of the school. All of the girls have been classmates for 4 years. Milda could be interpreted as the holding member of the group: Monika and Miglè are found to spend time together less commonly if Milda is not around. This is further affirmed by the choice of teammates: Milda indicates both Monika and Miglè, whereas they only indicate Milda, considering the members of this group. Nevertheless, there is no apparent dispute or competition between Monika and Miglè. This friend circle is chosen as a target group due to the noticed higher frequency of English elements in their in-group conversations.

(2) Kristupas, Kajus and Kristè – the “gamers”. The members share a clear interest in gaming. Kristupas, a new member of the class, is quite active and talkative and is considered the leader of this friend circle. It is important to note, that Kipras is also often seen in their company, however, during the task of teammate choice Kristupas indicated an irritation with him and specifically stated that he does not want to be in a team with Kipras. Kristè also wished to be paired with Kajus and Kristupas. Later stages of the study revealed that Kajus and Kipras became closer. However, at the time of this stage of the investigation, this composition of a friend circle was observed and distinguished.

(3) Kornelija and Kamilè – the “beauty girls”. The members share an interest in beauty and fashion. Kamilè is a new member in the class who chose the school based on Kornelija’s recommendations. The data reveals that they spend as much time together outside school as they do in school. Moreover, they are the only instance of participants whose clothing style came into play: there was a week when they wore matching clothes. Both of them indicated one another as desired teammates and people they spend time with, thus constitute a friend circle.

Kipras, Kotryna and Karina are seen as the “outsiders” of this class. Kipras’ situation has been outlined in the circle of gamers. Kotryna is a quiet new member of the class and spends her time with the pupil not participating in this study. Karina’s social challenges have also been presented. These pupils are considered outsiders in the context of this study as they are not found to be members of any groups. They were grouped together for a discussion on free-time activities: in that case they were treated as a group of classmates spending their time in a shared space rather than close friends bound by relations. For the sake of preserving methodological consistency in the study, the language use of this group will not be analysed as this is not a circle of friends. Nevertheless, the contents of their discussions and interviews, that is, their interests and comments on English will be taken into account.

The analysis has shed some light on the social life in school in terms of participants’ relationships and group characteristics. The following chapter examines the language use of the distinguished friend circles in terms of overall tendencies and the peculiar use of English elements by the target groups.

4.2. Mixed language use

This section of the thesis presents the findings of the 6 friend circles’ discussions on free time. Specifically, the part of the discussion where the groups speak without a researcher-teacher present. The main finding is that the pupils of both classes could be characterised as mixed language users: English words and phrases appeared in their discourse in various ways and extent. Hence, it revealed that embedding English elements is a customary phenomenon among these teenagers. The frequency of English elements may indicate the complex nature of its use and a variety of meanings attached as the presence of English elements in a different language is systematic (see Leppänen, 2007; Leppänen et al., 2009; Vaicekauskienė & Vyšniauskienė, 2019). The initial observation was affirmed: ordinary and target friend circles differ in terms of mixed language use. This chapter explores how English elements are incorporated into a Lithuanian discourse and the considerable differences between ordinary and target friend circles in detail. The findings will be presented in the following order: first, the language mixing cases will be discussed; second, the instances of code-switching will be explored.

4.2.1. Cases of language mixing

The speech of teenagers was found to have various instances of language mixing. This tendency is perceived as complex – there are several ways by which these elements are incorporated and

how they can be interpreted in each context. The majority of language mixing cases were related to the topic of media and adapted to Lithuanian language. It is notable that the topic of media prevails despite the pupils' deviation from the given topic of free time. In other words, English elements are incorporated into Lithuanian matrix when the participants talk about something related to the media. This adaptation is a clear feature of ordinary friend circles. All of the participants are found to mention some type of media during the conversations with their peers or, as the present study treats it, natural speech of a friend circle. The incorporated English elements are adapted to the grammatical and phonetic framework of Lithuanian language: the speakers actively use and transform the existing English elements by changing their form according to Lithuanian rules of grammar. To give examples of a few: *fortnaitq* [Fortnite-GEN], *tiktokus* [TikTok-GEN], *jūtūbo* [YouTube-GEN]. The mentioned media includes video games, streaming platforms, YouTube and other social media. This reveals that language mixing cases include, first, various names and titles – these are a constitutional part of teenager discourse, thus, are not in any way eliminated from the analysis. Second, the category of language mixing included media-related terms which usually concerned the features of a certain media. Such cases tended to be adapted to the framework of the Lithuanian language as well. To exemplify, *pafolovint* [to follow], *komentq* [content-GEN], *geimintojai* [gamers], *nuhakintų* [would hack]. Noteworthy, discussions being held on Zoom may have instigated more language mixing cases. Under the circumstances, the participants needed to communicate about the functions of the platform on several cases, e.g.:

- (1) *Adas 5-1: ir nelagini!*
[and you're not lagging!]
- Aistė 5-1: nebelaginu rimtai?*
[no longer lagging seriously?]
- Adas 5-1: nebelagini nu dabar biški užlaginai.*
[no longer lagging well now you lagged a bit]

or

- (2) *Monika 5-2: Migle tu užsimjūtinus.*
[Migle you're muted]
- Milda 5-2: nežinau Miglė tiesiog užsimjūtinus.*
[I don't know Miglė is just muted]

Therefore, it could be concluded that the topic of media evokes the phenomenon of language mixing among peers in the investigated classes among both ordinary and target participants.

The connection between English and media has been noticed in other studies as well (Leppänen et al., 2009; Roos & Nicholas, 2019; Zenner et al., 2020).

Another commonly used element by both ordinary and target friend circles is *okej*. This element is interpreted as language mixing partly because it is phonetically adapted to Lithuanian, namely, is uttered following Lithuanian not English pronunciation. The main reason is its universal use in various utterances and by various speakers – it is not used when changing a topic or signalling relationships. It is incorporated into the Lithuanian matrix seamlessly and frequently. Therefore, *okej* is interpreted as an element which has already attained its place in Lithuanian spoken language of these adolescents. In general, it contributes to understanding adolescents' language as mixed.

There were a few instances where English elements were not grammatically or phonetically adapted to the Lithuanian language in the context of these two classes. It is mentionable that two participants, namely, brothers Ažuolas from 5-1 and Kristupas from 5-2, used a few utterances where English elements were not adapted, to exemplify:

(3) Ažuolas 5-1: *jo **tofu chicken nuggets** jie irgi labai skanūs.*

*[yeah **tofu chicken nuggets** they're also very tasty]*

In this case, the phrase is categorised as language mixing as the name of the product rather than a certain emotion or stance is uttered. Additionally, the mentioned product appears in an adapted form in the same conversation as well. No change in meaning is apparent. E.g.,

(4) Ažuolas 5-1: *aš parašiau valgyti **nagetsus** <...>*

*[I wrote eating **nuggets** <...>]*

and

(5) Ažuolas 5-1: *davai **čiken nagetsai**.*

*[let's (choose) **chicken nuggets**]*

The few instances where Kristupas uses non-changed English elements are quite similar to his brother's – it includes names, but in his case, of media: *brawlstars*, *youtube*. Language mixing, what appears to be, of yet another nature could be noticed in a short dialogue between the “gamers” Kristupas and Kristė:

(6) *Kristupas puts his headphones back on after searching for something in his room.*

*Kristupas 5–2: ello ar girdit **hello***
*[ello (informal English) do you hear me **hello**]*

Kristė 5–2: labas.
[hello]

Kristupas 5–2: žmonės aš pabandyčiau įjungti šviesą <...>
[people I'll try to switch the light on]

As demonstrated, language mixing may occur not only within the borders of the utterance of one speaker. Kristupas mixes English and Lithuanian when checking the microphone, Kristė answers in Lithuanian and the conversation continues, the change in languages goes, as if, unnoticed. This incorporation and instances of code switching which will be discussed in 4.2.2. indicate that English elements are natural in the speech of this friend circle. On one level, languages are mixed by Kristupas in his utterance and on another level, by both of them in this dialogue. It could be seen as suggestive of a group feature; however, no firm conclusions can be made about it due to insufficient data.

Overall, the language mixing is found to be a natural practice in the discourse of all friend circles, especially, when the conversation revolves around the media and its features. Due to the limited length of this paper, only several examples were presented. As noted previously, all participants share interests in various kinds of media. This reveals a social meaning of English frequently reported in the field – the adolescents position themselves as active media users. Furthermore, English is considered to be the default language of the media which could explain the presence of English when media is the topic of conversation.

As stated in the beginning of this chapter, the target friend circles in each class differed from the ordinary ones in terms of language mixing. First, the difference becomes visible through the analysis of how the English elements are incorporated into speech. That is, the form: the non-changed English elements do appear in the matrix of Lithuanian in a few instances within ordinary friend circles, however, not as commonly as in target ones. Second, the members of the target circles incorporate English elements which are media-unrelated, which was not common among the ordinary circles. Hence, the initial observation is supported by this finding: a group in each of the classes which stands out in the use of English elements. E.g.,

(7) *Monika 5-2: <...> tipo to **raid all** ar **bloxborgo** ir taip toliau ar **raidgeito** nes jos ten **hakina** kaip pasiutusios nes jos šiaip didžioji dalis yra **harmless** <...>*

[<...> well that **raid all** or **bloxborg** and so on or **ride gate** because they **hack** there like crazy because generally they most of them are **harmless** <...>]

or

(8) Miglė 5-2: o čia tiesa kad jie **nehakina** tikrų **people**?
[and is it true that they **don't hack** real **people**?]

or

(9) Marija 5-1: aš aš noriu nusipirkti kažkokį **flegą** aš **probably** nusipirksiu **trans flegą** nes kodėl gi ne.
[I I want to buy a certain **flag** I will **probably** buy a **trans flag** because why not.]

The examples show that in the same utterance, some of the English elements appear adjusted to Lithuanian framework and others do not. Monika's excerpt shows how even the elements of a similar meaning, in this case, names of different modes of a game, are incorporated dissimilarly. *Raid all* comes into the Lithuanian matrix unadjusted whereas *Bloxborg* and *Ride gate* are modified. Moreover, the appearing English elements are not always directly related to media as it is the case with the ordinary friend circles. For instance, Miglė's use of *people* – the topic of the conversation is media related: the girls are discussing Roblox – a popular game among the classmates. At the same time, the incorporated element is not a name or a title of a certain character, feature or function, instead – a common noun. Similar cases are Monika's *harmless* and Marija's *flegą*. Therefore, the English elements used by the target groups are found to denote common objects and emotions among other meanings. Generally, the target circles incorporate non-changed English elements which are not solely media-related in comparison to the ordinary circles.

Nonetheless, the target groups cannot be equated – there are differences in language mixing when comparing the two. Language mixing is notably more common in the target group from class 5-1 when compared to 5-2. It becomes evident that the individual speakers play an important role in such tendency. However, styles within the group are significant to the whole friend circle as belonging or identifying oneself to a certain group can be signalled through language. Hence, the style of one person signals overall group style. Marija serves as an excellent example of a repeated incorporation of English elements. She mixes languages the most in comparison to other targeted participants, thus influencing the overall impression of the friend circle she belongs to. As she is a member and the leader of the target circle, the way she speaks reveals the speaking norms of the group to some extent. It is found that Marija typically incorporates elements such as *probably*, *basically*, *anyway*, e.g.:

- (10) Marija: *basically* homofobai ateina per praidą <...>
[*basically* homophobes come during the pride <...>]

This and similar English elements can be interpreted as discourse markers which add to the flow of the speech rather than signal changes in roles, relationships etc. Nonetheless, the case of Marija is complex: the elements listed above could also be interpreted as stance indicators. In that case, such use would be connected to maintaining her leadership through the use of English. Generally, the analysis of the language use of the target groups revealed that the incorporation of one-word English elements in Lithuanian matrix signals a general mixed language strategy, that is, language mixing.

The target friend circles' language mixing compared to the ordinary circles' reveals a complex nature of mixed language use. The incorporation of English elements differs among friend circles: the ordinary are found to incorporate media-related English words by adapting them to Lithuanian grammar and pronunciation, whereas the target circles incorporate non-adapted English words which may not be media-related. Moreover, when compared to the rest of the class the target groups stand out in their use of language mixing to such degree that it seems that these language practices could be interpreted as code switching as well: there are instances of words denoting emotion, thus change in stance. This is never the case with the ordinary friend circles. This difference is perceived as socially meaningful: this use shows style and by mixing languages participants signal their group membership and identity. Overall, there is no doubt that the language practices show a highly mixed nature of adolescent discourses: language mixing could be perceived as a feature of youth language.

The following discussion of the code switching cases reveals even greater disparities between the ordinary and target participants language use. Moreover, it is also going to expose the line between the categories of language mixing and code switching in the case of target friend circles. It is going to become more evident that all of the target participants' speech examples discussed above are indeed cases of language mixing just of a different nature from the ordinary participants' instances.

4.2.2. Cases of code switching

English elements, in the majority of cases non-adjusted phrases and clauses, were interpreted as code switching instances as they signalled stances, relationships, roles and various changes in it. As with the cases of language mixing, code switching practices differed among disparate friend circles, especially, in terms of frequency. Code switching tends to be more common

within the target groups' conversations. Some other differences were observed as well. Precisely like in the analysis of language mixing, the findings from the target groups' analysis are going to be discussed by taking into account the usual use or the norm, namely, the code switching practices of ordinary friend circles.

The phenomenon of code switching was not found to be a feature of the non-targeted participants' styles. It either does not appear in a certain friend circle at all or is adopted by only some of the members. To be more specific, no instances of this phenomenon were found in the friend circle of "entertainers" in class 5-1 and the "beauty girls" in class 5-2. A few instances of codeswitching were found in Ažuolas and Augustė's from 5-1 and Kristupas' 5-2 speech. Let us take a look at Ažuolas, Augustė and Akvilė's discussion:

- (11) Augustė: *Ažuolai gali užsimjūtinti?*
[Ažuolas can you mute yourself?]
- Akvilė: *Ažuolai o tavo antras kiek turi?*
[Ažuolas and the second one of yours how many does it have?]
- Ažuolas: *mano antras jo turi devynis šimtus deviniadešimt kelis.*
[Another one of mine yeah has nine hundred ninety several.]
- Augustė: ***can you mute yourself!***
Ažuolas changes his voice by adding an American country accent.
- Ažuolas: ***can you just not tell me what to do I'm a eleven year old I can probably have nine babies and still be alive makin' money makin' life for my babies!***

Example 11 demonstrates how the participants make use of English elements to change relationships and roles. Some minutes prior to this dialogue Augustė declares that she is going to watch YouTube videos until the researcher-teacher comes back as they are done with the provided task. Ažuolas and Akvilė continue talking about their Instagram followers which supposedly disturbs the sound of the videos Augustė watches. As seen from the excerpt, Augustė addresses Ažuolas in Lithuanian, however, it does not receive any reaction. In a stricter manner, she repeats herself in English. There is a change in their relationship from friendly to confronting as Augustė's utterance changes from request to demand. It could be said, that Augustė uses English language to be more assertive, hence, to signal higher authority. In a way, she seeks the position of a leader. Ažuolas, on the other hand, takes a playful approach in this situation. A change in his voice indicates a change in role or, specifically, persona: he chooses to play a certain character, thus, to participate in a role play and escalate the disagreement further. He flexibly adapts his identity to a social situation, which could be

interpreted as identity play and power negotiation. It is done by voice raising and playing a well-accomplished persona: having multiple children and inventing great things. For instance:

(12) *Ažuolas: I invented Mona Lisa!*

After several speech turns, Augustė starts laughing – she understands that this is not a serious conversation but rather a performance. Then she continues in English to show a change in role and starts participating in this role or identity play herself. It shows the flexibility of identity, to specify, she uses language to signal different forms of being in different social situations. She also chooses a socially powerful persona, namely, “your mother”, to negotiate power and Ažuolas disagrees with her authority:

(13) *Augustė: I'm your mother!*

*Akvilė: *inaudible**

Augustė: I'm your mother!

Akvilė calls for the researcher-teacher:

Akvilė: Lina penktokų klasė Lina penktokų klasė!

[Lina class 5 Lina class 5!]

Ažuolas: no you're not my biological mother my blood is not related to yours!

The presented excerpt shows the participants' ability to adapt linguistic resources to the context and it shows the flexibility of their identity. Similar findings are reported by Song (2007) and Ng & Lee (2019). The performance is a fun activity – the performers are excited and laugh while competing for social power. However, Akvilė does not participate in this performance and, in fact, tries to stop it on several occasions. First, she asks them to be quiet since her little sister is asleep and later, she calls for the teacher to come back, supposedly, to stop this performance. It is noteworthy that English is a difficult school subject for Akvilė, therefore, her ability to participate in such performance is very limited. Due to no participation as one of the performers, instead an active engagement against this kind of identity play, it could be perceived that she has the position of an outsider in this fun interaction. By taking into account her English skills, it becomes evident that the lack of them is likely to be the cause of these social disadvantages. In general, this conversation reveals a certain value of English language

in this circle: English has influence on ingroup relationships and dynamics. Furthermore, it indicates a link between English language and higher social positions, authority.

Some similarities could be found between the above analysed dialogue and the code switching utterances by Kristupas from 5-2 in terms of performing in English. To provide some context, after briefly discussing the given task all members of the “gamers” friend circle, namely, Kristupas, Kajus and Kristė, start doing their own things – all of them start playing individually. While others are playing on their phones, Kristupas starts throwing a ball towards the light switch on the wall with the aim to switch the light on and off:

(14) *Kristupas throws the ball, hits the light switch. Makes it into a game.*

*Kristupas: oho ir išjungė.
[wow and it switched it off]*

Pauses.

*Kristipas: iškėlęs rankas.
[with hands up]*

Throws with his hands up.

Kristupas: oh oh oh oh I see you there let's try.

Throws the ball after each word:

Kristupas: try try try second try third third try.

Analogous to the previously discussed excerpt, this monologue can also be interpreted as a performance. When a playful activity, that is, throwing a ball becomes a certain structured game, in other words, receives an aim – to hit a certain thing in a certain manner, a switch in languages happens. It may be understood as a change in role: at that moment Kristupas becomes a player as the discussion with others is over. Being aware of having an audience, the role of a performer is attained. Therefore, English elements are used here for performative reasons. The incorporation of English may also indicate a wish of attention as it was the case with Augustė: he is the only one interrupting the silence. Moreover, the contents of the discussion reveal that Kristupas streams the games he plays. This contributes to the indexical field of English insertions by showing the connection between English elements and media, in this case – video games. By way of explanation, teenagers use English language as the usual means of communication in the media and, therefore, position themselves as active and skilled media users. This argument is further affirmed by language use of other members of this circle. While Kristupas is throwing the ball, Kristė and Kajus are playing on their phones. Their game is

followed by various English phrases expressing their emotions towards the events in the game, thus, stances:

(15) *Kristė*: ***fuck!***

or

(16) *Kajus*: ***mm okey oh shit!***

When taking into account these code switching practices of 5th graders a slight tendency becomes apparent – English phrases and clauses can be used when being playful and performing, negotiating identity. Although these performances do differ, it shows that English elements could be socially meaningful for identity construction. The participants take on different roles, thus, signal different identities, e.g., of an assertive person, a skilled player, a performer. In some cases, it is followed by additional indicators, e.g., intonation. Thus, English becomes one of the possible resources for identity construction and play: it is chosen to play a character or, generally, become a performer in a certain context. However, English is not found to be the only means of such performances and identity work among adolescents. During their conversation, the “entertainers” Adas and Andrius took on roles of committee members and wrote suggestions about adolescent life improvements to the government and the president of Lithuania. They spoke Lithuanian, no code switching was found in their dialogue. In general, when considering the code switching patterns in ordinary participants’ language, the aspect of performance is essential since code switching hardly ever appears in a serious conversation between the ordinary participants.

Different linguistic styles are revealed from the English element use by the target groups. Generally, both target friend circles code switch to English in a common conversation, that is, when discussing objects around them, requesting, commenting various situations and similar. The aspect of performance is not found to be dominant in the instances of code switching on the contrary to the ordinary friend circles. The findings show the greatest difference between the ordinary and target participants – frequency of code switching code switching is seen as the main and distinctive feature of the target circles although they do differ from one another. The target group from class 5-1 code switch frequently between the two languages, to specify, they speak one language, then after several turns of a dialogue they switch to another language. Contrastingly, the target group from 5-2 code switch seldomly and their dialogues in one

language are longer when compared to the other target group. It shows that there is variation in what is categorised as code switching. Excerpt 17 below is from the conversation of 5-2 and 18 of 5-1 target friend circle:

(17) *Monika:* *jūs galite matyti kas darosi kai aš šituos daiktus paimu aš tiesiog einu einu ir tokia *nesigirdi* dalykų.*
*[you can see what is happening when I take these things I just go go and like *inaudible* of things.*

Pause.

Monika: *awkward quietness.*

Milda: *awkward silence.*

Milda starts talking in a squeaky voice.

Milda: *I like how I decorating things.*

Monika: *I want to go on my bed.*

Milda: *okey oh you look good there.*

Monika: *gonna throw something down don't know what those are actually.*

Milda: *oh.*

Monika: *Imma jump off three two one.*

Milda laughing.

Milda: *you look good.*

Monika: *oh I just messed up the bed.*

Milda: *oh okey don't care about it my bed is always messes up like okey like...*

Monika: *I'm still very happy that my brother is like ah...*

Milda shows her bed.

Milda: *here.*

Monika: *aš visada labai džiaugiuosi kad mano brolio neigiamas testas.*

[I am always very happy that my brother's test is negative.]

(18) *Mantė shows off a skirti in front of a camera.*

Martyna: *braah...*

Mantė: *do you like my skirt?*

Marija: *no.*

Mantė: *a taigi jis toks senas jis toks gražus jis toks anime.*

[ah but it's so old it's so pretty it's so anime.]

Martyna: *yeah it would be anime if you would like be more skinny.*

Marija: *I like it.*

Martyna: *Now it's not.*

Mantė: *Imma be a froggy.*

Mantė: *kažkas vėl stuksena į sieną!*

[somebody's knocking on the wall again!]

Excerpts 17 and 18 show the target circle from 5-2 taking more speech turns in one language in comparison to the target circle from 5-1. In general, the target group from 5-2 lies relatively close to the ordinary groups in terms of code switching: Lithuanian dominates in their discussion then a switch to English appears. Contrastingly to others, the participants switch back to Lithuanian after a number of utterances: do not only include a phrase of English but have a conversation in the language. To add, the aspect of performance is not relevant here. In the cases of the 5-2 circle, language is switched due to a topic change:

(19) *The girls are talking about advent calendar candy.*

Monika: *nes jie tiesiog apie jį ir užmiršta tai aš tiesiog suvalgau.*
[because they just forget about it also so I just eat it.]

Miglė: *pavydžiu *sister's name* niekad neužmiršta.*
*[I'm jealous *sister's name* never forgets.]*

Milda: **inaudible**

Miglė: *hm mano katinas nori užeit sugrįžt.*
[hm my cat wants to come in come back.]

Miglė goes to let her cat in.

Milda: ***oh wait so what did you get?***

Monika: ***it's a unicorn.***

Milda: ***get out!***

Excerpt 19 shows that Milda starts a new topic or, rather brings the topic of advent calendars back, by switching to English. The example also captures an important aspect of group dynamics: the switch appears when Miglė steps away from the camera. This could be an indicator of a disunity in the group, namely, that English is a fitting resource of communication only between Monika and Milda. In such case, Monika and Milda as if separate themselves and their relationship from the one with Miglė by using English. Hence, it suggests that Miglė could be an outcast in this friend circle to some extent. The following utterances validate this interpretation:

(20) *Milda: ah okey.*

Monika: I have an R-aged dance in my...

Miglė comes back and interrupts.

Miglė: *Milda what are *inaudible*.*

Monika starts laughing at herself.

Monika: *jūs galite matyti kas darosi kai aš šituos daiktus paimu aš tiesiog einu einu ir tokia daug dalykų jo.*

[you (plural) can see what happens when I take these things I just go and go and like many things yeah.]

Excerpt 20 shows the switch from English to Lithuanian precisely as Miglė comes back. Although the topic is changed as well, it does not seem to cause this switch. Several topic changes are present in Monika and Milda's dialogue, however the language is changed only when Miglė attempts to participate in the conversation. Moreover, Monika addresses both of the participants in the utterance after having a dialogue only with Milda for some time. After a pause the conversation is continued in English with only Monika and Milda talking. The fact that Miglė attempts to participate in the conversation in English shows her flexibility and conformation in terms of language: she reinforces the style used by other members of the group in that context. Considering her language mixing and code switching practices in general, she is quite similar to other members of this group. Her stylistic practice could be seen as an attempt to be included and have an equal position to all members. That is, gain social power by using English. Nonetheless, English is not seen as appropriate language of conversation with the presence of Miglė. Thus, a certain social order is reflected in the use of English. A similar finding was discovered in the group of Augustė, Akvilė and Ažuolas. Altogether, the code switching practices reveal some aspects of the group dynamics: English is in-group style for only some members of the group, namely, Augustė and Ažuolas in one friend circle, Monika and Milda in another. English is means of exclusion for others; however, an outcast, in this case, Miglė may attempt to be included by using the language.

Another social value of English, which comes to light from the discussion, is skilful speaker. There are several instances that lead to this conclusion. First, the girls discuss the names of certain cat figurines they all like. Milda and Miglė get into an argument about the name of one figurine and this is the ending of the argument:

(21) Miglė: *kas yra ta midnight?*

[what is that midnight?]

Milda: *vidurnaktis.*

[midnight.]

Miglė angrily:

Miglė: *aš žinau kas yra midnight ką reiškia midnight!*
[I know what midnight is what midnight means!]

Fragment 21 shows Milda's assumption about Miglė's poorer English skills which could be perceived as one of the reasons for Miglė's weak social position in the group. Miglė's angry tone indicates her awareness of the value of English skill: she is intimidated by such assumptions. Additionally, Milda, who is also the holding member of the group, corrects Monika's English on one occasion as well. As seen from example 17, Monika uses a phrase "awkward quietness" and is immediately corrected by Miglė's "awkward silence". Hence, it could be concluded that good skills in English are socially beneficial in this friend circle.

The target group's from class 5-1 style differs greatly from the rest of the friend circles in their code switching practices. First, the code switching appears so frequently that the question of whether Lithuanian language is indeed the matrix of their discussion could be raised. In other words, the stylistic practices of the members of this circle come closer to what Leppänen (2007) terms alternational code switching. Second, on the contrary to the target group 5-2, no members are excluded from the practices of English. However, the aspect of negotiating relationships within the group was also noticed and will be discussed below. To illustrate the frequency of switches:

(22) Marija offers to show her cat.

Mantė: *noriu.*
[I do (want).]
Marija: *okey palauk.*
[okay wait.]
Mantė: ***bunny bunny had a bunny thrugy(?) hat.***
Marija: *va.*
[here.]
Mantė: ***he's skinny!***
Marija: ***no he's fat actually *cat's name* džiaukis tave pavadino plonu!***
[*cat's name* be glad you're called skinny!]
Mantė: *hm plonu!*

The central feature of this friend circle lies in role changes. There is a number of cases where code switching was found when role changes appeared. During the discussion various topics were considered and different roles attained by switching to English. As variation shows

different ways of being, it could be said that the identity of this friend circle and, in fact, others is found flexible: different identities are relevant in various social situations. For instance, Mantė changes into a skirt and asks for others' opinions in English – in this case, she becomes a performer demonstrating clothes. She also mentions the main quality of the skirt: *jis toks anime [it's so anime]*. As a brief reminder, anime series are found to be a shared interest of the group. The skirt reveals that Mantė aims to dress in anime style which she sees in the series. Her persona style indexes a value of being anime alike, whereas use of English allows to position herself as an active user of the media and a part of a translocal (see Leppänen, 2007) anime community. In other words, she identifies herself with the anime community through the incorporation of English and clothing. One instance of code switching captures the expression of identity through English elements, therefore, the importance of English in their discourse even more clearly:

- (23) Marija: *aš probably esu aš nežinau tiesą sakant ko kas aš esu bet aš *inaudible* I'm gay that's all that I can say.*
*[I probably am I don't know what who I am but I *inaudible* I'm gay that's all that I can say.]*
- Mantė: *vau.*
[wow.]
- Martyna: *I didn't know that...*

One of the possible explanations of the switch to English above could be one's association with the translocal LGBT community. The topics of LGBT movement arise on several occasions among this friend circle in various stages of this research. To exemplify, the girls discuss the procession taking place in Vilnius every year referred to as pride in example 10; or Marija expresses her plans to purchase a trans flag in example 9. This is significant to identity – a flag usually represents a community one belongs to or identifies oneself with. Moreover, the self-description in example 23 is even more explicit. In these cases, Marija identifies herself with the community by both the contents and the form of what she says. The choice to express LGBT-movement-related ideas in English indexes one's association with LGBT movement. On the whole, English is used for identity construction by this target group: the use of its elements signals identification with an international community, e.g., anime or LGBT, and, at the same time, positions one in the global context. Social meanings of globalness and membership in an international community were also found in other friend circles, however not as dominant characteristics.

This chapter has presented the findings of participants' language use and the social meanings of English arising from it. The following chapter explores the social meanings of English which emerge from language commentary.

4.3. Language commentary

As the analysis of language use is only one way to tackle the question of social meaning, this chapter discusses the findings arising from the perspective of language commentary. As noted in the methodological part, the participants were asked to comment on English in their contexts: on the photographs they had taken, on self-identification online and, in the case of target groups, on the mixed language use in their friend circle. The findings of language commentary reveal several tendencies. First, a fast-flowing stream of English in their daily life: various types of media, goods were captured and the presence of English in their families and school subjects other than English was expressed. E.g., *pilnas namas anglų kalbos* [full house of English language] (Augustė 5-1); *kur tik nusisuku angliškas dalykas* [wherever I look an English thing] (Kornelija 5-2). This indexes normalcy of English. Second, links to their interests thus identity were noticed in the photographs. For instance, the interest in make-up and fashion was reflected in the photographs of the “beauty girls” from both 5-1 and 5-2 classes. Therefore, the taken photographs are found to provide insights not only to ideology but also aspects of identity. Third, the semi-structured interviews showed teenagers' difficulty to reflect and interpret language practices. Many participants have found it challenging: the why questions about the photographs were often followed by silence, indications of difficulty and lack of knowledge. Similar phenomenon is witnessed by Leppänen et al. (2009) and is explained by unconscious nature of language practices. In present study, the aspect of unconsciousness is also relevant. Regarding their explanations of practices, the same interpretation is plausible. Concerning the photographs, it can be argued that the participants do not reflect on language around them frequently and may have unconsciously accepted it as a norm in their surroundings due to its frequency. Nonetheless, certain interrelated meanings attached to English variants can be derived from the commentary analysis. Target and non-target participants did not significantly differ in the meanings they attach.

According to the results of the semi-structures interview, the majority of teenagers attach the meanings of globalness, norm and media to English. The meaning of globalness arises from their comments on the popularity of the language, international mobility, migration and English

being the lingua franca. Consider these comments on English: Kipras 5-2: *pagrindinė pasaulio kalba [the main language of the world]*; Ažuolas 5-1: *labai populiari [very popular]*; Aistė 5-1: *visi rašo angliškai [everybody can write English]*. Moreover, English language was seen as fashionable, as in, popular by both target circles. This popularity of the language could be seen as leading to another meaning – the norm. The teenagers' comments make it clear that English is the norm in certain spheres, such as street art, various types of media and, generally, online. For instance, Kristė 5-2 notes that *visi renkasi [everybody chooses]* English nicknames online and Ažuolas 5-1 expresses his surprise towards the question why Lithuanian nicknames are not chosen: *(kiti žaidėjai) galvotų kad aš nenormalus [they (other players) would think that I'm not normal]*. The comments provided by the pupils show that they indeed prefer English nicknames and often explain their choice by the normalcy of English in media. Moreover, Kornelija 5-2 argues that English is also the norm of graffiti. These arguments also reveal another social meaning of English found in the analysis of language use as well– it allows them to be associated or position themselves in a certain community. For instance, Augustė 5-1 makes an English journal because she identifies with E-girl style, Marija 5-1 reads books about warrior cats in English as she aspires to create videos and join the fandom, Kajus 5-2 declares English as a gateway to gaming: *ačiū dievui moku anglų ir galiu eiti per visus levelius [thank God I know English and I can go through all levels]*. Identity negotiation is apparent: English is means to become a member of a certain group. The findings go hand in hand with previous research as these English values were observed by other scholars (see Akyol, 2019; Leppänen et al., 2009; Roos & Nicholas, 2019; Zenner et al., 2020).

Socioeconomic value and quality are other values of English found from language commentary. These meanings are found in other studies as well (see Akyol, 2019; Ng & Lee, 2019; Zenner et al., 2020). Some participants commented on purchasing goods from the global market which shows not only globalness and belonging to a certain community, but also socioeconomic benefits which are attained by English speakers. The meaning of being goal oriented comes to light: Milda 5-1 said that if she had *didelių tikslų [big goals]* for her business she would name it in English. Another example with such meaning was made by Kristupas 5-2 on products with English names: *žmonės galvoja, kad jie geresni [people think that they're better]*. This particular comment is indicative of another meaning noticed in the data – higher quality. The majority of the participants indicated that English elements sound better, are cooler, more creative and similar, thus these meanings can be attributed to the speakers of the language. Overall, the social meanings the participants attributed to English were positive.

The target friend circles were inquired about the English conversations they were noticed to have with each other at the end of the semi-structured interview. Certain additional observations on the meaning of English elements can be made from the results. The comments of the target friend circle from 5-1 further justifies the sense of normalcy of English elements in their discourse. For instance, Mantė 5-1 explains English in texting: *kažkas parašo ir atrašau angliškai [somebody texts me and I write back in English]*. Martyna gives a similar explanation. The data shows that English is a common occurrence in their conversations, hence, they do not pay much attention to it. Regarding the target circle from 5-2, the language commentary findings allow to make firmer conclusions about the dynamics of the group. First, the interpretation of the outsider position of Miglė is affirmed. Even though Miglė is found to speak English with the rest of the members, both Milda and Monika claim that only the two of them constantly speak English to one another. Second, the findings affirm the importance of English skill in their group:

(24) *Monika 5-2: <...> kai aš su Milda rašau tai ji visą laiką sako why is your grammar so bad.*

[<...> when I text with Milda she always says why is your grammar so bad.]

Milda 5-2: it is.

Milda is seen as the leader of this group and she criticizes and comments on others' skill. Furthermore, as became apparent from the previous chapters, Miglė having limited English skills, as perceived by the group, has the lowest social position. It may be assumed that the skill of English allows to attain higher social positions in the group. This conclusion is strengthened by the previously found Milda's attribution of higher prestige to English. An additional value of English which was not found to be explicitly expressed in any other part of this study is the connection with youth. Monika 5-2 comments: *<...> tiesiog taip įprasta angliškai kalbėti su savo jaunesniu jaunimu. [<...> it's just usual to speak English with my younger youth.]*. Aside from the sense of normalcy, the comment indicates that English is the norm only among a certain social group – younger youth. However, no further specifications of what she considers “younger” are made. The social association between English and youth has been found in other studies as well (see Vaicekauskienė, 2020). In general, both groups are similar to one another and the rest of the participants in their views of English as a norm.

The chapter on the language commentary findings has revealed multiple social values in the indexical field of English. The ones expressed by the majority – globalness and norm,

normalcy. The comments on language use by the target friend circles provided additional arguments for certain claims, e.g., on group dynamics. However, this part of the study did not reveal major differences between the target friend circles and other participants. Nevertheless, the analysis of language commentary led to the meanings attributed to English language by all the investigated teenagers in general.

5. Conclusion

To take everything into account, the present study reveals a great deal about the teenagers' relationships, stylistic practices and the social meanings of English. First, various friend circles came into light which could be labelled based on their members' shared interests, behaviour in school and relation to others. Namely, "entertainers" participating in various performances, "beauty girls" interested in make-up and fashion, "gamers" engaged in gaming activities, "good girls" interested in book-reading and performing well in school, "outsiders" not having formed significant relationships with the classmates. Second, mixed language use was found to be a feature of teenagers' stylistic practices. Nevertheless, a disparity in the incorporation of English elements by different friend circles was observed in both form and content of the utterances. To the best of my knowledge, such clear disparity has not been considered in detail in the previous studies. "Good girls" or the target groups incorporate both adapted and non-adapted elements of English into Lithuanian and express meanings which are not only media-related in contrast to the ordinary groups. In addition, English elements commonly appear when the "good girls" change stances, roles and relationships which is rarely the case with ordinary friend circles. Hence, it could be concluded that styles of the target and ordinary groups differ which, together with disparate interests, indicate different identities negotiated in the friend circles.

Various social meanings constituting the indexical field of English are reported in this study. The ones arising from both language use and comments are media, globalness, skill and community membership. Stylistic practices of the teenagers revealed a social meaning of playfulness: teenagers use English when playing roles, performing. English also signals in-group authority. Metalinguistic comments revealed meanings of normalcy, socioeconomic benefits, quality and youth. Using English meant being goal-oriented, cool, creative. Similar meanings are found in other studies as well (see Vaicekauskienė, 2020). No significant differences in the attributed meanings were observed in the metalinguistic comments of ordinary versus target friend circles. Furthermore, the detected social meanings show a clear tendency for English elements to be used when negotiating identity. English elements are found to index negotiation of group or global community membership and various roles. In other words, English as a part of persona style is used when positioning oneself in the social context: an active media user, an expert player, a performer, a socially powerful group member and similar. Identity is adapted according to social context, hence is flexible and dynamic. In

general, adolescents mix English and Lithuanian in such a way expressing their unique selves in a certain context.

Despite providing valuable insights into the stylistic practices of the youth, the study has some limitations. Some methodological aspects of the study should be critically considered. First, the researcher's position as the English teacher of the participants which was found to have some influence on the participants. Although the position evoked English language on a few occasions in peer discussions, the students generally spoke Lithuanian, hence, may not have considered the activity to be a task in an English lesson, and deviated from the task, thus may not have felt monitored. Second, the pandemic of Covid-19 limited the methods for investigating teenage language use in an ethnographic study to tools online. It also caused the inability to retrieve conversations in various contexts rather than on tasks provided by the researcher-teacher during Zoom meetings. Finally, the limitations of the master thesis restricted my abilities to provide more interpretations and examples of authentic speech.

Further investigations of the social meanings of English constructed by young people could investigate the revealed disparity in English incorporation by different groups of adolescents from other perspectives. For instance, to study the language use of members inside the group of friends compared to their language use outside it or to investigate pupils with a different background, that is, attending public rather than private school. In my firm belief, such studies would enrich the knowledge in the field by elaborating on the different incorporations of English and the social values it indexes.

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7. Summary in Lithuanian

Anglų kalbos socialinės reikšmės: etnografinis paauglių tyrimas

Anglų kalbos svarba šiuolaikinėje visuomenėje nenuginčijama: būdama *lingua franca*, ji užima reikšmingą vietą turizmo, verslo, pramogų ir kituose sektoriuose. Todėl nenuostabu, kad anglų kalba tampa sociolingvistinių tyrimų objektu neanglakalbėse šalyse: domimasi anglų kalbos plėtra įvairiuose domenuose, mišriais kalbos stiliais ir pragmatine bei socialine anglų kalbos verte (Vaicekauskienė, 2020: 185). Pasak Eckert (2008), kalbos variantams gali būti suteikiama daugybė socialinių reikšmių skirtinguose kontekstuose, o visos šios reikšmės sudaro to varianto indeksinį lauką (angl. *indexical field*). Socialinės anglų kalbos reikšmės tyrimai jaunimo tarpe rodo globalumo, medijų, jaunimo, priklausymo tam tikrai grupei ir susijusias reikšmes (Vaicekauskienė, 2020). Eckert (2008:456) teigimu, asmens stilius – skirtingų stiliaus sistemų, pavyzdžiui, kalbėjimo ir apsirengimo, samplaika – nurodo į skirtingą būtį. Tai reiškia, identitetą, kuris matomas kaip kintantis, priklausomas nuo konteksto. Kalba matoma kaip viena iš identiteto raiškos priemonių. Šio etnografinio tyrimo tikslas – išnagrinėti socialines reikšmes, kurias skirtingos paauglių draugų grupės priskiria anglų kalbai per kalbos praktikas bei metalingvistinius komentarus. Iš viso stebėta ir ištirta dvidešimt privačioje Vilniaus mokykloje besimokančių penktos klasės mokinių (iš dviejų skirtingų klasių): jų tarpusavio santykiai, diskusijos ir pusiau struktūruoti interviu. Kokybiškai analizuojant duomenis remtasi Eckert (2008) indeksinio lauko ir asmens stiliaus sąvokomis bei Leppänen (2007) modeliu mišraus kalbos vartojimo (angl. *mixed language use*) analizei.

Šis tyrimas atskleidžia tirtų paauglių socialinius santykius, stiliaus praktikas ir anglų kalbos socialines reikšmes. Pirma, paauglių tarpusavio santykių ir jų pomėgių analizė parodė klasėse egzistuojančias grupes: „gerąsias mergaites“, „linksmintojus“, „žaidėjus“, „gražuoles“ ir „vienišius“. Antra, kalbos vartojimo analizė atskleidė, kad kiekvienoje klasėje yra grupė mokinių išsiskirianti anglų kalbos elementų įtraukimu į lietuvių kalbą, t.y. mišriu kalbos vartojimu. Šios draugų grupės pasirinktos tikslinėmis. Nors mišriu kalbos stiliumi pasižymi visi penktokai, tikslinės grupės anglų kalbos elementus rečiau pritaiko prie lietuvių kalbos gramatikos bei šie elementai savo reikšme nebūtinai yra susiję su medijomis. Taip pat, jų įtraukiami elementai dažnai nurodo į pozicijos (angl. *stance*), rolės ar santykio pokyčius. Apskritai, skirtingi asmenų stiliai nurodo į skirtingus identitetus. Pasak tyrimo rezultatų, mišrus kalbos vartojimas reikšmingas identiteto raiškai: paaugliai taip nurodo grupės ar globalios bendruomenės narystę bei įvairias roles. Taigi, vartodami anglų kalbos elementus paaugliai

pozicionuoja save socialiniame kontekste kaip, pavyzdžiui, aktyvius medijų vartotojus, atlikėjus, socialiai įtakingus grupės narius ir panašiai. Visa tai kontekstualu: reiškiamas identitetas pritaikomas prie konteksto, lankstus, dinamiškas. Anglų kalbos socialinių reikšmių rasta ir daugiau: globalumas, įprastumas, medijos, jaunimas, įgūdis, kokybė, priklausymas bendruomenei, žaismingumas, , socioekonominiai privalumai. Panašios reikšmės randamos ir kituose tyrimuose (žr. Vaicekauskienė, 2020). Dėl to, kad socialinės reikšmės tyrimams svarbus kontekstas bei ribotos šio tyrimo apimties, gauti rezultatai gali neatspindėti lietuvių paauglių priskiriamų reikšmių anglų kalbai apskritai. Visgi, šis tyrimas gali pasitarnauti ateities tyrimams šioje srityje.

8. Summary in Swedish

Sociala meningar av engelskan: en etnografisk studie av tonåringar

Betydelsen av det engelska språket i det samtida samhället är otvivelaktigt: som *lingua franca* är det viktigt inom turism, affärer, underhållningsbranschen och andra sfärer. Det är inte förvånande att engelska blir ett intresse för sociolingvistiska studier i länder som inte talar engelska. Dessa studier tar upp utbredningen av engelska inom olika domäner, blandade språkstilar samt dess pragmatiska och sociala värden (Vaicekaskienė, 2020:185). Enligt Eckert (2008) kan en språkvariant tillskrivas olika betydelser i olika sammanhang och dessa betydelser utgör dess indexfält (eng. *indexical field*). Studier av sociala meningar bland ungdomar rapporterar globalitet, media, ungdom, gruppmedlemskap och relaterade meningar (Vaicekaskienė, 2020). Eckert (2008: 456) hävdar att personastil, det vill säga syntesen av alla stilistiska system, såsom språk och kläder, indexerar olika sätt att vara. Det betyder identitet som ses som dynamisk och kontextberoende. Språket uppfattas som ett av medlen för identitetsuttryck. Syftet med denna studie är att analysera de sociala betydelser som olika tonårsvängrupper tillskriver engelska genom språkanvändning och metalingvistiska kommentarer. 20 5:e klassare från två olika klasser i en privatskola i Vilnius observerades och undersöktes, särskilt deras relationer, diskussioner med varandra och halvstrukturerade intervjuer. Den kvalitativa analysen baseras på Eckerts (2008) indexfält och personastil begrepp samt Leppänens (2007) modell för analys av blandade språkanvändning (eng. *mixed language use*).

Studien avslöjar de undersökta tonåringarnas sociala relationer, stilistiska praktiker och sociala meningar av engelskan. För det första avslöjade analysen av tonåringars relationer och intressen de befintliga vängrupperna: de ”goda tjejerna”, de ”underhållarna”, de ”spelarna”, de ”skönhetsflickorna” och de ”utomstående”. För det andra visar språkanvändningsanalys att det finns en grupp elever i båda klasser som står ut i sin blandad språkanvändning, det vill säga införlivande av engelska element i sitt tal. Dessa grupper av vänner valdes som målgrupper. Även om blandad språkanvändning är ett kännetecken hos alla 5:e klassare, anpassar målgrupperna de införlivade elementen till det litauiska språket mindre vanligt än andra. Vad mer, de inkluderade elementen är inte nödvändigtvis media-relaterade och ofta indexerar förändringar i hållning, roll eller relation. Generellt indexerar olika personastilar olika identiteter. Enligt resultaten av denna studie är blandad språkanvändning viktig i identitetsförhandlingar: på detta sätt indexerar tonåringar grupp- eller

globaltsamhällsmedlemskap. På så sätt kan tonåringar genom att använda engelska element i sitt tal positionera sig i ett socialt sammanhang, exempelvis som aktiva medieanvändare, artister, socialt kraftfulla gruppmedlemmar och liknande. Detta är kontextuell: den förhandlade identiteten beror på sammanhanget, är flexibel och dynamisk. Studien rapporterar också sådana sociala meningar: globalitet, normalitet, media, ungdom, skicklighet, samhällsmedlemskap, lekfullhet, socioekonomiska fördelar, kvalitet. Liknande resultat rapporteras i andra studier av fältet (Vaicekauskienė, 2020). På grund av betydelsen av sammanhang i socialmeningsstudier och den begränsade omfattningen av denna forskning, kan resultaten inte återspegla de övergripande trenderna bland litauisk ungdomen. Denna studie kan dock vara värdefull för framtida studier inom området.