Linguo-Statistical Analysis of Borrowed Words Used in School Textbooks and Children's Literature Books

Summary

Introduction

Pre-primary school and basic educational programmes pay attention to children's speech development, combining it with vocabulary development and acquisition of words meaning.

As early as in kindergarten, favourable opportunities should be provided for the development of literary correct and rich language, and non-literate words should be eliminated from children's speech. The kindergarten curriculum claims that at the preschool age, children must acquire such a vocabulary, which can ensure communication by means of language, prepare them for successful learning at school, and foster perception of folklore, fiction, films, radio and TV programmes. While children are learning the language, words from their passive vocabulary can enter the active vocabulary, depending on the work done for language enrichment by adults. A very important task to be implemented by both parents and teachers is to open up the wealth of the literary language, which can be perceived through multiple sources – folksongs, fairytales, legends, proverbs, sayings, riddles. A major role is played by fiction in the process of personality development, because it immensely facilitates children's knowledge about the environment, adult and peers life, and about their ideas, actions and aspirations.

Diminutives, exclamation words and sound verbs, serving efficiently for short emotional description of feelings, volition or reality and expressing their assessment, are widely involved by both adults and children in their language as well as used in genres of folklore and children literature.

Children have to be able to use comparisons, synonyms, idioms, and foreign words, because in daily speech they are an integral components (they are widespread in fiction and in other styles, different language fields). Loan words help to acquire foreign language more easily, approach languages and promote understanding.

Aim of the study

The aim of this work is to discover the usage of foreign words in textbooks for primary schools because foreign words are crucial components of vocabulary.

Materials and methods

School textbooks, children's literature. Methods of applied linguistics, descriptive method and testing.

Results

As figures of statistics show there are quite a lot of foreign words which are used in textbooks for children in primary classes. Teachers think that a limited number of foreign words should be included in textbooks.

Conclusions

Primary attention at the teachers' studies courses is paid to teaching foreign methodology.

Key words: *school textbooks, children literature, borrowed words, linguostatistical analysis.*

Introduction

Preschool and basic educational programmes pay significant attention to children's speech development, combining it with vocabulary development (Kaņepēja 2003, 58) of acquisition of words meaning (especially of borrowings) and their comprehension, the maintenance of correct phoneme pronunciation, development of grammatically correct speech. As early as in kindergarten, favourable opportunities should be provided for the development of literary correct and rich language, non-literate words should be purposefully eliminated from children's speech (Kuzina 2006, 260). The kindergarten curriculum claims that at preschool age the child must acquire a vocabulary which can

ensure communication by means of the language, prepare them for successful learning at school, foster perception of folklore, fiction, films, radio and TV programmes.

A very important task to be implemented by both parents and teachers is to introduce borrowed words (i. e. foreign words), which constitute an important component of the lexicon (widespread in fiction and other styles, other areas of language); meanwhile they considerably enrich children's vocabulary and by their widespread usage make easier the acquisition of other languages; thus, the children should not avoid using such words.

Borrowings penetrate into any language under the influence of various cultural, political, economical and other conditions; therefore, adult and child language, fiction, scientific literature etc. includes such words and word combinations, which express conceptions in science, technology and art.

Aim of the study

The article has been created due to the project 'Children language research in Latvia: linguistic, social and culture aspects.' The article pays major attention to the usage of borrowed foreign words (also barbarisms) in textbooks for forms 1 and 2 in primary schools, children literature and in the children language.

Materials and methods

The article analyses four text-books, which are proposed for schools with Latvian as the language of instruction. The research has implemented linguo-statistical and descriptive methods, questionnaires, and interviews.

Results

Each of us uses words borrowed from other languages that have come into Latvian everyday language. Many of them denote widespread conceptions, for instance, radio, television, cars, balcony, ticket, price etc. The greatest number of borrowings (loans) or international words has been introduced from words of Greek and Latin origin, known both by large and small nations, for instance, *alphabet, ball, grammar, idea, climate, choir, lexicon, machine, theatre, museum, metal, author, examination, excursion, class, confectionery, furniture, mode, person, reconstruction, republic* etc.

Due to historical conditions, the Latvian language is most influenced by German and Russian languages (recently – by the English language), yet their own footprints have also been left by other (French, Italian etc.) languages.

The entry of loans into the Latvian language and other languages is a natural process, because due to them, the vocabulary of any language is considerably enriched. As recognized by the majority of linguists, the full value existence of the Latvian language nowadays cannot be exercised without such loans as *aktieris, alfabēts, banāns, klase, koncerts, mode, mašīna, opera, šokolāde, tramvajs, trolejbuss* etc. borrowed during the last centuries or even recent years. In this respect we must agree with P. Birznieks that the Latvian language should not be afraid of invasion by foreign words and foreign syntactic forms; it should be afraid only of the native speakers who lack diligence and show no respect to the flourishing of their language (Birznieks 1996, 148).

As known, a part of international words (i. e., loans, which are known in many languages) have their equivalents in the Latvian language (for instance, *stabils – noturīgs, unikāls – vienreizīgs, komplicēts – sarežģīts, realizēt – īstenot, ignorēt – neievērot* etc.), which widen the opportunities of expressing, bestow the language with flexibility, precision, create stylistic diversity. In some respect, the use of these words in speech or written works disclose the person's broadness of perception, his intelligence; therefore, parents' and teachers' task is to promote gradual enrichment of children's language with foreign words.

The majority of international words have to be acquired consciously, as memorisation of their meanings requires special attention. When encountering some less known international words, children

should try to remember the words with the same root, perceiving the word-building connections, for instance, pretendēt, pretendents; kandidēt, kandidāts, etc. Thus, single words will not exist as isolated items, but will constitute units of related words like the Latvian origin words possessing the same root.

To illustrate the usage of foreign words in the text-books (for forms 1 and 2), it is necessary to mention some figures:

Form 1 text-book includes 5% foreign words;

Form 2 text-book includes 8% foreign words.

As foreign words also constitute a significant part of everyday vocabulary, it is advisable to enrich the children's vocabulary regularly at first with the most often used foreign words (international words), meanwhile explaining their meanings in accordance with the children's development level. Parents, preschool and basic school teachers, radio, television and mass media officers can assist children in acquiring foreign words (also the more rarely used). It is important for the teachers pay attention to the correct use of foreign words (for instance, *getras, fliterītis, panno, figūra, elements* etc.).

Very often the play-games as well as the text-book texts include sentences, which involve even several foreign words, for instance, *Nolikt kvadrātiņu uz analoga kvadrātiņa, Noklāt laukuma katru otro sleju: horizontāli, vertikāli, pa diagonāli, šaha veidā, Automātiskais šoferis bez grūtībām iedarbina motoru, Materiāli no „Lielās ilustrētās enciklopēdijas”, Mūsdienās kosmosā strādā orbitālās stacijas, kas tur darbojas pat vairākus gadus, un tās apmeklē vairākas astronautu komandas, Ekskursijā uz Rīgas motormuzeju 2. klases skolēni brauca ar autobusu utt.* Also Form 2 text-book in one text on the Olympic Games (also in comments) there are as many as 20 foreign words (*olimpiskais, talismans, simbolizēt, ceremonija, kontinents, stafete, komiteja, prezidents, olimpiāde, stadions, kosmiskais, stacija, tramplīns, klase, organizēt, diskusija, sports, tēma, fotogrāfija, metode*), which constitute 1/5 of this text.

To investigate the comprehension of foreign words, Form 1 pupils (in Lielupe and Pumpuri secondary schools) were offered two lists of words for foreign word assessment. The first list is established based on foreign words use in the magazine 'Barbie' (12/2007), the second list supplies foreign words which are included in the text-book "Mazā Zile" (Form 1). Both the foreign word lists mark as + understand, as - do not understand.

Can you understand the foreign words included in the magazine "Barbie"?

Orīģināls-	Noregulēt+	Forma+	Želatīns-	Esence-
Pseidonīms-	Mandēles (rieksti)+	Krēms+	Lakrica-	Šokējošs-
Frizūra+	Šokolāde+	Konfektes+	Konditoreja-	Komplekts+
Maska+	Torte+	Glazūra-	Rums-	Salons+
Valsis-	Žurnāls+	Telefons+	Interesants+	Frizieris+
Princese+	Ilustrēts-	Fotogrāfs+	Kabīne+	Filma+
Aksesuāri-	Oficiāls-			

Out of 32 foreign words 11 foreign words, i.e., 1/3, were not understood by Form 1 pupils.

Can you understand the foreign words included in the text-book "Mazā Zile"?

Hokejs +	Halva +	Džinsi+	Lifts +	Fotografēt +
Klase +	Teksts +	Ilustrēt –	Ferma –	Lineāls +
Ekskursija +	Karafe –	Tunelis +	Fuksija –	Matemātika +
Nektārs –	Ovāls +	Treneris +	Konservi +	Karalis +
Metāls +	Luksofors +	Helikopters +	Diktore +	Žirafe +
Anekdote +	Hameleons -	Kartīte +	Profesija +	Penālis +
Halle -	Haizivs+	Džungļi +	Frizūra +	Filma +

Himna +	Hantele -	Futbols +	Nēģeris +	Vafeles +
Humors +	Džemperis+	Fanta -	Flamings -	Cilindrs -
Enciklopēdija -	Mūzika +	Komisija -	Sports +	Argo –
Vizuāls -	Narcise -	Krokuss –		

Out of 53 foreign words 17 foreign words, i.e., almost 1/4, were not understood by Form 1 pupils. To investigate the comprehension of foreign words, Form 2 pupils also were offered 2 lists of words to assess foreign words. The first list included the foreign words, which were used in four texts by the magazine "Zilīte" (June, July, August, 2008), the second list was created on the basis of the foreign word usage in the text-book "Zile" (Form 2), beside this list contains only the more rarely used foreign words (their number - 79).

Can you understand the foreign words included in the magazine "Zilīte"?

Ornitoloģija -	Suga +	Gandrs -	Programma -	Sezona +
Teritorija +	Migrēt -	Kilometrs +	Izolēts +	Populācija-
Marts +	Aprīlis +	Informācija +	Ekoloģisks-	Hektārs –
Ekonomika -	Populācija -	Koncentrēties-	Resursi -	Transports +
Elektroenerģija +	Nafta -	Gāze +	Ogle +	Plastmasa+
Planēta -	Monitors -	Mobils -	Telefons +	Šokolāde +
Internets +	Tests -	Muzejs +	Faktiski +	Hronika –
Process -	Arheoloģisks -	Selekcija -	Sports +	Tūrisms +
Hipodroms -	Disciplīna +	Tarpāns -	Maksimāli-	Speciāli +
Projekts -	Konsultants +	Ekosistēma -	Parazīts +	Konkrēts +
Tularēmija -	Parazītisks +	Organisks +	Konstatēt +	Konsultēties+
Parazitēt -	Efektīvs-	Stadija -	Mēbele +	Speciālists +
Veterinārais +	Preparāts -			

Out of 62 foreign words 29 foreign words, i.e., almost 1/2, were not understood by Form 2 pupils.

Can you understand the foreign words included in the text-book "Zile"?

Simpātijas+	Sinonīms -	Arheologs-	Meliorators+
Flomāsters+	Arhivārs -	Mēness +	Dinozaurs +
Protoceratops-	Pterozaur-	Mēnesis +	Fragments +
Emblēma -	Idille -	Difterija-	Grupēt +
Grifs -	Prērija -	Buldogs+	Ingvers –
Kojots-	Amarillis-	Ilustrācija+	Hronists-
Diktāts +	Dialogs+	Kondors-	Cinerārija-
Abonents-	Dalmācietis-	Pulverizators-	Propolis-
Komandējums+	Noformēt+	Žurnālists+	Alpīnists+
Badmintons+	Baravika+	Enciklopēdija+	Ģerbonis+
Ģerānija-	Humoristisks+	Himna+	Intervija+
Kaktuss+	Komponists+	Komikss+	Loto+
Penālis+	Recepte+	Simbols-	Skulptūra+
Sams-	Akācija+	Aplicēt-	Čempions+
Domino+	Drakons+	Dežurants+	Elastīgs+
Figūriņa+	Filmiņa+	Kombinācija-	Hokejs+
Japāņi+	Kadrs (filma)+	Partneris+	Pikniks+
Grāds+	Indiānis+	Ilustrācija+	Ilustrēt+
Konstruktors+	Krokusiņš-	Konflikts+	Kondors-
Komplekts+	Lokomotīve+	Magnēts+	

Out of 79 more rarely used foreign words Form 2 pupils could not understand 27 foreign words, i.e., almost 1/3.

As proved by Forms 1 and 2 pupil answers, the comprehensions of foreign words often cause them difficulties. The teachers admit that the meanings of many foreign words are not always clear to the children; therefore explanation of the meanings of such words is necessarily included into the education process. The difficulties are also caused by the pronunciation and spelling of the foreign words (for example, instead of the foreign words like: *helikopters, tetovējums, propelleris, tramvajs, krokodils, žirafe, automobilis, koridors* the children use: *hopteris, heletokteris, tetējums, kodidors, kokoko, žirape, tramis* etc.). The teachers claim that they do not know how to teach foreign words to the children, as up to the present the methodology for the teaching of foreign words is not developed. They consider that foreign words are necessary for learning texts, but in a limited number, so that they do not interfere with the perception of the idea manifested by the text.

The text-books for Forms 1 – 2 include both the most often used as well as more rarely used foreign words (see table No 1).

Table 1
Usage of foreign words in text books

Text-books	Foreign words in total	Explanations of foreign words (number)	Most often used foreign words (% out of total number)	More rarely used foreign w. (% out of total number)
Paegle, Dz. (1997). <i>Vārds: Lasāmā grāmata un ievadijums valodas mācībā 1. klasē</i> R.: Zvaigzne ABC.	52	3	23.1	17.3
Mazā Zīle. 1. klasei (2005). R.: Zvaigzne ABC.	54	-	35.8	30.2
Zīle. 1. klasei (2005). R.: Zvaigzne ABC.	94	1	31.9	23.4
Zīle I, II daļa 2. klasei (2000). R.: Zvaigzne ABC.	371	11	16.4	21.3

As indicated by data in Chart No 1, in the text-book by Dz. Paegle, there are included 52 foreign words; 3 of the foreign words (*paviljons, eskimoss, nēģeris*) are supplied with explanations. There are 12 most often used foreign words (with the word usage frequency 5 - n) and 9 more rarely used foreign words (with the word usage frequency 1 – 2), for instance, *krokodīlīte, nēģerēns, terase, pensija, ģipsis, želeja* etc.

The text-book for Form 1 "Mazā Zīle" includes 53 foreign words; out of them 19 foreign words belong to the most often used and 16 to the more rarely used, for instance, *halle, princesīte, helikopters, hameleons, zebra, karafe, fuksija, žirafe, diktore, ovāls, argo, vizuāls* etc.

The text-book for Form 1 "Zīle" includes 94 foreign words; an explanation is given for one foreign word (*profesija* - profession). As established, this text-book includes 30 most often used foreign words and 22 more rarely used ones, for instance, *enciklopēdija, karaliene, nektārs, apetīte, kg, krokuss, diktors, kristāliņš, narcise, cilindrs, prezidente, komisija* etc.

The text-book for Form 2 „Zīle” (Parts I, II) includes 371 foreign word; 11 foreign words (for instance, *simpātijas, arheologs, meliorators, sinonīms, mēness, mēnesis, idille, prērija* etc.) are supplied with explanations, 61 are the most often used foreign words and 79 - the more rarely used ones, for instance, *arhivārs, emblēma, grifs, hronists, abonents, dalmācietis, dinozaurs, difterija, ingvers, kondors, pulverizators, propoliss, protoceratops, pterozauris, koijots, amarillis, cinerārija* etc.

According to the questionnaire data that were accomplished (in Lielupe and Pumpuri secondary schools), the majority of the foreign words which are supplied with explanations in the text-books, the children could understand, for instance, *mēness, mēnesis, kafija, anekdote, analizēt, reklāma, akrobāts, ideja, plakāts, realizēt, reakcija, simbols* etc. It proves that for the explanations of the foreign words have been chosen words, which can be perceived by children.

This study may be useful to the teachers as a methodical aid used for teaching foreign words. The teachers from Jūrmala schools when introduced with the data of foreign words usage in the texts of the text-books claimed that they encounter major problems exactly when teaching the more rarely used foreign words.

While teaching the vocabulary of the abovementioned type, the teachers must ask the pupils the following questions, whether they understand every foreign word included in the learning text, whether there are such words, which cannot be understood; attention must also be paid to the pronunciation and spelling of the foreign words. The more rarely used foreign words should be read to the children, then they should be given assistance in forming the word combinations, sentences, and told a story; some analytical and creative exercises with the foreign words could be given, so that children could easier acquire the more rarely used foreign words.

Sometimes the texts for Forms 1 – 2 (also the explanations supplied for the foreign words, for instance, *praķis, akurāt* etc.) include other borrowed words such as, *dakteris, opaps, omamma, bode, bonbonga, onkulis, brangs, vinnests, vinnēt, bilde* etc., which should be classified as barbarisms. They harm the literary language, “decrease qualitative and quantitative aspects of the speaker’s vocabulary, way of expression, have impact on the whole language system – phonetics, grammar, lexicon” (Freiberga 2006, 135); therefore, they should be eliminated. As a positive example we can mention, the text-book by Dz. Paegle, which includes the poem “Valoda” [Language] by M. Cielēn. The poem itself, as well as its key words pays attention to the usage of barbarisms - (*kurtka, samosvals, bante, davai*) in the Latvian language. It claims that there are words not favourable for the language. If the speaker substitutes a word from some other language for a Latvian word, then the language of such a person is ugly. The key word kit supplies an explanation of barbarisms, for instance, *kurtka* – a word from the Russian language; in Latvian this outfit is called: *vējaka*; *bante* is a word from the German language, in Latvian it is called - *lente* or *saite*, for instance, *matu lente, pārsienamā saite*. In the contemporary circumstances of bilingualism and multilingualism, when Latvian language users have close contacts with diverse languages, in encounter situations, adults (yet mainly adolescents, also children) borrow from other languages unsuitable words or word clusters and bring them into the Latvian language (for instance, *pončiks, gonkas, skāde, tūre, kurtka, vot, forši, davai, semočas, feini, okei* etc.).

The use of barbarisms in children’s language most often is connected with the desire to express their feelings and emotions (anger, happiness, surprise etc.); therefore exclamation words are often used, which name certain emotional experiences, give a positive or negative assessment of different issues of reality, for instance *bāc!, super, baigi, bļin, vau!* Those can be words, which name some deviations in child’s physical, mental, spiritual, emotional qualities, for instance *čukča, duraks, idiņš* etc.

To establish the qualitative contents of the children’s vocabulary, students at RTTEMA guided by lecturers D. Markus, I. Freiberga, I. Freidenfelds and V. Kuzina have compiled barbarisms, which are used by preschool age children in their everyday vocabulary when talking to their peers and adults. The compiled materials are shown in table No 2.

Table 2
Barbarisms in preschool age children's language

Barbarisms (in Latvian)	Childrens' phrases (in Latvian)
<i>Padjezds, bišķiņ, fiksi, dikti, superīgs, besī, kruts, dancot, vinnēt, omīte, opaps, beibe, dāvai, vāruški, babuļa, korablītis, puķovka, bai – bai (atvadoties), bļin, o, bože, forši, fufelis, jes, kurtka, ņefīgā, okei, prikols, šiki, točna, vot, šaiba, kļuška, baigi u. c.</i>	<i>Ejam uz padjezdu. Es bišķiņ nosmērējos. Fiksi aizskriesi pie audzinātājas. Man mājās ir superīga galda spēle. Tu mani besī ārā. Tētis teica, ka esmu šodien krutā beibe. Dāvai, jāucam ārā māju un ceļam jaunu. Man taču cimdu nav, ir tikai vāruški. Babuļa, nu nopērc man šito korablīti. Mamma rīt dabūs puķovku uz Vaivariem.</i>

These barbarisms are borrowed from adult and elder brothers or sisters, less often from peers language. Children not always perceive their meanings, and they often do not know the respective words in their native language.

Bilingualism and multilingualism does not mean a mechanical mixture of two or more languages, but a permanent co-existence of the languages; therefore children need the basic knowledge about the common and different features of two or more languages, about the positive and negative aspects of interference. As claimed by I. Freidenfelds (Freidenfelds 2006, 142), multilingualism is one of the remarkable features of the age in children's language; to research it, to interpret it positively and expertly means to promote care for the next generation's mental development and about the future of the Latvian language.

Conclusions

For enrichment and diversification of children's language, borrowings (loans) should be studied because they constitute a significant part of their lexicon and refer to the conceptions of social and political life, science and art.

The borrowings, which are used reasonably and are easy to perceive, serve as good tools for the acquisition of the Latvian language by children; they can serve as switchmen during that stage when a new language is being mastered (for instance, English, Russian, German etc.).

Everyone (especially teachers) must develop the children's linguistic perception, comprehension of the significance of foreign words (also barbarisms) for the Latvian language. Barbarisms in the children's language are used for variation of expressions; they serve as synonyms for native language words.

As shown by the statistical data, in the texts of the text-books (for Forms 1 – 2), as well as in children's literature texts, the number of the foreign words used is comparatively great; therefore children's perception of the texts may be diminished. The teachers claim that foreign words are necessary in the learning texts, yet in limited numbers, so that they do not disturb the perception of the idea manifested by the text. The education aids, methodological materials based on the findings of the linguists' investigations.

Particular attention should be paid to the methodology of teaching foreign words at the teacher training study programmes.

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