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Greetings in Lithuanian and Chinese languages

Greetings are one of the speech acts studied in sociolinguistics, pragmatics and they are also a politeness strategy. These speech acts are important to start communication as well as to establish and maintain interpersonal relationships. There are various factors that influence the use of greetings, including social distance, social power, environmental and cultural factors, etc. In this paper, we analyze Lithuanian and Chinese greetings, using the discourse completion test (DCT) method. The study analyzed greetings, their expression, non-verbal language and what social factors influence the choice of greetings. The data was obtained by an open-ended questionnaire, in which 16 situations were given to Lithuanian and Chinese students. The aim of the study was to compare Lithuanian and Chinese greetings in verbal and non-verbal language. 105 questionnaires were collected and the results were analyzed using quantitative and qualitative methods. Firstly, we will discuss the polite norms in both countries. Secondly, we will define what factors influence the use of greetings, what the head act is and what modification strategies are used. For example, in Chinese, it is common to greet people by their surname when greeting them, indicating the relationship with the person and their profession, but this strategy has not been used much in Lithuanian. Thirdly, the research results show how the use of non-verbal language depends on social factors. For example, when the addressees were of higher status than the students, the typical body language is different: Lithuanian students smile and nod their heads, while Chinese students bow a little. Greetings are a part of the linguistic routines of politeness, their verbal and non-verbal language has some similarities in Lithuanian and Chinese cultures, but there are also differences, some of which are due to certain historical circumstances and different concepts of politeness.